

Buddy Rich Big Band – Wham! (1977-1978)

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- 01) *Time Out*
- 02) *Willowcrest*
- 03) *Ya Gotta Try*
- 04) *Tales Of Rhoda Rat*
- 05) *Time Check*
- 06) *Cape Verdean Blues*
- 07) *Bugle Call Rag*
- 08) *So What*
- 09) *A Little Train*
- 10) *Channel One Suite*

Buddy Rich - Drums, Interviewee David Boyle - Trombone Clint Charmin - Trombone Ed Eby - Trombone Alan Gauvin - Flute, Producer, Sax (Alto), Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) Dale Kirkland - Trombone Ross Konikoff - Trumpet Steve Marcus - Sax (Tenor) Jon Marshall - Trumpet Turk Mauro - Sax (Baritone) Bob Mintzer - Arranger, Flute, Sax (Tenor) Dean Pratt - Trumpet Jim Pritchard - Sax (Baritone) Joe Rodriguez - Trumpet Dave Stahl - Trumpet Rick Stepton - Trombone Tom Warrington - Bass Chuck Wilson - Flute, Sax (Alto), Sax (Soprano)

The Buddy Rich Big Band. A lot's been said and written about Rich. A stormy person who was all extremes, he would laugh at your joke one moment, and tell you he'd kill you another. He was loved by some, disliked by many, and even hated by a few. But no matter what kind of person he was, there are two incontrovertible facts about Buddy Rich: He held some kind of a band together for nearly 50 years -- usually a big band. The second one was, he was truly one of the most bad-assed drummers jazz ever produced. Only Kenny Clarke, J.C. Heard, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, and Max Roach were in the same league -- or he in theirs depending on your point of view. This curious album was assembled from tapes made by saxophonist Alan Gauvin while with the Rich band from 1977 to 1978. Most of the tracks were recorded in Detroit, a couple in Long Island, and one in, of all places, Dexter, Michigan. If Joel Dorn (who runs the Label M operation) and Alan Gauvin were looking to showcase a band at its strengths, then

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that's what they did here. While it is true that the quality of these recordings is not exactly state of the art, they are far from bad. They give a certain authenticity to these certainly edited proceedings, by presenting the actual music exactly as it was recorded -- and that music is steamin'. Rich was never one for subtlety, and there is nothing subtle about the arrangements on these tracks, even the slower ones such as Miles Davis' "So What." But that's just the way the man ran a band. There are a few personnel differences in these bands because Rich had a revolving-door band, but two of the constants are Bob Mintzer -- who composed the wonderful "Tales of Rhoda Rat" here -- and co-producer Alan Gauvin. The charts were written by everybody from Mintzer to Bill Holman to Don Menza and Tom Boras. But really, none of the documentation here means a damned thing: The music itself -- from Horace Silver's "Cape Verdean Blues" to Bill Reddie's "Channel One Suite" -- is played one way: without a flaw, full of piss and vinegar, and physical -- in your face. This is big-band music that will remain contemporary no matter when it is heard because Rich was timeless in his approach to music and life. This set, even with its sonic limitations, is as good as any Rich recording on the market, and better than any of the live ones. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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