

JASON MILES ON THE SONGS FROM MILESTOMILES IN THE SPIRIT OF MILES DAVIS

FERRARI

I was in Los Angeles working with Luther Vandross on Lisa Fischer's project. It was the middle of the week and Luther gave me a rare day off so he could concentrate on vocals. I got a call from my wife Kathy that day (she was in New York) who told me Miles Davis had called the house and wanted to talk to me. She told him I was in LA and he happened to be at his house in Malibu. I called and he wanted to know if I could come out and hang. It was amazing that I had the next day off. I drove to his house as it was at the north end of Malibu — a very cool place with a big living room with a view of the Pacific. He had his table laid out with canvases that he was painting. While he painted, I hung out and walked on the beach. He took me in the garage and I saw his Ferrari with license plates MD22. We drove north up the Pacific Coast Highway, barely leaving 3rd gear and going about 90. He eventually slowed down after mentioning that the last thing he needed was a ticket! Afterwards, we worked on some music and a few hours later, I was on my way back to LA.

BUTTER PECAN

I had just gotten Miles an Alesis drum machine and was showing him how to make beats on it. He loved James Brown grooves. Miles said he had to split but asked if I could come back in a couple of days to work more and I said sure. I didn't shut off the drum machine and the pattern kept playing. I came back a couple of days later and, when I walked into his apartment, I noticed the TV, radio, and cassette player were all on. I walked into the little music room and saw that he had never stopped the drum machine from playing because he thought he would lose the program if he did, so it was running for 2 days! Kathy called and I picked up the phone but Miles wanted to talk to her and said, "Kathy, stop at the store for me. Get a loaf of French bread, a dozen eggs, milk, and a pint of Haagen Dazs Butter Pecan." Kathy told him that he shouldn't eat that stuff because of his diabetes, but — in the end — she got it. Miles had a sweet tooth and he loved Butter Pecan ice cream. This song reflects that James Brown groove with the vibe of Haagen Dazs Butter Pecan.

GUERRILLA JAZZ

Miles listened to a lot of different kinds of music that people turned him on to. He told me, "Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. You got to take the chance." *Guerilla Jazz* represents taking a chance. When I wrote the track with Bob Berg I told him "think dangerously" and he totally got it. I have Me'shell Ndegeocello on bass, Karsh Kale on tablas, Dean Brown on guitar, Tom Harrell on trumpet and my friend, the late Bob Berg, on sax to give it the cutting-edge vibe.

KING OF THE BLING

Miles' sense of Cool and fashion was impeccable. When I started making a little money, I stopped by this store on Columbus Avenue called Henry Lehr. The store always had hip clothes. I saw a shirt for \$150 and decided to buy it. Miles was coming to the studio that night (we were working the MUSIC FROM SIESTA) and I wanted to wear the shirt. He felt the material of the shirt and liked it. He said, "Jason, it's all part of the show." I really believe Miles was ahead of his time in fashion and was "King of the Bling."

BIKINI

Miles loved the shape of a woman's body. He used to have these books of different photographs of women — from nudes to bikinis on and off the beach, which he appreciated as art. How much hotter can you get than a beautiful woman in a bikini on the beach in Brazil? I wrote this for Romero Lubambo who is truly a melodic genius and guitar master.

LOVE CODE

This is almost the companion piece to *Bikini*, but with more African influences. The same premise: on the beach, hot and sweaty. Maria De Barros is incredibly sensuous and Nicholas Payton's trumpet layering is amazing.

FLAMENCO SKETCHES

Miles once told me that a European promoter wanted to pay him a lot of money to go to Europe and play the music from KIND OF BLUE. He said he wouldn't do it because he would only play it with John Coltrane, Bill Evans, and Cannonball Adderly, but they were all gone. He was always into moving forward and playing fresh and original music. He appreciated Marcus Miller so much because he created a new phase of music for Miles. I included *Flamenco Sketches* because it's a song on KIND OF BLUE that hardly anyone ever plays. Along with Barry Danielian on trumpet, I asked Keiko Matsui and Marc Antoine to play because I felt that they never get a chance to stretch out of the smooth jazz format. Marc's intro on the song shows you just how much a master of the guitar he really is.

STREET VIBE SUITE VOICES ON THE CORNER

When I heard the album ON THE CORNER, it totally flipped me out. It sounded like a conglomeration that was frenetic, crazy, and dangerous. In 1975, I saw Miles perform at the Bottom Line and, during a 75 minute set, he played the organ for an hour and the trumpet for just a few minutes. From that experience, I wanted to include a song with no horn. I asked Bernie Worrell, one of the funkiest players on the planet, to play organ and clav. He picked up the vibe immediately and the descending line at the end reminds of me of how Miles played the organ. The voices are from all corners of the world.

STREET VIBE

This is the continuation of *Voices On The Corner* with a little New Orleans call-and-response courtesy of Tom Harrell on trumpet. Aaron Heicke on alto sax is another incredibly underrated and overlooked player. I love his playing and he shines on this song.

SUBA

This is some São Paulo street funk. The late Suba was an incredible producer who wrote music around sounds and ambience. His production on Bebel Gilberto's *Tanto Tempo* was so innovative. Tragically, he died in a fire in São Paulo in 1999. I collaborated with DJs Ming + Fs as well as sax player and arranger Karl Denson to create this vibe, imagining what it would be like if Suba produced Miles.

NEW WORLDS

This is the last song on the CD because it's the most experimental. It is a new world out there and we better get used to it. I have Sussan Deyhim (Iranian), Karsh Kale (Indian), Graham Haynes (African-American), and Lorenza Ponce (Mexican American) to bring the point home that we can all collaborate and live together peacefully. I believe when it came to musicians, Miles was just interested in who was the best for the music — color didn't matter.

JASON MILES, an accomplished producer/arranger/keyboardist/synthesizer programmer, was a friend and collaborator of Miles Davis who has left a lasting impact on his life and music.

