

Volume II



PS AUDIO

SIMPLER TIMES

SOPHISTICATED LADY QUARTET



YARLUNG RECORDS
BOB ATTIYEH, PRODUCER

Elliot Midwood, executive producer

SIMPLER TIMES

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PS AUDIO

The PS Audio Quartet

Elliot Midwood and Steve Hoffman are two of the titans who have enabled Yarlung Records to succeed. Steve kindly took us under his wing to master our first release and he has generously worked with us ever since.

Steve Hoffman supported our “less is more” concept of minimalist recording techniques and taught us how to handle myriad situations that would have been so much easier to “solve” using multiple microphones and many tracks. Instead, Steve has championed Yarlung’s direct-to-two-track methods and provided important inspiration and direction.

Elliot Midwood has helped us refine our recording techniques, designed microphone preamplification and monitoring equipment for us, and served as executive producer for a number of our most successful analog releases as well as this DSD quartet. We often use Elliot’s studio at Acoustic Image to check test recordings and hone our microphone setups. And we always listen with him before an album goes to the pressing plant. It is fair to say that Yarlung recordings are “born” at Acoustic Image.

Both Steve and Elliot think highly of PS Audio’s DirectStream digital to analog converter. Steve has written about the company extensively. Elliot uses the DirectStream for his digital playback at Acoustic Image and he has sold a number of these beautiful units to his customers.

We are therefore doubly pleased that PS Audio agreed to sponsor Yarlung’s fourth quartet of albums in DSD. Thanks especially to Paul McGowan and Bill Leebens at PS Audio for making this possible.

Critical response to the PS Audio DirectStream DAC has been overflowing. The Absolute Sound gave PS Audio the coveted Golden Ear award and reviewer Vade Forrester wrote:

It's easily the best DAC I've heard in my system, making digitally-recorded music sound better than I've ever heard it.

Marja Vanderloo and Henk Boot, who awarded the PS Audio DAC their Blue Moon Award, enthuse:

In conclusion, the PerfectWave DirectStream DAC is a bit like following Howard Carter, the archeologist who discovered King Tut's tomb. Its ability to uncover hidden beauty is some rare form of sonic archeology....With its great sound quality and versatile usefulness, the DirectStream DAC from PS Audio offers the best way we've yet encountered to convert "digital" music into real music.

Steve Hoffman does not hold anything back when he comments about PS Audio:

The sound is truly better than anything I've ever had here, and I've had the best float in here from time to time.

...the illusion of life is amazing with this set up. It's truly the best in this regard I've heard in my house. The sound is effortless, natural, dynamic, has the best ambiance retrieval I've experienced here....The PS Audio digs up the missing chunks of time and space to complete the illusion of real musicians in a real space.

Congratulations PS Audio! And thank you!

Bob Attiyeh, producer

www.yarlungrecords.com

SIMPLER TIMES

Sophisticated Lady jazz quartet:
JJ Kirkpatrick, trumpet and flugelhorn
Misha Adair Bigos, piano
Gary Wicks, bass
Andrew Boyle, drums

Simpler Times is Yarlung's first album to make its debut in DSD. Before the tape release, before the CD, before vinyl and before all other high resolution digital formats. Sophisticated Lady jazz quartet is also the first jazz group with whom Yarlung has collaborated on a recording, so this is a double debut.

Simpler Times follows Sophisticated Lady's highly acclaimed self-titled debut album, from executive producer John Pruitt:



Sophisticated Lady jazz quartet pays homage to the Great Tradition of American jazz but most of their repertoire is written by members of the quartet. *Simpler Times* celebrates these original tunes, especially those by the great Gary Wicks, our bass player. Unlike the majority of contemporary jazz recordings, which are carefully and surgically perfected in postproduction, this album remains raw and fresh. These tracks are complete takes, "live to tape," without editing. The music on this recording is how Sophisticated Lady plays without the help of digital magic. The quartet rehearsed and performed some of these tracks before our recording but at least half are the first time through; the quartet discussed the tunes and who would take what solo in which order but without rehearsal. I wanted the intensity of raw improvisation. This is possible when superb musicians tackle new material together, listening carefully to each other and playing as a single organism. Some melodies, I played for them on the piano right before our take and the quartet improvised from there. Music cannot get fresher than this.

