

## Excellent Distraction a Pleasant Surprise

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by Brian Hough

Some people don't like oysters (some even pronounce the mollusc *erst*ers), others detest Brussel sprouts. I abhor jazz violinists including Stephane Grapelli (he added the final e later in life), Joe Venuti, and Frans Poptie. Even bluesy guys like Stuff Smith leave me cold, and I won't even mention the screechers in country music.

So what I am doing reviewing a new (to me) jazz/pop violinist by the name of Miles Stiebel? Well, if the truth be known, as it will, I had the CD playing in the car and I was temporarily distracted so missed the first track but caught the second, *Six Degrees Above Normal*.

Against my normal instinct I let it play and then listened to the third track, Kiss Me Again. So, this indie compilation called *Excellent Distraction* had wormed its way into my affections and I kept it in the car for a few weeks.

As I hadn't heard of Miles Stiebel before receiving the album I checked his credentials on his promoter's website.

As usual Cheryl Hughey had what I needed and this is what I learnt: "From Presidential galas to celebrations for foreign dignitaries, contemporary jazz violinist Miles Stiebel is one of the most requested performers in the special events industry.

As a musician and band leader, Miles Stiebel has provided first class music for some of the country's most prestigious events. As a recording artist, Miles' progressive musicality and his unique sound have led to his music being played on over 65 jazz radio stations and on the Weather Channel.

In his second release, Miles has created an *Excellent Distraction* for the sophisticated jazz listener with a collection of originals and covers. From Miles' dynamic violin to the hard driving horn section to the conversations between the violin and saxophone, *Excellent Distraction* is a musically rich tapestry of distinctive quality."

There are 10 tracks on this album and all but one are Stiebel's own compositions, the final track is Stevie Wonder's *Sir Duke*.

Stiebel has surrounded himself with some very competent musos including an excellent brass section and a zillion violins aided by cellos and violas. A string section in a jazz band? As my American friends would exclaim, "Go figure!"

Go to [www.milesstiebel.com](http://www.milesstiebel.com) and listen to the first track, *Midnight Fifty*.

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