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Lou Marini: *Starmaker* (2012)

By [HRAYR ATTARIAN](#), Published: October 13, 2012

Lou Marini's *Starmaker* is a reflection of the veteran reedman's professional life, with eight originals ranging from jazz, to blues and other related genres. Known by the moniker "Blue Lou," Marini has starred in the classic "The Blues Brothers" and has played with such diverse ensembles as [Woody Herman's](#) orchestra, Blood, Sweat and Tears, guitarist/composer [Frank Zappa](#), trumpeter [Lew Soloff](#) and singer/songwriter [James Taylor](#).



Raw emotionality and effervescent zest permeate all of the tunes as Marini alternates blowing all three of his saxophones with soulful vocals. Clocking at over eleven minutes, the R& B of "In My Dreams" contrasts Marini's gritty alto, full of satisfying vibrato, with his smooth voice. Jeff Mironov's blistering guitar enhances the urbane mood. True to his nickname, Marini blows a wailing solo on the gutbucket "Civilization Blues," against the backdrop of a full horn section and heavy percussion.

The funky "Mr. Slinky" sheds the spotlight on Marini's spontaneous creativity. His intricate and meandering soprano takes an exhilarating round-trip ride to the main theme. [Gil Goldstein's](#) complex piano arpeggios enhance the tune's jazz roots, while Robbie Kondor's subtle synthesizer gently hints at more electronic styles.

Fusion sensibilities also abound on the title track. Sparse sax notes and carefully placed percussive beats set a futuristic ambience, as Marini's evocative tenor lets loose a lilting melody that echoes against the mellifluous harmonies of the rhythm section. On "Jerusalem," on the other hand, Marini's piercing and agile tone glides over keyboardist Leon Pendarvis' vaguely bluesy vamps, spicing up the piece with Middle Eastern motives.

The remainder of the album includes the Afro-Cuban "A Slash 'a Mango," featuring George Wadenius' deep-rocking guitar and Francisco Centeno's angular bass, a gospel-esque "Mom and Dad," and a shorter reprise of "Starmaker."

Although short on improvisational vigor and lacking thematic unity in the traditional sense of the word, this rollicking disc is an engaging journey through a versatile musician's career. The

enjoyment of its exuberant spirit grows with each spin.

Track Listing: Starmaker; Mr. Slinky; Civilization Blues; In My Dreams; Slash 'A Mango; Jerusalem; Mom And Dad; Starmaker (reprise).

Personnel: Lou Marini: saxophones, vocals; Danny Gottlieb: drums; Chris Parker: drums; Manolo Bandrena: percussion; Sammy Figueroa: percussion; Bob Cranshaw: bass; Tom Barney: bass; Francisco Centeno: bass; Jeff Mironov: guitar; George Wadenius: guitar; Gil Golstein: piano; Robbie Kondor: synthesizer; Leon Pendarvis: synthesizer; Alan Rubin: trumpet; Birch Johnson: trombone; Lawrence Feldman: alto sax; Tommy McDonnell: background vocals; Birch Johnson: background vocals.

Record Label: [Blujazz Productions](#) | Style: [Straight-ahead/Mainstream](#)

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