

Chet Baker - Chet Baker Sings (1956/1998)

Written by bluesever
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A1 That Old Feeling 3:01 A2 It's Always You 3:32 A3 Like Someone In Love 2:23 A4 My Ideal 4:23 A5 I've Never Been In Love Before 4:26 A6 My Buddy 3:17 B1 But Not For Me 3:01 B2 Time After Time 2:43 B3 I Get Along Without You Very Well 2:56 B4 My Funny Valentine 2:18 B5 There Will Never Be Another You 2:57 B6 The Thrill Is Gone 2:49 B7 I Fall In Love Too Easily 3:18 B8 Look For The Silver Lining 2:38 Chet Baker - Trumpet, Vocals James E. Bond - Bass Russ Freeman - Celeste, Piano Peter Littman - Drums Larance Marable - Drums Bob Neal - Drums Carson Smith - Bass

As Gerald Heard's liner notes point out, it's difficult to decide whether Chet Baker was a trumpet player who sang or a singer who played trumpet. When the 24-year-old California-based trumpeter started his vocal career in 1954, his singing was revolutionary; as delicate and clear as his trumpet playing, with a similarly bright and vibrato-free tone, Baker simply didn't sound like any previous jazz singer. His first vocal session, recorded in February 1954 and covering tracks seven through 14 of this disc, is so innocent-sounding it's like cub reporter Jimmy Olsen had started a new career as a jazz singer. The album's first six tracks, recorded in July 1956, are even more milk and cookies, thanks in no small part to syrupy material like Frank Loesser's "I've Never Been in Love Before" and Donaldson/Kahn's drippy "My Buddy." Choices from the earlier session like "My Funny Valentine" -- arguably the definitive version of this oft-recorded song -- and "There Will Never Be Another You" work much, much better. The spacious musical setting, a simple trumpet and piano-bass-drums rhythm section, is perfect for Baker's low-key style. Despite the few faults of song selection, Chet Baker Sings is a classic of West Coast cool jazz. --- Stewart Mason, Rovi

Recorded with pianist Russ Freeman's ensemble in 1954 and 1956, this is the archetypal Baker

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release, and the first one to get if you're testing the waters. Baker sings standards (including "My Funny Valentine," of course) as if stepping out of an androgynous dream, although it would take another 20 years of hard living for his voice to take on otherworldly qualities. Relaxed West Coast swing such as this can't be duplicated today. In its sweetly melancholic post-war foreboding, this is a Mike Davis book set to music. "Sings" should be on the required listening list for any history class covering the city of L.A. ---D. Strauss, amazon.com

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