Yarlung Records did it again. This time it's their first jazz entry that has golden warmth of a Blue Note from its heyday as well as visceral instruments presence of a Contemporary Records. Recorded in Cammilleri concert hall using only a vintage tube stereo microphone, the sound of the CD is creamy like butter while the texture is so rich that you can easily discern which parts of the drum set the player hits and rubs. The big crescendo on 'For Andrew' is mind blowing!
--Mori Shima, *Stereo Sound*, Japan

Yarlung makes recordings in concert halls, not studios. Our albums capture the sound of our musicians playing in real acoustic spaces. One of the leading neuroscientists in the world, Dr. Antonio Damasio, hired Yasuhisa Toyota to build a concert hall for him in the Dornsife Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. The result is the spectacular and intimate Cammilleri Hall where Dr. Damasio generously invited us to make this recording.

When the members of Sophisticated Lady quartet first played in this acoustic marvel their eyes lighted up and excitement built. They responded to the beautiful sound in the hall immediately, and the acoustics enabled Yarlung to record this album with our characteristically minimalist approach. We used one AKG C24 stereo microphone from our friend Jon Fisher at Gearworks Pro Audio, with the addition of one AKG C12 for a small amount of reinforcement for Gary's bass. Elliot Midwood designed our microphone preamplification, and

next page: Gary Wicks



we recorded directly to RMGI 468 tape on our analog recorder with tube circuitry designed for Yarlung by Len Horowitz and to high resolution digital media. Our Steinway technician Robert Koning kept the piano in beautiful shape for our recording.

More jazz records should be like *Sophisticated Lady Quartet*—relaxed yet focused, tradition-based yet modern, elegant yet conveying a sure sense of swing. The recording is so pure that you almost feel as if you're eavesdropping on four musicians who seem completely in their element while performing, in a one-take environment, a set that's evenly split between previously rehearsed arrangements and performances where they had one chance to turn a composition into a memorable piece of music. No splicing or editing here—just a live-in-the-studio recording where the mood, playing and sonics are so solid that jazz lovers will wish that the mostly-classical label Yarlung wandered over to this side of the street more often.

--Jeff Wilson, *The Absolute Sound*

We wish to thank Cammilleri's technical director Nic Monaco, as well as Dr. Damasio's "two right arms," Susan Lynch and Pamela McNeff-Smith. You made our first recording experience at Dornsife such a pleasure. When the musicians first learned how Yarlung makes a recording, relying on the acoustic environment, without editing and without much post production, they understood it intuitively and welcomed the challenge. The quartet knew that Dr. Damasio had generously given us plenty of time in the hall (we spent our first day on set up and balance) and the fabulous acoustics meant they heard each other perfectly. This helped them relax into the recording and we were able to record *Sophisticated Lady* and *Simpler Times* in the same week.

--Bob Attiyeh, producer

JJ Kirkpatrick, trumpet and flugelhorn, was born in Portland, Oregon. JJ began his diverse musical career at 9 when he scored the opening sequence to a 10-minute film he co-directed with his brother. JJ began playing trumpet that same year, studying with Portland legend Thara Memory. Mr. Kirkpatrick has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Tootie Heath, Beyonce, Craig Robinson, Louis CK among others, and works as a performer, composer and producer. Along with Andrew Boyle, Misha Bigos and Gary Wicks, JJ founded Sophisticated Lady jazz quartet.
www.jjkirkpatrickmusic.com



Misha Adair Bigos, piano, grew up in Seattle, Washington. After graduating from Gonzaga University he played piano on cruise ships for two years. Misha just graduated with his Master's Degree from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he studied piano with Alan Pasqua and Sara Gazarek. Rather than holding his master's recital at school, Misha and Sophisticated Lady made their debut performance at Catalina Bar and Grill in Hollywood. For more about Misha please visit www.mishaadair.com

Sophisticated Lady performed this year for The Young Artist Jazz Series at Catalina Bar and Grill, and brought the crowd to their feet. I was so impressed with the group's innovation and talent in both their playing and writing. They bring a modern and creative energy to their original songs as well as standards, while maintaining the integrity of what is at the heart of jazz music. I have no doubt that they will have enormous success.

