



CANADIAN  
BRASS

# *Jazz Roots*

INCLUDES TWO CLASSIC ALBUMS FROM CANADIAN BRASS:  
RAG-MA-TAZZ & UNEXPLORED TERRITORY



## Canadian Brass **JAZZ ROOTS**

In the early 1970's the five classically trained young men in the Canadian Brass radically changed the perception of musical boundaries for performers. By looking beyond the usual narrow definition of classical music, they virtually invented the "classical crossover" concept.

They had all the right training and experience to make this surge forward, since their collective backgrounds included concert bands, orchestras, marching bands, stage bands, choirs, Broadway, dance bands, pit orchestras, commercial studio sessions and solo concerts.

Of course, Canadian Brass had the usual Bach transcriptions, Renaissance dance pieces, and a few modest brass compositions by Ewald, Arnold and Bozza. But from the very beginning, the Brass augmented their programmes with music by Gordon Lightfoot, the Beatles, and Anne Murray.

Luckily for the Brass, they were emerging during the glory days when the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was an essential force in Canadian culture. CBC allowed the Brass to experiment in unexplored musical territory.

First came *Rag-Ma-Tazz* - a ragtime era and ragtime influenced music recording. The first eight ragtime pieces are classic Scott Joplin, the king of ragtime composers. Joplin's music was inherently instrumental, transcribing perfectly for brass quintet and sounding as if Joplin himself had written them for Canadian Brass. On the strength of these performances, Canadian Brass became a frequent guest at The Ragtime Society conventions. At one of these meetings they had the opportunity to compare notes with one of the last great performers from the ragtime era, Eubie Blake.

Composers all over the world were well aware of the American ragtime craze, resulting in a plethora of jazz influenced compositions. A great example is French composer Claude Debussy, who was obviously inspired by this spirited and angular American music. And two Canadian composers added their musical view of the era, writing original music "in the style" for the Brass: film composer Larry Crosley and dean of Canadian composers Eldon Rathburn. Completing this sonic fantasy are two Fillmore early-century compositions featuring the slippery sliding sound of the trombone.

In 1977, *Unexplored Territory* became the first runaway best seller for Canadian Brass. *Stereo Review* featured this recording as its pick of the month, suggesting, "The Canadian Brass enters its golden age." Never before had there been such a successful collaboration between a classical artist with a jazz ensemble. This recording was a result of the unique professional collaboration of the Brass with pianist-composer Don Gillis, a writer who went on to become the music director for Muppets' creator Jim Henson.

Gillis brought his jazz quartet to the recording project, along with other names that have become a who's-who of Canadian artists, including the "First Lady of the Guitar" Liona Boyd playing a Bach prelude as the musical underpinning for "En Sueño".

Each of the compositions has its own importance for this recording, starting with "The Joust". To set the stage, Gillis begins with horn (French horn), arguably the most historically classical instrument of the brass family. He almost immediately follows the horn with a very up-tempo adventure including an electric guitar solo.

"En Sueño" features the incredible talent of Ron Romm, weaving his trumpet melody beautifully over the famous Bach "Prelude in C". Romm created the cadenzas in this work on the spot from the heart.

The original music by Debussy, "First Gymnopedie" ("Gymnopedie for piano No. 1" by Erik Satie) was a wonderful choice to show the beauty of jazz harmonization around a gorgeous melody. Don Gillis himself is heard as featured pianist in this work.

The tuba as jazz soloist in "Amazing Grace" was exceptionally unusual to hear when this recording first hit the streets. Now it is quite common to hear a tuba playing the melody and sometimes even being the central member of jazz ensembles.

"Bourbon Street Medley" shows off the Canadian Brass' remarkably authentic approach to early jazz. This was no accident. Gene Watts had put himself through college playing Dixieland music, while Romm had been an integral member of his family's band. The engineer also got into the act for this piece, 'detuning' the slow opening of "Just a Closer Walk" to make it sound like an old 78 record. The Gillis arrangement of "Just a Closer Walk" for the Canadian Brass has become a virtual theme song for them, as well as being an absolute "must play" work for brass quintets the world over.

The music of J. S. Bach stands at the pinnacle of classical Western art music; to whom better to turn for a crossover opportunity. Gillis chose Bach's "Magnificat" for "The Cathedral", using a multi-track recording process to layer antiphonal brass tracks on top of each other, achieving the sonic effect of a sonorous cathedral. Because of this arrangement the Canadian Brass was chosen to appear in the film *They All Play Bach*, displaying their ability to 'swing' Bach.

Surely George Frederic Handel would have been amused by Don's arrangement of his Fireworks music that ends this recording adventure. Jazz harpsichord with tuba? Flugel horn solo? Jazz piano? Electric bass? And the brass quintet itself!

.....CLASSICAL CROSSOVER WAS BORN!



