

Artie Shaw - The Best Of (1977)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 27 April 2012 17:07 - Last Updated Tuesday, 22 July 2014 13:34

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Side 1 01-Frenesi 02-Star Dust 03-Moonglow 04-Oh, Lady Be Good 05-All The Things You Are, Are Mine 06-Temptation Side 2 07-Begin The Beguine 08-Serenade To A Savage 09-Indian Love Call 10-Traffic Jam 11-Nightmare 12-Dancing In The Dark

Personnel includes: Artie Shaw (clarinet); Tony Pastor (vocals, tenor saxophone); Billie Holiday, Helen Forrest (vocals); Les Robinson, Hank Freeman, Neely Plumb (alto saxophone); George Auld, Herbie Steward (tenor saxophone); Chuck Gentry (baritone saxophone); Chuck Peterson, John Best, Claude Bowen, Bernie Privin, Harry Geller, Roy Eldridge, Billy Butterfield, Hot Lips Page, Bernie Glow, George Wendt, Johnny Cathcat (trumpet); Ray Conniff, George Arus, Ted Vesely, Harry Rodgers (trombone); Les Burness, Bob Kitsis, Dodo Marmarosa, Johnny Guarnieri (piano); Al Avola, Barney Kessel, Dave Barbour, Al Hendickson (guitar); Sid Weiss, Morris Rayman (bass); Buddy Rich, Cliff Leeman, Dave Tough, Lou Fromm, Nick Fatool (drums).

This RCA Victor compilation features some of Shaw's finest work spanning the years 1938-1945. As such, it's an interesting document in the history of World War II America. All 18 tracks are meticulously annotated, and Loren Schoenberg's biographical essay is a gem -- well-written, insightful, and free of banality and cliché. As for the music, it's classic swing, with performances by Billie Holiday, Buddy Rich, Roy Eldridge, and many more. The sound is top-notch by reissue standards. Shaw's masterful clarinet is a powerful presence, but there's also the writing and arranging to consider: Gershwin's "Summertime," Thomas Grisselle's "Nocturne," Shaw's "Concerto for Clarinet," and Eddie Sauter's "The Maid With the Flaccid Air" take some pretty innovative turns, balancing out more pop-oriented fare like "Begin the Beguine" and "Deep Purple." (The latter would become a theme song of sorts for Marie Osmond some 35 years later.) The inclusion of three barnstorming radio broadcasts from 1939, "Everything Is Jumpin'," "My Blue Heaven," and "Diga Diga Doo," make the package all the more valuable. For a concise yet thorough introduction to Shaw's intelligent brand of swing, one couldn't ask for better. --David R. Adler, Rovi

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