



# TAL FARLOW




JAZZ MASTERS 41



314 527 365-2

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VERVE JAZZ MASTERS 41 presents a collection of the recordings of Tal Farlow. The enclosed booklet includes biographical material and commentary on the songs selected.

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. AUTUMN LEAVES                               | 1:41  |
| 2. IT'S YOU OR NO ONE                          | 3:26  |
| 3. LITTLE GIRL BLUE                            | 3:23  |
| 4. OUT OF NOWHERE                              | 5:27  |
| 5. EV'RYTHING I'VE GOT                         | 3:29  |
| 6. ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?                          | 10:12 |
| 7. METEOR                                      | 6:37  |
| 8. LORINESQUE                                  | 4:16  |
| 9. THE LOVE NEST                               | 2:43  |
| 10. YESTERDAYS                                 | 5:53  |
| 11. WITH THE WIND AND THE RAIN<br>IN YOUR HAIR | 3:02  |
| 12. I REMEMBER YOU                             | 4:13  |
| 13. MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU                      | 4:25  |
| 14. AUTUMN IN NEW YORK                         | 5:04  |
| 15. STELLA BY STARLIGHT                        | 3:33  |
| 16. CHEROKEE                                   | 4:52  |

Total playing time 72:16



Of all the guitarists to emerge in the first generation after Charlie Christian, Tal Farlow, more than any other, has been able to move beyond the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic vocabulary associated with the early electric guitar master. He was the first jazz guitarist to explore and incorporate the *total* instrument; players as diverse as Jim Hall, John McLaughlin, and Jimmy Raney acknowledge Tal's influence. These tracks, nearly all on CD for the first time, feature the brilliant guitarist in trio, quartet, and sextet formats supported by Ray Brown, Eddie Costa, Chico Hamilton, Red Mitchell, and Oscar Pettiford, among others.


Original recordings produced by **Norman Granz**  
Photographs by **Herman Leonard**



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TAL FARLOW

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# VERVE JAZZ MASTERS

## THE COMPLETE VERVE JAZZ MASTERS

Louis Armstrong	VJM 1	314 519 818-2
Count Basie	VJM 2	314 519 819-2
Chick Corea	VJM 3	314 519 820-2
Duke Ellington	VJM 4	314 516 338-2
Bill Evans	VJM 5	314 519 821-2
Ella Fitzgerald	VJM 6	314 519 822-2
Erroll Garner	VJM 7	314 518 197-2
Stan Getz	VJM 8	314 519 823-2
Astrud Gilberto	VJM 9	314 519 824-2
Dizzy Gillespie	VJM 10	314 516 319-2
Stéphane Grappelli	VJM 11	314 516 758-2
Billie Holiday	VJM 12	314 519 825-2
Antonio Carlos Jobim	VJM 13	314 516 409-2
Wes Montgomery	VJM 14	314 519 826-2
Charlie Parker	VJM 15	314 519 827-2
Oscar Peterson	VJM 16	314 516 320-2
Nina Simone	VJM 17	314 518 198-2
Sarah Vaughan	VJM 18	314 518 199-2
Dinah Washington	VJM 19	314 518 200-2
Introducing the Verve Jazz Masters	VJM 20	314 519 853-2
George Benson	VJM 21	314 521 861-2
Billy Eckstine	VJM 22	314 516 693-2
Gil Evans	VJM 23	314 521 860-2
Ella Fitzgerald-Louis Armstrong	VJM 24	314 521 851-2
Stan Getz-Dizzy Gillespie	VJM 25	314 521 852-2
Lionel Hampton-Oscar Peterson	VJM 26	314 521 853-2
Roland Kirk	VJM 27	314 522 062-2
Charlie Parker Plays Standards	VJM 28	314 521 854-2
Jimmy Smith	VJM 29	314 521 855-2
Lester Young	VJM 30	314 521 859-2
Cannonball Adderley	VJM 31	314 522 651-2
Chet Baker	VJM 32	314 516 939-2
Benny Goodman	VJM 33	844 410-2
Coleman Hawkins	VJM 34	314 521 856-2
Johnny Hodges	VJM 35	314 521 857-2
Gerry Mulligan	VJM 36	314 523 342-2
Oscar Peterson Plays Broadway	VJM 37	314 516 893-2
Django Reinhardt	VJM 38	314 516 931-2
Cal Tjader	VJM 39	314 521 858-2
Dinah Washington Sings Standards	VJM 40	314 522 055-2
Tal Farlow	VJM 41	314 527 365-2
Sarah Vaughan The Jazz Sides	VJM 42	314 526 817-2
Ben Webster	VJM 43	314 526 817-2
Clifford Brown	VJM 44	
Kenny Burrell	VJM 45	
Ella Fitzgerald The Jazz Sides	VJM 46	
Billie Holiday Sings Standards	VJM 47	
Oliver Nelson	VJM 48	
Anita O'Day	VJM 49	
Sonny Stitt	VJM 50	