--Barbara Brighton, producer, Young Artists Jazz Series



Andrew James Boyle, drums, lives in Los Angeles, where he continues to study with his mentor, the legendary drummer Peter Erskine at USC. Andrew also studied with the wonderful Aaron Serfaty in Los Angeles, and before that with Tim Metz in Sacramento. Andrew maintains a busy schedule teaching and performing, locally and overseas. In addition to receiving multiple prestigious awards from USC, Andrew also earned the Outstanding Soloist Award from the Monterey Next Generation Jazz Festival. Andrew was Yarlung's introduction to Sophisticated Lady quartet. Please visit andrewboylemusic.nubook.com



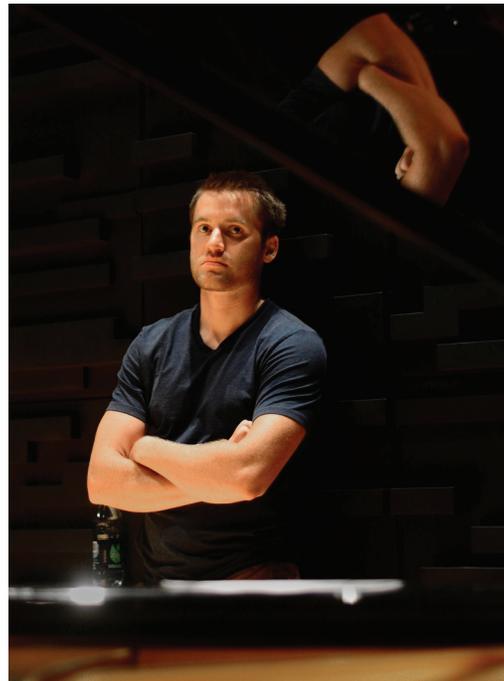
Gary Wicks, bass, a virtuoso on both acoustic and electric bass, played and toured around the world with the Grammy Award winning group The Manhattan Transfer for 5 years. With The Transfer, Gary played in myriad international music festivals and on the group's most recent recording. Originally from Albany, NY, this second generation bassist has been a part of the vibrant music scenes in London, Los Angeles, Albany and Boston, where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Double Bass Performance from the New England Conservatory. Gary taught on faculty at the Silver Lake Conservatory of Music and currently teaches at The Musician's Institute. Gary proudly plays D'Addario Zyex bass strings and endorses Eden Electronics amplification. For Gary's compositions and arrangements, please visit www.garywicks.com, [bassygrove productions](http://bassygroveproductions.com) (ASCAP).



Critical praise for Sophisticated Lady:

This band of young jazz musicians follows in the classy-cool tradition of Shorty Rogers & His Giants, a tasteful swinging late 50s-early 60s outfit led by a principal creator of the West Coast sound. Recorded in Cammilleri Hall in LA, this debut album sounds astoundingly good. Recorded live, it gives one the feeling of having a ringside seat at an intimate jazz club. It opens with a politely swinging rendition of Jerome Kern's "I'm Old Fashioned" that's underscored by drummer Andrew James Boyle's deft brushwork at the intro. Every nuance of JJ Kirkpatrick's bristling trumpet solo here can be readily felt while Boyle's switch to sticks on the ride cymbal is like sparklers being set off in the dark. Boyle's gentle ballad "Gone" is a lyrical highlight while the Ellington-Strayhorn song "Isfahan" is another showcase for Kirkpatrick's bold tones and sly improvisations. Pianist Misha Bigos contributes the swinging "Finale" and delivers a dramatic solo piano piece, "Fields of Kurdistan," while bassist Gary Wicks contributes the darkly beautiful "Night Night" and the somber "Weightless." Kirkpatrick also turns in some bright trumpet work on a faithful rendition of Duke's timeless "Sophisticated Lady." A stellar first outing by a group that shows great promise.

Bill Milkowski



Misha Adair Bigos



Sophisticated Lady Jazz Quartet

Independent LA label Yarlung Records' slogan is "Young. Provocative. Engaging.", and this attitude perfectly fits this talented new ensemble.

I am a product of excellent high school and college jazz education and I believe strongly in fostering jazz through teaching America's "classical music" to future generations. Therefore, I was thrilled to meet recently Mr. Bob Attiyeh and learn about the young men of 'Sophisticated Lady Jazz Quartet', all Masters' of Music graduates of the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles.

