
Verve
A PANORAMIC TRUE
HIGH FIDELITY RECORD
MG V 4001

SIDE TWO

		Mstr. No. & Take	Time
1.	**CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS?** (Kay Swift–Paul James)	20222-2	**3:45**
2.	**ISN'T THIS A LOVELY DAY?** (Irving Berlin)	20208-2	**6:14**
3.	**MOONLIGHT IN VERMONT** (Karl Suessdorf–John Blackburn)	20213-7	**3:41**
4.	**THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME** (George and Ira Gershwin)	20207-2	**4:38**
5.	**UNDER A BLANKET OF BLUE** (Jerry Livingston–Al J. Neiburg–Marty Symes)	20212-10	**4:16**
6.	**TENDERLY** (Walter Gross–Jack Lawrence)	20209-5	**5:06**
7.	**A FOGGY DAY** (George and Ira Gershwin)	20214-6	**4:31**
8.	**STARS FELL ON ALABAMA** (Frank Perkins–Mitchell Parish)	20210-2	**3:32**
9.	**CHEEK TO CHEEK** (Irving Berlin)	20211-5	**5:52**
10.	**THE NEARNESS OF YOU** (Hoagy Charmichael–Ned Washington)	20216-1	**5:40**
11.	**APRIL IN PARIS** (Vernon Duke–E. Y. Harburg)	20215-6	**6:33**

Ella Fitzgerald (vocal) and **Louis Armstrong** (trumpet, vocal)
with Oscar Peterson (piano); Herb Ellis (guitar);
Ray Brown (bass); Buddy Rich (drums).

Recorded August 16, 1956 at Capitol Studios, Hollywood
Original-LP issue: *Ella and Louis* Verve MGV 4003

Original recordings produced by Norman Granz
Original-LP cover photograph by Phil Stern

Tracks are in their original-LP sequence. Master numbers show the order in which they were recorded.

ELLA AND LOUIS

REISSUING ELLA AND LOUIS

Getting Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong together in a studio at the frantic peak of their respective careers was rather like getting the moon and the sun to align for an unscheduled eclipse.

In more relaxed times, when both served common masters at Decca, there were fewer complications. So in January 1946 Fitzgerald and Armstrong had recorded their first duets together, a pair of wretched pop tunes that never managed to connect the two into a persuasive rapport, although they did yield fine playing from Armstrong.

But that was then, when each was facing the malaise of mid-career doldrums and nobody was looking too closely. Now it was 1956, and each was in constant motion, a prisoner of sudden recent triumphs that, as is the way with triumphs, presented unlimited riches along with non-negotiable demands.

For Armstrong, the switch from Decca to Columbia in 1954 had kick-started his recording career again with a series of astounding and career-capping albums pulled together by producer George Avakian. And when the State Department became involved with his tours of Europe and West Africa, Armstrong's name rose to the level of an international cold-war newsmaker, although why the State Department was needed to arrange travel to countries any American with a passport could visit is unclear. Paris, Amsterdam, and Milan were not exactly teetering dominoes. But the publicity was terrific and turned Armstrong into "Ambassador Satch."

For Fitzgerald, also recently liberated from a twenty-year association with Decca, her career was in a sudden turnaround that would ultimately place her first among the immortals. Her *Cole Porter Song Book* (Verve CD 314 537 257-2) was at no. 11 on the *Billboard* LP chart, in direct competition with Elvis Presley. It was the kind of strategic triumph that was already carrying her out of the jazz clubs and into the best showrooms and concert venues show business could offer.

For Ella and Louis, this sort of stardom was a license to mint money. But it didn't come to them; they had to go out and get it. And that meant grueling schedules crowded with tedious travel and endless bookings. One show a night for a concert gig; two or three if it was the Waldorf in New York or the Chez Paree in Chicago. Each artist was always racing for the next show. Joe Glaser, Armstrong's manager, was notorious for milking Louis and the All-Stars on the live appearance circuit. And Norman Granz, who had taken over Fitzgerald's career three years before, was different only in the amenities he would demand on her behalf. But she worked.

