

Miles Davis & Edith Piaf

THE MILES DAVIS and Edith Piaf stamps, jointly issued by the U.S. Postal Service and La Poste of France, celebrate a lively two-way musical conversation between nations.

Trumpeter Miles Davis (1926–1991), beloved in many countries, is a particular favorite in France, where he became a Chevalier in the Legion of Honor, roughly equivalent to being knighted. His playing is remembered for its profound depth of feeling.

Kind of Blue, recorded in 1959, contains classic tunes such as “So What,” “Freddie Freeloader,” and “All Blues.” All of the songs were modal jazz compositions, with each musician improvising around a scale instead of harmonies or chord progressions, resulting in a simpler, “thinner” sound than would be typical of other jazz styles such as bebop. *Kind of Blue* is the best-selling jazz album of all time.

Other influential albums by Davis include *Sketches of Spain* (1960), “fusion” masterpieces such as *In a Silent Way* (1969), and later works such as *Tutu* (1986).

Edith Piaf (1915–1963) was one of the few singers in the French popular tradition to become a household name in the United States.



Although Piaf is best known for singing ballads about heartbreak, in America she is more famous for the cheerful song “La Vie en Rose” (“Life in Pink”), about the experience of falling in love and seeing life through rose-colored glasses. Piaf wrote the lyrics to this popular song herself, and it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998. Today, “La Vie en Rose” is still frequently heard on the streets of Paris, Piaf’s hometown.

Piaf was ill and convalescing in 1960 when a young composer played her a new song, “Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien” (“No Regrets”). Though discovered late in her career, “No Regrets” became Piaf’s trademark anthem.



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