

FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER

2^xHD
FUSION

TEDDY WILSON

ST. LOUIS
BLUES

STORYVILLE

Whitney Balliett, one of America's most distinguished jazz writers, produced a fine appreciation of Teddy Wilson in one of his *New York Times* columns in 1972 when he wrote: "Teddy Wilson is a marvel and we must not take him for granted". He went on to describe Wilson's "feathery arpeggios, the easy, floating left hand, the impeccable rhythmic sense, the intense clusters of notes that belie the cool mask he wears when he plays".

All the prodigious pianistic artistry of Teddy Wilson is in evidence on this album which features the pianist with two excellent rhythm sections. The 1968 sides, originally released on Storyville SLP 1005, were produced by Timme Rosenkranz. They team Wilson with Denmark's most famous jazz export, Niels Henning Ørsted Pedersen and his very accomplished compatriot, Bjarne Rostvold.

The other six sides were recorded 12 years later, Wilson's backing on this occasion being supplied by Ed Thigpen – an "adopted" Dane of more than ten years' standing – and (Where do they find them?) yet another superb Danish bassist, Jesper Lundgaard, who has worked with Dexter Gordon, Tommy Flanagan, Warne Marsh, Jimmy Raney and Benny Carter, among others.

"It was very easy working with Teddy" says Lundgaard. "He had the whole programme of tunes lined up and we had worked together for a few nights before the record date in the Tivoli Gardens. We completed the session in four or five hours and needed very few retakes".

This is piano trio music at its most relaxed, informal and delightful, with Wilson displaying that dextrous execution,

perfect touch and highly creative use of all the piano's resources – walking left-hand tenths, rippling runs, trills and octaves. One of his most characteristic devices is that tripping, ascending run that leads into the bass solos on "Don't Be That Way", "I've Got A Feeling" and "You're Blasé".

Throughout Wilson gives generous solo space to his colleagues and they make the most of it. NHOP needs no recommendation, but Lundgaard is also extremely impressive. He has good time and intonation and is an inventive and harmonically accurate soloist.

On the opening track, a tune whose chord sequence has been voraciously appropriated by beboppers over the years, Wilson makes only sporadic reference to the original melody (which certainly wears less well than its chord pattern). The right hand has a typical fluent delicacy, set against walking left-hand tenths, two-in-the-bar bass backing and Thigpen's discreet brushes. Wilson builds up rippling arpeggios for two choruses, then Lundgaard moves into four-in-the-bar and the piece really starts to swing. There are good choruses by bass and drums before Wilson returns for a grandstand finish.

Keeping Out of Mischief Now is a nod in the direction of the great Fats Waller, who wrote this jazz standard with Andy Razaf, and it is taken at the perfect tempo, with Wilson's lines always logical and melodic. There are fine solo contributions again from Lundgaard and Thigpen and they also shine on the next track, a flag-waver for the Benny Goodman band which had its premiere at the famous Carnegie Hall concert of 1938. A feature of *Don't*

Be That Way is the descending phrase in the second bar which has rather difficult intervals. Even the normally immaculate Wilson gets it slightly wrong, but it is of little consequence – Wilson's own spontaneous composing is of such a consistently high order.

I'll Remember April is a much-loved jazz standard and particularly notable on this treatment is Wilson's flair for making delightful phrase and then chasing it through the changes.

One of the most famous of all jazz compositions, W.C. Handy's *St. Louis Blues* written in 1914. There is nothing dated, however about some of the changes Wilson uses – particularly those in the 9th and 10th bars where he goes down from G minor in half steps and reaches the D7 via and E flat 7 with flattened fifth.

In the G major segment of the tune Wilson achieves a lively boogie effect which is underpinned by Lundgaard's eight-to-the-bar. Then comes a good change in dynamics as Wilson plays spare single note lines against solid walking bass. He also sets up real "orchestral" riffs and, after an excellent bass solo, builds to a storming finish.

Somebody Loves Me is a track from the 1980 session, a song George Gershwin wrote with Buddy de Sylva and Ballard MacDonald for George White's *Scandals* of 1924. Wilson sets a brisk pace and gets committed support all the way from Lundgaard and Thigpen.

The six tracks from the earlier session are all relatively short by the standards of some of today's jazz musicians, but Wilson has the precious gift of all great communicators – that of being able to take very little time to say a

great deal. With the exception of the rather banal *When You're Smiling*, which is unremarkable enough to present something of a challenge as a vehicle for improvisation, all the selections are superior popular songs written between 1929 and 1937.

If *I Had You* is taken at a pleasingly leisurely tempo and Fats Waller's under-exploited *I've Got A Feeling* gets into a good groove, kicked along by the crisp stick-work of Rostvold and the "interior sprung" notes of NHOP. *Prelude to a Kiss* is one of the most beautiful songs in the Ellington repertoire and it is beautifully played by the trio.

You're Blasé, a British song written by Bruce Sievier and Ord Hamilton in 1932, is a rather sophisticated number with four-bar bridge, and it has a fine solo by Orsted-Pedersen. NHOP also provides particularly outstanding support for the final number, *Easy Living*, a superlative Leo Robin/Ralph Rainger ballad which Wilson plays pretty straight, showing a clear respect for the melody.

The playing of Teddy Wilson on this album totally endorses the evaluation once made by writer Otis Ferguson when he said that Wilson's improvisations are "so clear and lasting, so eternally unpredictable yet easy and right, that they rise above the common accepted habits of the medium and the time".