Paul Smith, who was Ella's pianist during the period of this recording and who later traveled with her, sketched a vivid picture when I remarked to him how much more kindly the years have been to Lena Horne than they were to Fitzgerald. Said Smith: "Lena never worked as hard as Ella. That's the secret. My God! [Drummer] Stan Levey and I went out with her for forty-six weeks in 1962, and we *worked* forty-six weeks. We ended up in Seattle at the World's Fair, and after the last concert we tore off our tuxes and threw them in the wastebaskets. We had done double and triple shows in two cities: the Hague for shows at six and ten PM; then to Amsterdam for a midnight show and finish at four AM. Wherever they booked her, she went. Didn't make any difference

about days off, holidays, double shows. Most of the time she didn't know where she was going. They'd tell her but she'd forget. It made no difference. When I think of what we did in those forty-six weeks, and what she went on doing for the next sixteen years with Tommy Flanagan, it's amazing. Tommy left in 1978 when he had his first heart attack — not because of her, but because she worked so hard."

Assembling two such wayfaring performers in one place at one time required patience, perseverance, and, given the situation, a readiness to swallow a measure of pride. The man whose project it was, of course, was Norman Granz, who had been known to force more than a few segregationist theater operators to gulp down large quantities of pride by selling tickets without regard to race if they wanted the riches his Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) concerts could bring them. He was an indefatigable negotiator when he controlled the key elements, which was always his preferred method. Here, though, he controlled all the elements except one: Armstrong. This meant that he faced the unwelcome necessity of dealing with an equally stubborn negotiator: Joe Glaser, whom Armstrong's biographer Laurence Bergreen referred to as a "quasi-hoodlum manager." To Glaser there was nothing complicated about it: Armstrong was available to the highest bidder.

"I would like to have done more with Louis," Granz says. "But it always worked out that I had him, without exception, under the worst possible circumstances. Everything was always rushed. In one case he came off the road and his chops weren't right. I used to talk to Pops about it. It was almost as if Joe Glaser did it deliberately."

Glaser was not a man with whom Granz had a great deal in common in terms of philosophies of management. Granz was a man of ultra-refined tastes who took great care in shaping the content of Fitzgerald's body of work. Glaser was a man who seemed to have no particular taste at all, except a taste for hits that paid off quickly. Granz looked at Armstrong and, as he had with Fitzgerald, saw great potential trapped in a small vision.

"The main criticism that Louis faced in those days," Granz says, "was that his repertoire was always the same. I wanted to do something about that. When he opened at the Copa in New York for the first time, I went to see Glaser and said, 'Look, I'll do it for nothing, but let me stage his show.' I thought it would be marvelous for him to come out and do something like 'A Foggy Day'. Something different. It didn't make that much difference what it was. I wanted to have him stretch out with things by Gershwin and so on."

With the huge success Fitzgerald's Cole Porter album was having, it seemed prudent to Granz, as long as he had Armstrong's services, that he use the opportunity to put him together with his biggest star. Not only would the earthy Louis be a perfect match for the elegant Ella; it would be the ideal project in which to extend Armstrong's repertoire into the realm of American standards. "I thought it was a sound idea," Granz reflects. "The first duet sessions with Ella were fairly simple, and they were all right, I guess. Under the circumstances — Louis was not my exclusive artist, and his management was not very cooperative — I guess I did about the best I could."

For this album the only rehearsal, such as it was, for these two singers who had not recorded together in six years was at a JATP concert the night before, Wednesday, August 15, in the Hollywood Bowl. Fitzgerald was in Los Angeles for two weeks at a fashionable club called Zardi's, during which time Granz intended to record her duets with Armstrong and then the second of the *Song Book* series, devoted to Rodgers and Hart (Verve CD 314 537 258-2), arranged and conducted by Buddy Bregman. Armstrong and his group had worked their way west from New York, where a month before they had recorded with Leonard Bernstein at Lewisohn Stadium. Two

nights after that, July 16, they were in Highland Park near Chicago for Wednesday and Friday concerts at Ravinia Park, an occasion I lovingly recall as my eighth-grade graduation present and the first time I ever set eyes on Armstrong in person. "Satchmo's Heat Rocks Ravinia," the Chicago *Daily News* said the next day on top of a page full of pictures. Louis was big news.