# TAL FARLOW JAZZ MASTERS 41

1. **Autumn Leaves** (Joseph Kosma–Jacques Prévert) 1:41
2. **It's You or No One** (Jule Styne–Sammy Cahn) 3:26
3. **Little Girl Blue** (Richard Rodgers–Lorenz Hart) 3:23
4. **Out of Nowhere** (John W. Green–Edward Heyman) 5:27
5. **Ev'rything I've Got** (Richard Rodgers–Lorenz Hart) 3:29
6. **Isn't It Romantic?** (Richard Rodgers–Lorenz Hart) 10:12
7. **Meteor** (Talmage Holt "Tal" Farlow) 6:37
8. **Lorinesque** (Tal Farlow) 4:16
9. **The Love Nest** (Louis A. Hirsch–Otto Harbach) 2:43
10. **Yesterdays** (Jerome Kern–Otto Harbach) 5:53
11. **With the Wind and the Rain in Your Hair** (Clara Edwards–Jack Lawrence) 3:06
12. **I Remember You** (Victor Schertzinger–Johnny Mercer) 4:13
13. **Moonlight Becomes You** (James Van Heusen–Johnny Burke) 4:25
14. **Autumn in New York** (Vernon Duke) 5:04
15. **Stella by Starlight** (Victor Young–Ned Washington) 3:33
16. **Cherokee** (Raymond Stanley "Ray" Noble) 4:52

Tal Farlow plays guitar on all tracks, accompanied by:

On tracks 1, 2, and 12:

Track 1: Farlow unaccompanied (g).

Tracks 2 and 12: Claude Williamson (p); Red Mitchell (b); Stan Levey (d).

Recorded January 17, 1955 at Radio Recorders, Hollywood

Original LP issue: *The Interpretations of Tal Farlow* Norgran MGN 1027

On tracks 3, 14, and 16:

Gerald Wiggins (p); Ray Brown (b); Chico Hamilton (d).

Recorded November 15 or 16, 1954 at Radio Recorders, Hollywood

Original LP issue: *The Artistry of Tal Farlow* Norgran MGN 1014

On tracks 4, 8, and 13:

Bob Enevoldsen (tb); Bill Perkins (ts); Bob Gordon (bs);

Monty Budwig (b); Lawrence Marable (d).

Recorded May 4, 1955 at Radio Recorders, Hollywood

Original LP issue: *A Recital by Tal Farlow* Norgran MGN 1030

On tracks 5, 9, and 11:

Barry Galbraith (g); Oscar Pettiford (b); Joe Morello (d).

Recorded June 2, 1954 at Fine Sound, New York City

Tracks 5 and 9 original 10"-LP issue: *The Tal Farlow Album* Norgran MGN 19

Track 11 original LP issue: *The Tal Farlow Album* Norgran MGN 1047

On tracks 6, 7, and 10:

Eddie Costa (p) and Vinnie Burke (b).