Sophisticated Lady's self-titled debut (2014) was recorded live by producer Mr. Attiyeh of Yarlung Records at USC and is a tasty treat to be savored by lovers of the classic jazz combo. The recording itself is so clean and well-mastered that I marveled that it was captured in a concert hall.

Did I mention that *each* of the tracks was also cut in one take a piece? That's right, one take. Knowing this is a strong testament to the talent, passion, and technical prowess of this amazing ensemble, even before one embarks on the satisfying journey delivered by the music itself.

The group's front man is trumpeter J.J. Kirkpatrick (Portland), and already in his budding career, he boasts performances with Wynton Marsalis, Beyoncé, and Louis CK, among several other notable artists. Kirkpatrick's playing brings the best of Terrance Blanchard and early Miles Davis (1949-1954), meaning that his voice is always powerfully sweet without being overly brassy -- "sophisticated", as his group name suggests. On the Abe Meeropol classic, "Strange Fruit", Kirkpatrick undertakes a skilled free-improvisation, much like Coleman Hawkins' bare-bones melodic take on "Body and Soul" so many years ago.

Pianist Misha Adair Bigos (Seattle) delivers gorgeous chord progressions, comping, and solo ideas throughout the album, altering his style -- from percussive to tender -- to fit the musical mood of each piece. Admirers of piano legends such as Bill Evans and Tommy Flanagan will immediately recognize these influences in his work on the album, but also find that he brings a compelling voice all his own that commands attention. On "I'm Old Fashioned", I smiled during his entire solo, happily remembering Evans' 1961 delivery on "Waltz for Debby". Interestingly, in lieu of a Graduate Recital, Mr. Bigos played a professional "gig" at Catalina Bar and Grill in Hollywood - an excellent way to introduce himself to the Southern Californian jazz scene and thereby bid adieu to his post-grad days on the highest and coolest note possible.

'Sophisticated Lady' is expertly supported by bassist Gary Wicks (Albany), who also serves as one of the group's very skilled arrangers, and is a five-year veteran of touring with the critically-acclaimed Manhattan Transfer. Wicks' playing, in the spirit of bass royalty Scott LaFaro, Charles Mingus, and Chuck Israels, is right on the money in allowing the listener to "feel" the bass, instead of "overly hear" it. His bass lines are fresh, original, and together with the gentlemen of his rhythm section, weaves a perfect carpet for soloists to strut upon. By letting his fellow artists shine, he shines as well.

Drummer Andrew James Boyle (Los Angeles) is a regular student of the great Peter Erskine at USC and between performances remains busy as a teacher in his own right. I am reminded a lot of Philly Joe Jones' style in his playing; it is understated but still accented and punchy in the classic "bebop" style. Regardless, Mr Boyle is always in the pocket, deftly partnered with Mr. Wicks' bass, and even in expressing himself behind the drum kit, never imposes a percussive stumbling block to his fellow bandmates' ideas. A great example is on "Ropes of Sand", arguably one of the most complex and passionate pieces on the album. Being a samba, a less-experienced drummer might give in to the temptation to approach it too heavily. However, Boyle allows

everyone to effortlessly ride the wave, breathe freely, join in the dance, and he never loses his personal style in the process. This is the drummer that every jazz musician wants in his or her group: a sensitive artist that listens as well as he plays.

With *Sophisticated Lady*, the name is fitting, as the group functions as a tight unit, respecting each other's voices and allows a deep and elegant conversation to develop throughout the album's twelve classy offerings. Furthermore, the group is not afraid of taking on a challenging classic, such as Gary Wicks' arrangement of Ellington/Strayhorn's "Isfahan"; however, they lighten the vibe to suit their modern, fresh, and delicious style.

In addition to the covers, the gentlemen of the group offer several intelligent and captivating originals. "Ropes of Sand" (a savory Latin treat that reminds me of Horace Silver in his prime), "Finale", and "Fields of Kurdistan" were written by pianist Misha Bigos, with "Ropes" done during a visit to his grandmother. As I mentioned it previously, "Ropes" is truly one of my favorites, as I found myself returning to listen to it several times in a row to discover all of the complex artistic conversation and deep interplay at work between the musicians.