To help Glaser amortize Armstrong's record date, Granz agreed to add him to his Hollywood Bowl JATP package the night before at his normal concert fee. (Selections from the concert were released on two LPs as *Jazz at the Hollywood Bowl*.) It was also the occasion for Ella and Louis to do two numbers together, including a spectacular though underrehearsed "Undecided".

Armstrong's playing at the Hollywood Bowl concert also casts some doubt on the widely held notion that his embouchure was not in good form for the next day's session. While that may be true, in fact he played very well at the concert. Perhaps the real difference was the contrasting environments. The *Ella and Louis* session was perhaps the most intimate, even austere, session he had ever submitted himself to. To Ella it was her natural working unit. But away from his All-Stars, without trombonist Trummy Young and drummer Barrett Deems whooping it up and pianist Billy Kyle mapping out matters of form and musicology, Armstrong stood uncharacteristically exposed and vulnerable, with only a discreet rhythm section (Buddy Rich confines himself almost exclusively to brushes) to support him. The leisurely tempos and sophisticated material come closer to a recital of art songs than a jam session. But Armstrong plays trumpet on every track (and solos on almost all of them) and adjusts accordingly. His sound is smaller, his reach intentionally confidential, his concepts closer to the text and in proportion to his co-star and their fireside environment. No soaring arias here on material he was dipping into for the first time. His full choruses on "April in Paris" and "Tenderly" are low-key and conversational. Without the filterings of the All-Stars and the echo of the concert hall, this record brought us closer to the Armstrong trumpet and especially to the detail and texture of the voice than we had ever been. It put the grit and gravel of his vibrato inches from our ear, like pillow talk.

Granz drew up a list of twenty or thirty standards, from which Louis selected the eleven that were performed. Ella deferred to his choices, Granz told Leonard Feather in a 1957 *Playboy* interview, even down to the keys. Like most Granz sessions, this one was efficient, leaving no unissued titles behind.

"I've done so many sessions I hardly remember one from the other," guitarist Herb Ellis recalls. "But I do remember that one. There was a feeling that we were all part of something very special. There was no time to prepare anything. We just met in the studio. Ella and Louis had the music and lyrics in front of them, and Norman had made some marks on the sheets about who should come in when. They'd just do a tune and we'd go for it. Louis had no trouble, as I remember it, even though he didn't play these songs. We'd go through a chorus once or twice and then do it. Norman, God bless him, let the artists do it their way."

Granz thought he had a winner and wasted no time getting *Ella and Louis* into the market. The cover was as simple and spare as the music inside: a Phil Stern photo of the two stars sitting on chairs in the studio, without a word of copy. They appear utterly without pretense or decoration — Ella in a loose cotton dress, Louis with white socks curled down to his ankles. The album was shipped near the end of September, six weeks after the session, accompanied by full-page ads in *Billboard* and other trade publications and lots of publicity.

Verve's other big release that week was *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings*, perhaps the best LP

of Bing Crosby's career. It all conveniently came together just as MGM was releasing one of its last big musicals, *High Society*, starring both Bing and Louis. Granz had them both, in groundbreaking albums presenting them as they'd never been heard before. More than any other event, these albums marked Verve's arrival into the big time: Ella, Louis, and Bing, all at their peak.

Nat Hentoff sent *Ella and Louis* off with five stars in *Down Beat*, calling it "one of the few albums to have been issued in this era of the LP flood that is sure to endure for decades." Looking back, Granz says that the biggest sellers he ever had were Fitzgerald's Cole Porter recital and comedian Shelley Berman's first album. "The Ella–Louis duet LP was all right," he adds, "but not phenomenally big. But nothing I've ever done was that big."

It was big enough to produce a second album a year later, however, and the *Porgy and Bess* collection in 1959. More important, we now know that Nat Hentoff was right. *Ella and Louis* has endured for decades.

John McDonough
October 1999

John McDonough writes about jazz for Down Beat *and* The Wall Street Journal.

***photograph by* William Claxton**

A Brief History of the Verve Music Group

Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, and Chick Webb in the Twenties. Bing Crosby, Benny Goodman, Art Tatum, Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, Jimmie Lunceford, Roy Eldridge, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Jack Teagarden, and Teddy Wilson in the Thirties. Nat "King" Cole, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Billy Eckstine, Bud Powell, and Machito in the Forties. Oscar Peterson, Johnny Hodges, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Art Blakey, Clifford Brown, Max Roach, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sonny Rollins in the Fifties. Charles Mingus, John Coltrane, Bill Evans, Jimmy Smith, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Wes Montgomery, George Benson, Albert Ayler, and Ornette Coleman in the Sixties.