# Jazz Roots - 1

## RAG - MA - TAZZ

1	Entertainer Rag	Fred MILLS/Scott Joplin	2'08"
2	Pleasant Moments	C DAELLENBACH/Scott Joplin	1'48"
3	The Favourite	C DAELLENBACH/Scott Joplin	2'15"
4	Sycamore Rag	C DAELLENBACH/Scott Joplin	2'21"
5	Euphonic Sounds	C DAELLENBACH/Scott Joplin	2'25"
6	Rosebud Ragtime March	C DAELLENBACH/Scott Joplin	1'45"
7	Figleaf Rag	Lee NORRIS/Scott Joplin	3'18"
8	Easy Winners	Lee NORRIS/Scott Joplin	3'31"
9	Days Before Yesterday	Larry CROSLEY	2'21"
10	Golliwog's Cake Walk	Fred MILLS/Claude Debussy	2'46"
11	Slim Trombone	C DAELLENBACH/TK Fillmore	1'34"
12	Lassus Trombone	C DAELLENBACH/TK Fillmore	1'32"
13	Canadian Brass Rag	Eldon RATHBURN	2'48"

Remastered by Dixon VanWinkle, Produced by Monique Grenier, Engineered by Gilles Vaudeville  
Recorded in St-Pierre Apotre Church, Montreal, Originally recorded 1974 for RCI

# Jazz Roots - 2

## UNEXPLORED TERRITORY

1	The Joust	Don GILLIS	3'07"
2	En Sueño	Don GILLIS	4'51"
	Ron Romm, solo trumpet		
	Liona Boyd, solo classical guitar		
3	First Gymnopedie	Don GILLIS/Erik Satie	4'25"
4	Amazing Grace	Don GILLIS	2'44"
	C Daellenbach, solo tuba		
5 - 7	Bourbon Street Medley	Don GILLIS	
5	Just a Closer Walk With Thee	Don GILLIS	2'45"
6	Tin Roof Blues	Don GILLIS/Leon Rappolo	2'37"
7	Muskrat Ramble	Don GILLIS/Edward Ory	1'18"
8	The Cathedral	Don GILLIS/JS Bach	6'45"
	Adapted from Magnificat in D minor		
9	A Royal Firework	Don GILLIS/GF Handel	2'57"
	Ron Romm, solo trumpet		

Remastered by Dixon VanWinkle, Produced by Paul Mills, Engineered by David Greene  
Recorded at Soundstage, Toronto, Originally recorded in 1977 by CBC



### Canadian Brass

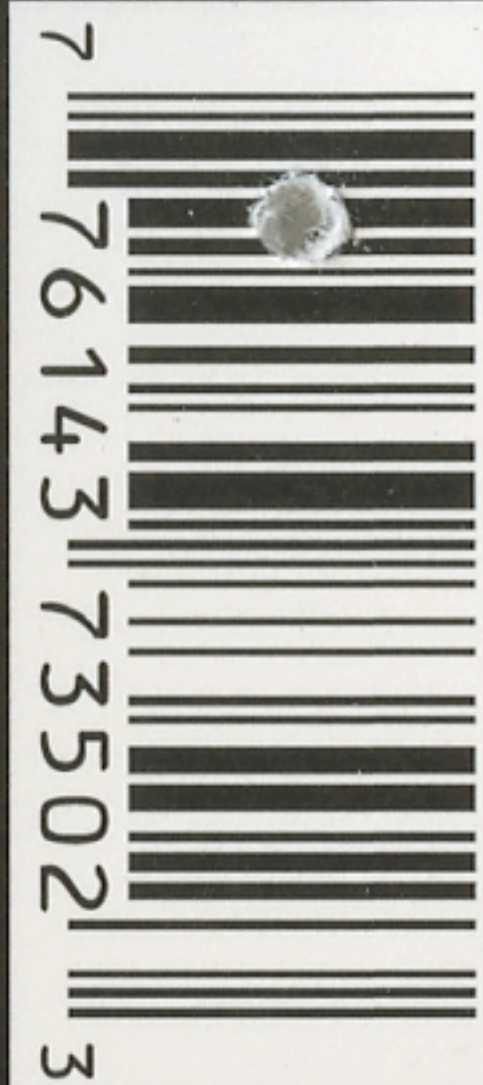
Ronald Romm - trumpet    Frederic Mills - trumpet  
Graeme Page - horn    Eugene Watts - trombone  
Charles Daellenbach - tuba



### Additional Unexplored Territory Artists Joining Canadian Brass

Don Gillis - piano    Brian Russell - guitar  
Tom Szczesniak - bass    Liona Boyd - classical guitar  
Rob Piltch - guitar    Erica Goodman - harp  
Brian (Leonard) Barlow - drums & percussion

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