Drummer Andrew Boyle contributed 'Green Eyed Monster' in memory of a personal brush with jealousy, "named Danielle" per the album's liner notes, and also wrote "Gone". Bassist Gary Wicks shows his ample arranging skills on the previously-mentioned "Isfahan" and on "Gone." All of the performances and arrangements are top shelf.

Visit <http://www.yarlungrecords.com/cd27-SophisticatedLady.html> to read additional press quotes about *Sophisticated Lady Jazz Quartet*, BUY the CD, and discover the fresh sounds of Yarlung Records, producer of both jazz and classical music.

Kathryn Ballard Shut (ASCAP)



Music Review: Sophisticated Lady - 'Sophisticated Lady Jazz Quartet'

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

Sophisticated Lady's debut album for Yarlung Records is an elegant stew of tradition-based jazz infused with some modern spice, a tasty dish sure to please the most discerning of connoisseurs. Working through a studio set of original pieces and classics, all recorded in one take, the quartet clearly demonstrates there is life in tradition yet. Innovation doesn't have to be far out, strange, outre. Such innovation can sound "go-o-o-od," very good.

The quartet, which met at USC where they were pursuing master's degrees, consists of pianist Misha Adair Bigos, J.J. Kirkpatrick on trumpet and flugelhorn, Andrew James Boyle on drums, and Gary Wicks on bass. They work together like the proverbial well-oiled machine. This is an ensemble to be reckoned with.

The original material includes two pieces by Boyle, "Gone" and "Green Eyed Monster," a darkly moody gem. Wicks contributes "Night Night," a melodic lullaby of sorts and "Weightless," which the liner notes point out harkens back to the sound of early Miles Davis. Kirkpatrick makes the most of it.

Bigos adds a trio of tunes: "Ropes of Sand," written while visiting his grandmother, it has something of a haunting exotic quality; "Finale" is a dramatic swinger which ironically comes in the middle of the album, and "Fields of Kurdistan" closes the album. It was written in honor of executive producer John Pruitt. "For Andrew" is listed as a quartet free improvisation on a "melody kernel" by Andrew Norman.

The standards begin with a Wicks arrangement of Jerome Kern's "I'm Old Fashioned," the earliest piece played by the ensemble. There is also a Wicks arrangement of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's "Isfahan." They do an inventive free improv on "Strange Fruit," the protest ballad most often associated with Billie Holiday. And, of course, a quartet taking its name from the Ellington classic does not omit "Sophisticated Lady."

Sophisticated Lady has put together a debut album that will be the envy of many a veteran jazz ensemble, and certainly a tonic for anyone with an ear for mainstream jazz. This is an album to be savored.

--Jack Goodstein

I like "Sophisticated Lady." A unique voice. Great improvising. One can hear everything on this recording, all the nuances and textures. I can *really listen* to this music because they have their own classic style. So much jazz is all the same today. "Sophisticated Lady" is refreshing.

--Billy Mitchell

"The group *Sophisticated Lady* has its eyes set on tomorrow's horizon — while their feet are planted in the terra firm of today — with the consummate skills and musical knowledge that have always been part of the jazz lore. They know their stuff and they can play! *Sophisticated Lady* gives me joy, hope, and I recommend them to you."

--Peter Erskine

One of those very cool involving jazz performances that bring you into the music from the very first note. The only thing this recording is missing are the expensive tickets and the sticky floor. It has become a reference of mine for space, front to back and left to right, and natural timbres.

--Robert Levi, Editor at Large, Positive Feedback

Look out Brubeck, *Sophisticated Lady*'s remarkable debut should perhaps be re-titled TAKE ONE. Why? Each tune was captured in one take! The 60+ minute CD also celebrates Yarlung's audiophile venture into JAZZ with a splatter of Chet Baker's seductive, kicked-back Californication daubed with a drizzle of Miles at his mellowest. No matter how busy your day, an evening spin through this one will definitely move your mood .

