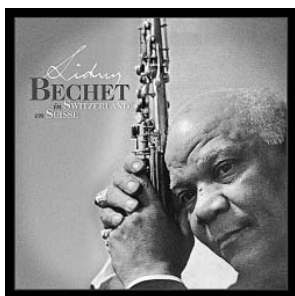


Record Reviews



SIDNEY BECHET IN SWITZERLAND

CD1: (1) *Sweet Georgia Brown*; *Summertime*; *Muskrat Ramble*; *Tin Roof Blues*; *High Society*; announcement of Sidney Bechet's recent birthday; *Weary Blues*; *Blues In The Air*; *Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None Of My Jellyroll*; *Southern Sunset* (excerpt); *Careless Love*; *Wild Cat Blues*; (2) interview; (3) *Oh Didn't He Ramble* (76.10)

CD2: (4) interview; *Honeysuckle Rose*; *St Louis Blues*; (5) introduction; *Royal Garden Blues*; *Summertime*; *Lady Be Good*; *Southern Sunset*; *Muskrat Ramble*; *September Song*; *Blues In The Air*; *St Louis Blues*; (6) interview (58.25)

JJ CONTENT

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CD3: (7) *Royal Garden Blues*; *On The Sunny Side Of The Street*; *St Louis Blues*; (8) *American Rhythm*; *When The Saints*; *St Louis Blues*; *Casey Jones*; *Blues In G*; *Basin Street Blues*; *Royal Garden Blues*; *Love For Sale*; *Society Blues*; extracts from *La Nuit Est Une Sorcière* and interviews (71.16)

CD4: (10) *American Rhythm*; *Royal Garden Blues*; *Down By The Old Mill Stream*; (11) *Saint Louis Blues*; *Pennies From Heaven*; *Les Oignons*; (12) *Muskrat Ramble*; *Summertime*; *Honeysuckle Rose*; *La Complainte Des Infidèles*; *Royal Garden Blues*; *Basin Street Blues* (53.44)

Sidney Bechet(ss) interviewed and accompanied by:

(1) Pierre Braslavsky's Band: Bernard Zacharias (tb); René Franc (cl); Pierre Braslavsky (ss); Eddie Bernard (p); Roger Kara (g); Alf Masselier (b); Michel Pacout (d). Geneva, 23 May 1949.

(2) Radio Geneva, April 1954.

(3) Jelly Roll Morton RCA version.

(4) Henri Chaix (p); Roger Benz (b); Raymond Thévenoz (d). Grand Casino, Geneva, 22 March 1954.

(5) Pierre Braslavsky's Band: as (1) but Christian Viénot (tb) replaces Zacharias and Roger Paraboschi (d) replaces Pacout. Maison Du Peuple, Lausanne, 8 October 1949.

(6) Sidney Bechet and Claude Luter, Radio Lausanne, 27 April 1951.

(7) Henri Chaix (p); Eric Brooke (g); Roger Benz (b); Raymond Thévenoz (d). Kongresshaus, Zurich, 18 January 1955.

(8) Claude Luter's Band: Pierre Dervaux (t); Guy Longnon (vib); Claude Luter (cl); Christian Azzi (p); Roland Bianchini (b); Francois Galépidès(d). Victoria Hall, Geneva, 28 April 1951.

(9) Charles Lewis (p). Lausanne, 21 April 1953.

(10) André Rêweliotty's Band: Roland Hug (t); Jean-Louis Durand (tb); André Rêweliotty (cl); Yannick Singéry (p); Georges d'Halluin (b); Kansas Fields (d). Théâtre de Beaulieu, Lausanne, 1 April 1958.

(11) as (10). Sion, 18 March 1958.

(12) Claude Aubert's Band: Raymond Droz (tb); Wally Fawkes

(cl); Claude Aubert (ss); Henri Chaix (p); René Marthaler (d). Private concert, Geneva, 19 March 1954.

United Music Foundation

★★★★★

So it's not just watches and cuckoo clocks the Swiss are good at. This is the most sumptuous music album that I have ever seen. It is elegantly and robustly bound and then boxed with a 216-page 12" x 12" book on Sidney Bechet that includes 250 photographs and 140 documents, most of them published for the first time. If she were alive this transcendently beautiful thing is the sort of treasure that Cleopatra would have wanted to be buried with her.

The set has been produced to commemorate a UNESCO anniversary and if my conversion from Swiss francs is correct then this would set you back £122.75. The set is too elevated to have a catalogue number.

The sound reclamation from various 78 dubbings and tapes used for radio broadcasts is excellent considering how comparatively primitive radio recordings and their preservation were handled at the time, and one presumes that anything that was aurally damaged was rejected. By and large Bechet sounds at his best here with the gifted French pianist Henri Chaix backing him, although Sidney always swung even when backed with treacle-fingered players. Eddie Bernard was always good and is particularly eloquent on *Lady Be Good*. Luter, Braslavsky and Rêweliotty all had good bands and had all had a chance to become familiar with Sidney's work.

Humphrey Lyttelton told me that after his band had played with Sidney, the American felt an obligation to talk to each man about his performance and give tips to each of them. No doubt such teaching was given to the

continental musicians too. As Wally Fawkes said, Sidney always played with sincerity, no matter in what company. He rises head and shoulder above his companions, and is especially good on numbers like *Careless Love*, *Southern Sunset*, *Blues In The Air* and *Lady Be Good* (why does the audience unanimously go "ooh!" when the latter is announced? Maybe it knew what was coming.).

Claude Albert and Wally Fawkes were close friends, so when Claude was offered a Swiss residency with Sidney he rowed Wally into the band (when Wally let his contemporary influence from George Lewis slip into his playing Sidney turned round on stage and yelled "What do you think this is? A bloody brass band?"). Wally acquits himself well and has a good solo on *Royal Garden*.

One of the problems with some of Sidney's later French concerts was that the audience overwhelmed the occasion. The Swiss are not so exuberant and as a result all this music is good to listen to. But then it's Bechet, so it would be, wouldn't it? The 22 minutes or so of interviews in French are sensibly put at the end of the CDs.

The United Music Foundation is at 20, chemin Rieu, 1208 Geneva, Switzerland.

Steve Voce

TIM BERNE'S SNAKEOIL

YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING ME

Lost In Redding; *Small World In A Small Town*; *Embraceable Me*; *Angles*; *You've Been Watching Me*; *Semi Self-Detached*; *False Impressions* (67.37)

Tim Berne (as); Oscar Noriega (cl, bcl); Matt Mitchell (p, elec); Ryan Ferreira (g); Ches Smith (d, pc, vib, tym). The Clubhouse, Rhinebeck, New York, December 2014.

ECM 472 2298

★★★★★