In each of the first five decades of recorded jazz, these great names began to make enduring contributions on labels that are now part of the Verve Music Group holdings. What's more, many of the artists listed, a virtual who's who of jazz on record, now have significant portions of their careers on VMG labels. Reissues and compilations to come of Armstrong, Basie, Eldridge, Ellington, Fitzgerald, Hawkins, and Holiday, to name a few, will span decades of their work.

The VMG story begins with some holdings of two great early-jazz labels, Brunswick and Vocalion. The first major label in VMG history is Decca, started in the Depression by Jack Kapp and dedicated to all kinds of music, but first and foremost a big-band label.

Two remarkable labels followed that defined the work of great Swing Era small combos: Commodore and Keynote. The former, begun by Milt Gabler, who also worked for Decca, was the first US label dedicated exclusively to jazz; the latter, the work of Harry Lim, was actually begun during the recording ban in the early Forties. Between them, they recorded virtually every major combo player of the era.

Next emerged the labels of the immediate postwar era, Mercury and Verve, which were linked by the presence of Norman Granz, who first worked at Mercury (where he issued some of his early Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts) and then founded Verve in 1956 (and brought back to the studio many Swing Era stars). In the early Fifties, Bob Shad inaugurated an all-jazz subsidiary of Mercury, EmArcy, which specialized in modern combo jazz and vocalists (while Mercury continued to produce more popular vocal records).

New record companies were started in the Sixties to reflect major changes in taste. Impulse, under the forward-thinking Bob Thiele, became the jazz label most associated with the avant garde. Another producer, Creed Taylor, emerged from his stewardship of ABC-Paramount's jazz operations (and Impulse's, before Thiele) to lead Verve in a new direction, giving the label some of its biggest-selling albums.

Other record labels dot this history, among them Argo, Cadet, MGM, Limelight, and Philips. Suffice to say that much of the history of jazz is here. And that history is secure.


photograph by Herman Leonard
MGV-4003 A
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VERVE MASTER EDITION

In the mid-Eighties, at the beginning of the CD era, landmark Verve LPs of the Fifties and Sixties were among the first jazz issues in the new format. For these projects the best analog sources had not necessarily been discovered.

Verve Master Edition reissues those classic records, and other classics not yet on CD, using the best available sources. They are restored carefully to produce optimal audio clarity. Extra material is included where relevant: bonus tracks, alternative takes, singles, incomplete versions, and even studio chatter. And these selections are included at the end of the disc, so as not to interrupt the original-LP sequence.

With original-LP cover art, photography, and liner notes faithfully reproduced, extra photographs, and a new essay, Verve Master Edition launches the next round of superior quality Verve jazz reissues.

Verve Master Edition includes the following titles, and more.