Mike Hennessey

BIOGRAPHY OF



TEDDY WILSON

Teddy Wilson is universally regarded as one of the supreme keyboard masters of the swing era. He refined the stride piano tradition established by James P. Johnson and Fats Waller and introduced qualities of elegance, delicacy and finesse that were to earn him wide-spread acclaim and a great number of imitators. Among the major piano stylists who came under his influence in the thirties were Billy Kyle, Jess Stacy, Joe Bushkin, Hank Jones, Billy Taylor and Mel Powell.

Born Theodore Wilson in Austin, Texas on November 24th, 1912, he studied piano and violin and majored in music theory at Talladega College. At 17 he started working with local bands in the Detroit area and in 1930 he moved to Toledo to join Milton Senior's band.

The early thirties found Wilson in Chicago where he gained valuable experience with the bands of Louis Armstrong, Erskine Tate and Jimmie Noone. Arriving in New York in 1933, he joined Benny Carter's Chocolate

Dandies and recorded some sides for John Hammond. Then, after a short spell with Willie Bryant's Band, Wilson teamed up in July 1935 with Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa in the famous Goodman Trio – a group that pioneered racial integrated jazz and became a major force in the swing era.

In the late thirties Wilson, once described by Benny Goodman as "the greatest musician in dance music today", did posterity the inestimable favour of recording a large number of sides for Brunswick and Vocalion with the incomparable Billie Holliday and a band of Basie alumni who included Buck Clayton, Lester Young, Freddie Green and Jo Jones. Those recordings represent the cream of Lady Day's recorded work.

Wilson remained with Goodman until the spring of 1939 and then formed his own excellent – but unhappily short-lived – band which included Ben Webster, Doc Cheatham, Al Casey and J.C. Heard. The band played such New York venues as the Famous Door on 52nd Street and the Golden Gate Ballroom, but broke up in June 1940.

For the first half of the forties Wilson led various small combos, appearing in and around New York, and he devoted an increasing amount of time to teaching, arranging and broadcasting. Between 1949 and 1952 he had a staff post with the WNEW radio station in New York.

In the sixties, Wilson continued to front small groups, to teach and to work in radio and television; he also made numerous trips to Europe for festival appearances, concert

dates and recordings. In 1962 he visited the Soviet Union with his old boss, Benny Goodman. In the seventies he made a number of trips to Japan where he was received with great enthusiasm and was much in demand for record dates.

Leonard Feather has described Teddy Wilson as succeeding Earl Hines in being the most imitated pianist in jazz; and Joachim Berendt has assessed Wilson's small combo recordings as "some of the best and most representative of the swing era".

Mike Hennessey

TEDDY WILSON

ST. LOUIS BLUES

(a) Teddy Wilson – piano
Jesper Lundgard – bass
Ed Thigpen – drums
Recorded June 15th, 1980 in Studio 39, Copenhagen
Engineer: Hans Nielsen
Producer: Karl Emil Knudsen

(b) Teddy Wilson – piano
Niels Henning Ørsted Pedersen – bass
Bjarne Rostvold – drums
Recorded December 14th, 1968 in Metronome Studio,
Copenhagen
Engineer: Birger Ulstad
Producer: Timme Rosenkrantz

2xHD Mastering: René Laflamme
2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry
Album cover and booklet concept and graphics: André Perry
Additional graphics: Sylvie Labelle

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| 1 | HOW HIGH THE MOON
Lewis | 4:00 |
| 2 | KEEPING OUT OF MISCHIEF NOW (a)
Walter | 4:25 |
| 3 | DON'T BE THAT WAY (a)
Sampson | 4:40 |
| 4 | SOMEBODY LOVES ME (a)
Gershwin | 3:35 |
| 5 | ST. LOUIS BLUES (a)
Handy | 5:28 |
| 6 | I'LL REMEMBER APRIL (a)
Raye – De Paul – Johnston | 5:02 |
| 7 | IF I HAD YOU (b)
J. Campbell – Connelly – Shapiro | 2:47 |
| 8 | I'VE GOT A FEELING (b)
Fats Waller & Harry Link | 2:55 |
| 9 | PRELUDE TO A KISS (b)
Duke Ellington | 2:55 |
| 10 | YOU'RE BLAZE (b)
Hamilton & Sievir | 2:42 |
| 11 | WHEN YOU'RE SMILING
Mark Fischer | 3:33 |
| 12 | EASY LIVING
Ralph Rainger | 2:46 |



THE 2xHD FUSION MASTERING SYSTEM



In the constant evolution of its proprietary mastering process, 2xHD has progressed to a new phase called 2xHD FUSION, integrating the finest analog, with state-of-the-art digital technology.

The mastering chain consists of a selection of high-end vacuum tube equipment. For the recordings on this album, the original ¼" 15 ips CCIR master tapes were played on a Nagra-T tape recorder, modified with high-end tube playback electronics, wired from the playback head directly to a Telefunken EF806 tube, using OCC silver cable. The Nagra T, with its four direct drive motors, two pinch rollers and a tape tension head, has one of the best transports ever made. A custom-built carbon fiber head block and a head damping electronic system permit 2xHD FUSION to obtain a better resolution and 3D imaging.

The resulting signal is then transformed into high resolution formats by recording it in DSD11.2kHz using a Merging Technologies' Horus A to D converter. All analog and digital cables that are used are state of the art. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by a super capacitor power supply, using a new technology that lowers the digital noise found in the lowest level of the spectrum. A vacuum tube NAGRA HDdac (DSD) is used as a reference digital playback converter in order to A and B with the original analog master tape, permitting the fusion of the warmth of analog with the refinement of digital.

2xHD was created by producer/studio owner André Perry and audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme.

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