Tracks 6 and 10 recorded June 5, 1956 at Fine Sound, New York City

Tracks 6 and 10 original LP issue: *Tal* Norgran MGN 1102

Track 7 recorded May 31, 1956 at Fine Sound, New York City

Track 7 original LP issue: *The Swinging Guitar of Tal Farlow* Verve MGV 8201

On track 15:

Eddie Costa (p); Bill Tackus or Knobby Totah (b); Jimmy Campbell (d).

Recorded February 17 or 18 or March 10, 1958 at WOR Recording Studios, New York City

Original LP issue: *This Is Tal Farlow* Verve MGV 8289

Original recordings produced by **Norman Granz**

Tracks 5, 9, and 11 are marred by a buzz that was on the original tape.

## Compilation

Supervised by **Michael Lang**

Selected and sequenced by **Barry Feldman**

Research by **Ben Young**

Mastered by **Suha Gur** at PolyGram Studios

Notes edited by **Peter Pullman**

Production coordinated by **Aric Lach Morrison**

Art designed and directed by **Sheryl Lutz-Brown**

Layout by **Wendi Traub-Cohen**

Design coordinated by **Nichell Delvaile**

Photographs by **Herman Leonard**

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Executive producer: **Richard Seidel**

### A Brief History of Verve

In 1944 Norman Granz promoted his first concert, a benefit held at the Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles. The live recording, issued in 1946, was a prototype of swinging jazz in concert, known as Jazz at the Philharmonic.

After his initial labels, Clef and Norgran, had been established, Granz inaugurated Verve Records in 1956 — and he brought these earlier efforts under the Verve banner. The Verve catalog grew through the Fifties and Sixties to include most of the major figures in jazz.

Verve, which now incorporates the Mercury Records/EmArcy jazz catalog, is devoted to reissuing its classics on CD while continuing to record major talent producing new jazz classics today.

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# TAL FARLOW

Of all the guitarists to emerge in the first generation after Charlie Christian, Tal Farlow, more than any other, has been able to move beyond the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic vocabulary associated with the early electric guitar master. Tal's incredible speed, long, weaving lines, rhythmic excitement, highly developed harmonic sense, and enormous reach (both physical and musical) have enabled him to create a style that clearly stands apart from the rest.

He was the first jazz guitarist to explore and incorporate the *total* instrument. Players as stylistically diverse as Jim Hall, Steve Howe, Alvin Lee, John McLaughlin, Jimmy Raney, and Attila Zoller have all acknowledged Tal's influence on their guitar playing and, in some cases, on their outlook on life.

Talmage Holt Farlow was born on June 7, 1921 in Greensboro, North Carolina. He was raised in a musical family. His mother played piano and his father played several instruments including guitar, violin, and mandolin. His father gave him a mandolin that was retuned like a ukulele and showed him a few basic chords; he left Tal to figure out the rest. Music was considered a hobby in the family so Tal's first vocation was that of sign painter. (Until a few years ago, he made a good living by painting signs whenever the opportunity arose.) As Tal continued to develop musically, he also picked up his father's interest in electronics and often spent time building radios and other types of equipment. Eventually, after hearing Christian's sound, Tal built an electric guitar by constructing a pickup from an old pair of earphones and a coil of wire.

At age twenty-two and playing professionally, Tal attracted the attention of bandleader Dardanelle Breckenridge. Between 1943 and 1945, Tal toured with Dardanelle up and down the East Coast, playing in such cities as Richmond, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia and eventually landing at the Copa Lounge in New York City. Upon leaving Dardanelle he returned to Philadelphia, splitting his time between painting signs and playing with a clarinetist named Billy Krechmer at a jazz club called Jam Session.

In 1948 Tal, along with pianist Jimmy Lyon and bassist Lenny DeFranco (brother of clarinetist Buddy), left Philadelphia and returned to New York City. Within about six months, the guitarist landed a gig with a popular cocktail pianist, Marshall Grant. It was during an engagement with the Marshall Grant Trio at Billy Reed's Little Club that bandleader Red Norvo first heard Tal. Soon after, the vibraphonist hired him to replace Mundell Lowe. The re-formed Red Norvo Trio, with Red Kelly on bass, headed to California and then to Hawaii for a six-week engagement.