Cannonball Adderley Quintet in Chicago
Louis Armstrong I've Got the World on a String and Louis Under the Stars (2 LPs on 2 CDs)
Louis Armstrong Meets **Oscar Peterson**
Count Basie April in Paris
Clifford Brown With Strings
Clifford Brown and **Max Roach**
Kenny Burrell Guitar Forms
Chick Corea Light as a Feather (2 CDs)
Chick Corea My Spanish Heart
Duke Ellington Soul Call
Duke Ellington and **Johnny Hodges** Side by Side
Bill Evans Conversations With Myself
Bill Evans Further Conversations With Myself
Bill Evans Trio 64
Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Duke Ellington Song Book (3 CDs)
Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Gershwin Song Books (4 CDs)
Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Johnny Mercer Song Book
Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Cole Porter Song Book (2 CDs)
Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Rodgers and Hart Song Book (2 CDs)
Ella Fitzgerald–Count Basie Ella and Basie
Ella Fitzgerald, **Billie Holiday**, and **Carmen McRae** at Newport
Erroll Garner Contrasts
Stan Getz Award Winner
Stan Getz Focus
Stan Getz Mickey One (soundtrack; arr. by Eddie Sauter)
Stan Getz The Steamer
Stan Getz–Charlie Byrd Jazz Samba
Stan Getz–João Gilberto Getz/Gilberto
An Electrifying Evening With the **Dizzy Gillespie** Quintet
Dizzy Gillespie–Sonny Rollins–Sonny Stitt Sonny Side Up
Coleman Hawkins Encounters **Ben Webster**
The Genius of **Coleman Hawkins**
Woody Herman (and the Herd) At Carnegie Hall, 1946 (2 CDs)
Johnny Hodges With **Billy Strayhorn** and the Orchestra
Billie Holiday Songs for Distingué Lovers
Antonio Carlos Jobim The Composer of "Desafinado", Plays
Roland Kirk I Talk With the Spirits
Charles Mingus Pre-Bird
The Modern Jazz Sextet
Wes Montgomery Movin' Wes
Wes Montgomery Tequila
The Complete **Gerry Mulligan** Meets **Ben Webster** Sessions (2 CDs)
Charlie Parker
Charlie Parker Big Band
Charlie Parker–Dizzy Gillespie Bird and Diz
Oscar Peterson Plays the Duke Ellington Song Book (2 LPs on 1 CD)
Oscar Peterson The Sound of the Trio
Oscar Peterson Trio + 1 – With **Clark Terry**
Oscar Peterson Trio Night Train
Oscar Peterson Trio With **Milt Jackson** Very Tall
Sonny Rollins and the Big Brass
Tony Scott Music for Zen Meditation
Jimmy Smith Bashin'
The Cat . . . The Incredible **Jimmy Smith**
Jimmy Smith–Wes Montgomery The Dynamic Duo
Sarah Vaughan
Sarah Vaughan Sings George Gershwin (2 CDs)
Dinah Washington Sings Bessie Smith
Dinah Washington The Swingin' Miss "D"
Dinah Washington What a Diff'rence a Day Makes!
Ben Webster and Associates
Ben Webster Meets **Oscar Peterson**
Lester Young With the **Oscar Peterson Trio**
Lester Young–Roy Eldridge–Harry Edison Laughin' to Keep From Cryin'

ELLA AND LOUIS THE ORIGINAL LINER NOTES

Jazz, unlike a bucket of nails, is full of paradoxes. There is, for example, the iconoclasm of the soloist having to mesh with collective improvisation. There is also, for lack of a better term, the business of jazz singing. Jazz, of course, began a good century ago as a vocal music. Yet it has become increasingly clear with the diminishing of the great blues shouters and the general shifting of the center of the music to an instrumental bias that vocal jazz is, with few exceptions, an extraordinarily difficult form that offers one possible advantage: It's easier to carry a voice around than a bass fiddle. In fact, the one definable tradition of jazz singing is probably blues singing. The rest of jazz singing has for some time been in the scattered, dissimilar hands of people who have persisted without the backrest of tradition. Among male jazz singers — who have not, by and large, had the prowess of female jazz singers — there have been Leo Watson, the remarkable scat singer whose word-streams have formed a series of harsh, cubistic dreams of birds, Chicago, and big bass drums; Jelly Roll Morton, a great jazz singer whose soft, thin, barreling voice still retains on his records an urgent poignancy, and his semi-followers, Clancy Hayes and Turk Murphy; Lips Page; Jack Teagarden, his voice good burlap; Nat "King" Cole, who developed a casual suede approach; and finally, Louis Armstrong. Among the women, there have been, outside of the early blues singers, two, or possibly three, principal figures — Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and Mildred Bailey — and alongside them, as well as stemming from them, such as Anita O'Day and Sarah Vaughan.

In recent years, the ranks of female jazz singers, though swelling daily, have been peopled by little more than handsome, leggy dilutions. But Ella has, for one reason and another, remained the most vigorous and ineffable singer in jazz and popular music. Her style was virtually set by the time she began professionally in the Thirties with Chick Webb. It was a rhythmical, agile, humorous way of singing that depended on a healthy, rather ordinary voice; a lack of useless ornamentation (most young singers today affect styles that are, basically, borrowed ornamentations); a direct and understanding delivery of lyrics (again, most young singers handle lyrics as if they were sucking mothballs); and a musicianship that enabled her to get

away from the melody in a way that any composer would have been proud of had he thought of it originally. It has, nevertheless, become more subtle, more flexible, more polished, and recently has manifested a luminous lyricism that is not apparent so much in its single parts as in the whole. She gives the impression today of the finished artist whose seams no longer show, whose approach is stable but exciting, and whose mind is in balance with the heart.