--David Thomson, RecordCollectorNews.com

The *Sophisticated Lady* Jazz Quartet's debut recording should be of great interest to fans of forward-looking straight ahead jazz. Each of the four musicians is excellent both as soloists and in ensembles, the music that they perform ranges from melodic versions of standards to lyrical originals and freer explorations, and their subtle playing keeps one guessing. This CD is well worth exploring and I certainly recommend it.

- Scott Yanow, author of 11 books including *Jazz On Record 1917-76* and *Jazz On Film*

Kudos to Sophisticated Lady for some of the most intelligent and soulful playing I've heard in a long while. Mr. Wicks is clearly the Stephane Grappelli of the bass. Mr. Boyle's atomic clock accuracy was outshone only by his remarkable sensitivity and nuanced "drumist" vocabulary. Mr. Kirkpatrick's winsome lines and lightning-fast coloratura took us beyond the trumpet and through the gamut of melody-instrument domains. And Mr. Bigos' hands fell lacelike over his ivories with the finesse and speed of traditional Portuguese tating amid a rainbow of colored threads. The ensemble's inspired compositions showcased a raft of fresh voices that we must have more of.

--Peter Rutenberg



In a surprisingly short period of time, the adventurous GRAMMY® Award winning classical music label Yarlung has produced an eclectic catalog of impeccably recorded performances by a roster of adventurous musicians, including many that are well-known and others soon to be. The varied repertoire, with a refreshingly international flavor, covers everything from modern percussion to solo piano and violin to large scale symphonic works with singers.

The minimally miked “purist” recordings produced and engineered by label founder Bob Attiyeh in some of the world’s great concert spaces, are captured simultaneously on analog tape and high resolution digital and released on vinyl, reel-to-reel tape, CD and as high resolution Studio Master downloads.

Yarlung’s production and sonic model is distilled from the recording industry’s glorious past—one that pessimists were certain could never be successfully resurrected—while its forward-thinking business and distribution model points the way towards a healthy future for a “record business” long given up for dead by trendy “futurists.”

For older lovers of recorded classical repertoire, Yarlung’s catalog represents a return to sonic and musical greatness. For younger ones familiar only with dynamically and spatially compressed low resolution recordings, these from Yarlung are like 3D IMAX but without the glasses.

-Michael Fremer
Editor analogplanet.com
Senior contributing editor, *Stereophile*

Once upon a time there was a land of hi-fi. And it was gone all too soon. But thank Heavens for Yarlung Records. In the age of compressed digital downloads, it is refreshing to hear real sound and real music again, reminiscent of RCA Living Stereo in its golden age, or Mercury Records at its height. Yarlung's sound is liquid and transparent, just as if you were sitting in the concert halls with superb acoustics, where these recordings are made. Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Ambassador Hall in Pasadena, and Zipper Hall at The Colburn School, to name a few.

What Mercury did for Howard Hanson and the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra in the fifties, Yarlung Records is now doing for The Colburn Orchestra and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke. You can hear the evidence on the album *If You Love For Beauty*, released in 2012. Who would have thought that a conservatory orchestra (granted the players are young superstars, soloists all), could capture the world's attention like this. I understand that Yarlung does this by using similar techniques to those in the golden age of recordings. Only one stereo microphone for smaller ensembles, and up to four microphones for full orchestras, recording directly to two track analog tape and high resolution digital.

Don't worry, Yarlung's recordings are all on iTunes, Amazon MP3 and so forth, but you can also order 180 Gram virgin vinyl LPs, exquisitely made CDs mastered by mighty Steve Hoffman, and high resolution downloads, all available worldwide through Naxos Global Logistics in Munich. Most exciting for analog tape enthusiasts might be the SonoruS Series of recordings on ¼ inch master tape. I recently reviewed Yarlung's *Martin Chalifour and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Walt Disney Concert Hall*, another album I recommend highly. Yarlung offers us a true feast for the ears, and this reviewer for one, wants more.

-Mori Shima
Stereo Sound, Japan



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Producer and Recording Engineer: Bob Attiyeh
Assistant Producer: Jacob Horowitz

Mastering Engineers: Steve Hoffman & Bob Attiyeh
Microphone preamplification by Elliot Midwood
AKG C24 & C12 tube microphones: Gearworks Pro Audio

Steinway technician: Robert Koning
Cooper Bates photography
Layout: Eron Muckleroy



Breaking the Sound Barrier

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