Bill Evans Trio - At Shelly's Manne-Hole (1963)

1 Isn't It Romantic 4:34 2 The Boy Next Door 5:14 3 Wonder Why 5:05 4 Swedish Pastry 5:35 5 Our Love Is Here To Stay 4:41 6 'Round Midnight 8:50 7 Stella By Starlight 4:50 8 Blues In "F" 5:05 9 All the Things You Are 8:52 Bill Evans - piano Chuck Israels - bass Larry Bunker - drums

Although the Scott LaFaro-Paul Motian lineup of the Bill Evans Trio is generally considered to be the strongest, Chuck Israels and Larry Bunker make a strong case of their own on At Shelly's Manne-Hole, a 1964 release that finds the entire band in classic form. This particular trio may lack some of the sheer combustive force of the better-known lineup, but it is, if possible, even more sensitive, melancholic, and nostalgic than the previous band. The leadoff track, "Isn't It Romantic," is one of Evans' finest moments, with the gently swinging theme leading into a strong, if restrained, solo from Israels. Over Bunker's sensitive brush work, Evans comments briefly and beautifully on the theme before returning to the head. The band's readings of such classics as "'Round Midnight," "Stella By Starlight," and "All the Things You Are" are wonderful, but it is the lesser-known tracks, such as "Swedish Pastry" and the aforementioned "Isn't It Romantic," that makes this recording so valuable. Jazz is rarely as sensitive or as melodic as this. Another classic from Bill Evans and company. --- Daniel Gioffre, Rovi

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