Louis Armstrong, on the other hand, has retained the insuperable singing style he had worked out by the late Thirties. There is less of the whooping, shoveling quality in his voice, which has, like rough waters, inevitably smoothed down, but the great *singing* foundation is apparent, particularly in the way he approaches ballads. And what great warmth and soul! What his voice has always been is an indication of how jazz singing could go. Louis invariably handles melody like a bear giving a hug; he smothers it in the peculiarities of his voice and enunciation, and out pops a new shape — a kind of counter-melody, dressed, nevertheless, in tweeds and pearls.

Unfortunately, of late, Louis has confined himself almost exclusively to remaking blues of an earlier age and pedestrian popular songs so that each impression was but a fainter and dimmer carbon of the original great talent. This record gives Louis a chance at restoration. The materials are a judicious choice of high-level standards. And instead of his usual, diffident dixieland backing, there are the Oscar Peterson Trio (Ray Brown on bass and Herb Ellis on guitar), plus Buddy Rich, who are properly pulsive and wholly discreet. In such a palmy setting, Armstrong is in simple, unraffish condition, and Ella is in impeccable voice. The record is full of pleasant inventions: Louis, muted, behind Ella; Ella, humming behind Louis's open horn; Ella and Louis in duet and a kind of near-counterpoint; Louis singing the verse of a song with such great feeling; Ella mimicking Louis; and always, the contrast — of the rough and the fairway — of two remarkable voices and talents. A quiet, Sunday-go-to-meeting record, with slow and middle tempos throughout (that, however, never stop swinging), it creates the sort of jazz that is pensive, rich, and rewarding.

REISSUE

Production managed by **Bryan Koniarz**
Research managed by **Ben Young**
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Production and research coordinated by **Tom Greenwood** and **Carlos Kase**
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Art directed by **Hollis King**
Designed by **GrowingStudio, Inc.**
Art production coordinated by **Sherniece Smith**
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Photograph research by **Cynthia Sesso**
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and the staff at Universal Mastering Studios–East

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ELLA AND LOUIS

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The Songs Are:

CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS
(Swift-James) Harms, Inc. ASCAP

ISN'T THIS A LOVELY DAY
(Berlin) Irving Berlin Music Corp. ASCAP

MOONLIGHT IN VERMONT
(Suessdorf-Blackburn) Michael H. Goldsen, Inc. ASCAP

THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME
(George and Ira Gershwin) Gershwin Pub. Corp. ASCAP

UNDER A BLANKET OF BLUE
(Neiburg-Symes-Livingston) Joy Music, Inc. ASCAP

TENDERLY
(Gross-Lawrence) Edwin H. Morris & Co., Inc. ASCAP

A FOGGY DAY
(George and Ira Gershwin) Chappell & Co., Inc. ASCAP

STARS FELL ON ALABAMA
(Parish-Perkins) Mills Music, Inc. ASCAP

CHEEK TO CHEEK
(Berlin) Irving Berlin Music Corp. ASCAP

THE NEARNESS OF YOU
(Carmichael-Washington) Famous Music Corp. ASCAP

APRIL IN PARIS
(Harburg-Duke) Harms, Inc. ASCAP

Cover Photo by Phil Stern
Album Produced by Norman Granz

Printed in U. S. A.

File under: ***Louis Armstrong*** **and** ***Ella Fitzgerald***

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ELLA FITZGERALD AND LOUIS ARMSTRONG

ELLA AND LOUIS

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Recorded August 1956 in Hollywood

Original recordings produced by Norman Granz
Original-LP cover photograph by Phil Stern

Having just done albums devoted to the music of Cole Porter and Fats Waller respectively, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong were both ready for something new when Norman Granz brought them together in the studio in 1956. In the intimate surroundings, they now had at their disposal, for the first time, the entire breadth of the American popular song.

Ella was adding not just a vocal partner, but the man who *invented* jazz singing. And Louis was gaining a musical inamorata, someone he could serenade. Their first album-length collaboration resulted in music that was both sublime and timeless.

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