The trio returned to California to play at The Haig, and it was there that Norman Granz first heard Tal and immediately approached him to offer a recording contract. (Of the more than thirty albums in Tal's discography, nearly one third were recorded for Verve between 1952 and 1960.) Although Tal was given a lot of artistic freedom, "Norman liked some things more than others. From me, he liked fast tempos," the guitarist relates.

All of the characteristics of Tal's unique style — the intricate single lines, the complex reharmonizations and chord voicings, the special effects such as harmonics (both single-line and palm), and the retuned A string (for extending the bass range on chord solos) — are found on these tracks.

Of the two trio contexts represented here, the one with Eddie Costa on piano and Vinnie Burke on bass is the more exciting. This trio was fashioned after the groups that Nat "King" Cole and Oscar Peterson had at the time. "When I was in the studio with Eddie and Vinnie, that was the only time I recorded with a group I was also working with. It made those dates go very smoothly. We were really used to each other."

Of the two quartet contexts, the one with Barry Galbraith on rhythm guitar provides more notable arrangements. On the head choruses, Tal often plays a chord-melody harmonization, with the second guitar either doubling the melody an octave lower or playing a counterpoint line against the melody. Tal's inspiration for this type of setup came from a group that Sal Salvador and Lowe had in the early Fifties. As Tal states, "They were working at The Embers. They had arrangements that Mundell wrote, and everything was really well worked out. He took advantage of several different kinds of things like voicings, close harmonies, things like that. It sort of stuck in my mind that it might be a good format to record with."

The sextet selections further display Tal's arranging skills; contrary to popular myth, he does read music well enough to write specific parts for the horns (he wrote all of the arrangements for his sextet albums). Two of Tal's many compositions, **Meteor** and **Lorinesque**, are included in this collection.

"Autumn Leaves", **Little Girl Blue**, and especially **Autumn in New York** illustrate the depth of his chord solo work and the harmonic freedom he uses so effortlessly in reharmonizing these well-worn standards. (For years, his retuned A string on these tracks confounded many guitarists who tried to learn these arrangements.) **Autumn Leaves**, a solo performance, was, Tal says, "recorded during a microphone check at the beginning of the record date. I was fooling around with the tune and they had the tape rolling. It was never intended to be released." Tal's command of blistering solo lines is very much in evidence on **Yesterdays** and **Stella by Starlight**, and this **Cherokee** is considered the fastest version of the song ever recorded by a guitarist (J= 400!). His rendition of **Isn't It Romantic?** provides a glimpse of his prodigious technique in the use of false harmonics. It is one of the most stunning effects ever displayed on electric guitar.

Of all the words used to describe Tal Farlow, the one most often used is **genius**. When I asked him how he felt about the term, he displayed his characteristic grace and humility, then absolutely rejected it. I proposed that his successes were, like those of so many other greats, a result of hard work and really digging it out. His reaction to that assessment was,

*"That seldom ever entered into any particular instance of my picking up the guitar and practicing in any conventional or traditional way. I mean, I would hear something that I liked from Bud Powell or Bird and try to work it out and gradually put it into my little bag of tricks.*

*"I think about Jimmy Raney's attitude toward the guitar, and mine is similar, in that I don't have any great, strong allegiance to the instrument. Jimmy said, 'It happens to be the instrument I can play.' It's less a love for the instrument than it is a love for the music."*

Steve Rochinski  
December 1994

Steve Rochinski is a guitarist, on the faculty at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and the author of *The Jazz Style of Tal Farlow: The Elements of Bebop Guitar* (Hal Leonard, Milwaukee, 1994).

# TAL FARLOW



JAZZ MASTERS 41

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2. It's You or No One
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9. The Love Nest

10. Yesterdays
11. With the Wind and the Rain  
in Your Hair
12. I Remember You
13. Moonlight Becomes You
14. Autumn in New York
15. Stella by Starlight
16. Cherokee

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