

Lester Young – Le Dernier Message - Jazz In Paris (1959)

Written by bluesever

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Jazz in Paris - Lester Young - Le dernier message de Lester Young *Tracklist:* 01. *I didn't know what time it was* 02. *Oh Lady, be good !* 03. *Almost like being in love* 04. *Three little words* 05. *I cover the water front* 06. *I can't get started* 07. *(Back home again in) Indiana* 08. *Pennies from heaven* 09. *New D.B. blues* 10. *Lullaby of Birdland* 11. *There will never* 12. *Tea for two*

Personnel: Lester Young (tenor saxophone); Jimmy Gourley (guitar); René Urtreger (piano); Jamil Nasser (double bass); Kenny Clarke (drums).

Issued here on the French label, Gitanes Jazz Productions, this excellent CD was recorded in Paris on March 4, 1959 and is a reissue/repackaging of Verve's Jazz in Paris series. Le dernier Message de Lester Young presents a total of 12 tracks, mostly well-known standards that had been part of Young's repertoire for years, plus one tune written by Young (New D.B. Blues).

The rhythm section making up this quintet is truly exemplary: Rene Urtreger on piano, Jimmy Gourley on guitar, Jamil Nasser on bass, and the American drummer living in Paris, Kenny Clarke.

Clarke ensures that the tempo never becomes plodding or too laid-back and injects some nice changes in the rhythmical dynamics, especially in the two more up-tempo tunes, Indiana and Tea For Two. Urtreger provides constant sensitive and restrained comping behind Young and on *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* gives Young a short but enticing introduction. Jimmy Gourley's guitar adds both tonal and rhythmic richness and unexpected moments of brilliance in his solo on *Almost Like Being In Love* and what amounts to a duet between piano and guitar on *Oh Lady, Be Good!*.

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And as for this "last message from Lester Young," we are captivated by the Prez's economical phrasing, for he eschews a note-for-note fidelity to the written score and instead hints at the melody through suggestive paraphrases, periods of silence, and unexpected chord changes. This Rollins-like treatment of these rather shop-worn songs breathes new life into them and seems to encourage his sidemen to weave similar elliptical passages as they play behind him or solo. A good example of this way of playing is Lullaby Of Birdland, not one of my favorite tunes, but here given a memorable fresh treatment. ---karlojazz, amazon.com

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