

FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER



BENNY CARTER QUARTET

SUMMER SERENADE



STORYVILLE

BENNY CARTER

Jazz is an international music and Benny Carter is one of its leading statesmen. Born in a district of New York known as Hell's Kitchen on August 8, 1907 he has proved conclusively that talent, determination and hard work can be combined to achieve the highest eminences. In Carter's case it has led to total instrumental control, a mastery of the arranger's craft, the will to form and lead successful orchestras and the ability to compose music for every occasion.

Although he has played trumpet, trombone, clarinet, tenor and piano it is as an alto saxophonist that Benny has achieved his enviable reputation as an instrumentalist. He has acted as an inspiration to hundreds of younger men, all of whom have been fascinated by the seemingly effortless way in which that flawless tone is produced. The broad, sweeping phrases of his improvisations have the structural stability of compositions in their own right and who can forget Benny's solo on the Norman Granz produced *Funky Blues* when he came on after Charlie Parker

and Johnny Hodges with what sounded like a two-chorus summing up of the history of jazz.

After several successful years both writing for and playing with the bands of Charlie Johnson, Horace and Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman, McKinney's

Cotton Pickers etc. Benny left the United States for the first time in the summer of 1935. He was on his way to Paris where he was to join the band of saxist Willie Lewis; the following year he moved to London to take up an appointment as staff arranger for Henry Hall's orchestra then, in 1937,

he worked on the Continent again, this time touring Holland and Scandinavia. He managed to make records in nearly every country he visited and the local musicians welcomed him with open arms. In August 1936, he made four titles in Copenhagen with the band of saxist Kai Ewans, one of those four titles being his own tune *When Lights are Low* on which he sang the lyric contributed by Spencer Williams. Almost 44 years later to the day he was



in Copenhagen again to make the enclosed LP and perhaps as an affectionate nod in the direction of that first visit, he recorded a new (non-vocal) version of *When Lights are Low*.

Into those intervening forty-four years Benny had packed a wealth of travel and a wide variety of work. He had toured extensively with Jazz at the Philharmonic (including the troupe's first visit to Japan), led a very musicianly wartime band out in California which included youngsters such as Miles Davis, Max Roach, Jay Jay Johnson, Dexter Gordon and Lucky Thompson, written extensively for television and films (he even appeared in a few, including a memorable sequence in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro") and generally was near the centre of important musical events.

A gentle man, he is loath to say anything but good about a musician. When interviewed for the BBC by Charles Fox he admitted that perhaps those pre-war European rhythm sections with which he worked were not quite the same as the units he had fronted in New York. "They were different but then, how many Sid Catletts were there at that time?" he asked. But in 1980 it was an entirely new proposition for visiting Americans. The overall standard of jazz playing in Europe had attained new heights thanks in no small part to the presence of expatriate Americans such as Kenny Drew and Ed Thigpen.

The Copenhagen session was a relaxed and highly successful date with Benny, as always, in brilliant form. Throughout the course of the album he plays alto, an instrument which has grown closer and closer to his heart over the years. (When he was in Europe first with Willie Lewis he seemed to have a preference for the trumpet; needless to say he produces an instantly recognisable sound on both horns.) The opening *Indiana*, at medium-fast tempo, turns out to be an ideal introduction to the quartet for everyone is heard solo. An unusual tone color is apparent in the theme statements where Kenny Drew restricts himself to playing only the lead – in phrases of the melody. *Almost like Being in Love* has a copy-book theme statement from Benny as he plays with a broad tone over Thigpen's tasteful brushes. The song obviously inspired Benny for his phrases are superbly melodic, a good contrast with the piano choruses where Kenny Drew adds a deep shade of blue to the proceedings. *Summer Serenade*, the first of the three Carter originals, opens with the spine-chilling sound of just alto and piano before bass and drums move in to provide a subdued bossa-nova rhythm. The tune is

quite lovely, which is possibly why Carter restricts himself to a careful exposition of the theme, leaving Kenny Drew to do the tuneful extemporisation. Co-producer Richard Boone used to play trombone and sing with Count Basie ("a man of few words" was the way the Count used to introduce him.) The amusing *All That Jazz*, which bears a resemblance to *Jada*, has Richard singing Al Stillman's words to Benny's tune before he treats us to some scat singing. Kenny Drew, swept along by humor of the occasion, makes a passing reference to The Entertainer!

Benny wrote *Blue Star* for a 1953 Norgran record date, used it again on his "Further Definitions" album for Impulse in 1961, included it in his "The King" LP for Pablo in 1976 and dug out the parts for the Copenhagen gathering. It was certainly an inspired choice with a fine feeling of spontaneity (you may hear Benny calling instructions to the band during the piano solo). Carter's beautiful, singing tone moves gracefully through the glissandos, then with matchless elegance, steps into the second chorus where the improvisation begins. *When Lights are Low* has served jazzmen well for many years (even if Miles Davis did manage to "forget" the correct middle-eight when he recorded it, simply transposing the main phrase up a fourth in its place). This version is crisp and precise with Benny clipping his phrases off in the theme statement and Kenny Drew again introducing a blues feeling in his solo choruses. The final *Taking a Chance on Love* makes an ideal closer for this is a healthy, swinging performance in the very highest Benny Carter tradition and again there are contributions from all three rhythm men who served Benny so well throughout this excellent and memorable Sunday date.

Alun Morgan

BIOGRAPHY

Bennett Lester Carter (August 8, 1907 – July 12, 2003) American jazz alto saxophonist, clarinetist, trumpeter, composer, arranger, and bandleader was a major figure in jazz from the 1930s to the 1990s, and was recognized as such by other jazz musicians who called him King. In 1958, he performed with Billie Holiday at the legendary Monterey Jazz Festival. The National Endowment for the Arts honored Benny Carter with its highest honor in jazz, the NEA Jazz Masters Award for 1986. He was awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1987, winner of the Grammy Award in 1994 for his solo "Prelude to a Kiss", and also the same year, received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 2000 awarded the National Endowment for the Arts, National Medal of Arts, presented by President Bill Clinton.

In 2016 the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History made Carter the focus of its Jazz Appreciation Month celebration, and featured him on the 2016 JAM poster from the National Museum of American History.

Personnel

Benny Carter (alto saxophone), Kenny Drew (piano), Jesper Lundgard (bass), Ed Thigpen (drums) and Richard Boone (vocal on All That Jazz)

Recorded August 17th, 1980 – Copenhagen, Denmark

Recording Engineer: Hans Nielsen

Producers: Karl Emil Knudsen and Richard Boone

2xHD Mastering: René Laflamme

2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry

Album cover design: André Perry

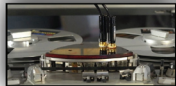
BENNY CARTER QUARTET

SUMMER SERENADE

INDIANA (Hanley)	5:10
ALMOST LIKE BEING IN LOVE (Loewe)	7:26
SUMMER SERENADE (Carter)	4:18
ALL THAT JAZZ (Stillman, Carter)	5:07
BLUE STAR (Carter)	8:07
WHEN LIGHTS ARE LOW (Carter)	6:04
TAKING A CHANCE ON LOVE (Duke)	8:24



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 1/4" 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.

www.2xHD.com
Pure Emotion