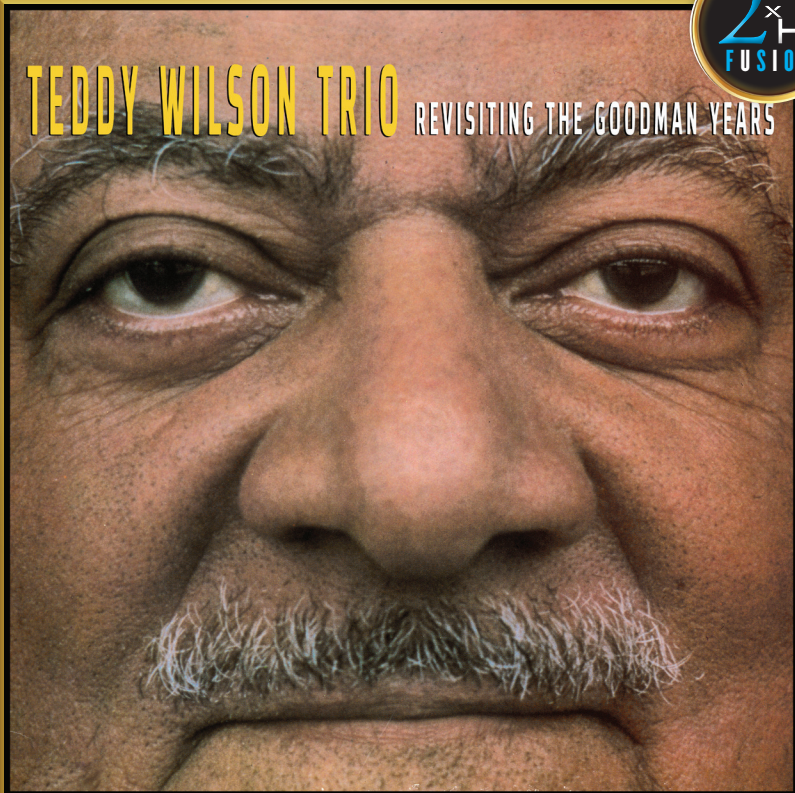


FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER



TEDDY WILSON TRIO

REVISITING THE GOODMAN YEARS



STORYVILLE



TEDDY WILSON

Revisiting the Goodman Years

As the jazz century turns, the huge achievements of masters like Teddy Wilson focus up ever more sharply. In Wilson's case they encompass fifty years in the life of a pianist whose originality has surmounted every trend, both as soloist and as a catalyst for all the greatest musicians of this era. In professions other than music such undiminishing skill and flare would be rewarded with a rich pension, long-service medals, and probably a statue in the main street. But jazz – to its shame – has no mechanism for such honors. So Teddy Wilson continues unobtrusively to prove his royal place in the hierarchy of great jazz pianists by simply going on playing the piano in a way that can never be duplicated and by producing records like this one.

Ever since – and perhaps before – Benny Goodman summarized Wilson's art with the words 'whatever elegance means, Teddy Wilson is it!' Jazz text books have typecast his individuality with words like 'urbane' 'polished', 'poised' or 'impeccable'. Such images though pertinent and well-meant threaten injustice. To begin with, they tell less than half the story, as the rollicking Fats Waller inspired stride piano that introduced 'What a sight, what

a moon, what a girl' (with Billie Holliday) told everyone forty three years ago. But the real danger is that words like 'elegant' are dangerously near the cocktail cabinet for a jazz pianist and while Wilson is elegant, he is never bland. His subtlety never neglects intensity. And his sense of poise never interferes with his sound of surprise. Teddy Wilson – like very few others in jazz – is most of all, a pure musician. 'That's something I've been trying to do all my life – to make my music absolutely pure' - Bobby Hackett once observed. He, Wilson and a very few select others have consistently produced fine jazz by taking the musical route through any playing situation. Wilson had mastered aesthetic perfection by the time he joined Benny Goodman (at age 23 in 1935) and has allowed pure music to speak for him ever since. This may be the reason why you won't find this nonpareil jazzman feted with fulsome biographies or introducing talk shows, as some other jazz pianists do. Teddy Wilson bears the proud title of jazz musician pure and simple and that is why the music in this record is of such high standard.

Wilson is such a consummate jazz voice that it's hard to imagine him being influenced musically by anyone else. Today he aligns himself with Billy Kyle – 'Billy and I stumbled on the identical format of playing piano' he observed recently, 'but formative influences included – Fats and Earl on recordings and then Tatum live – because Tatum hadn't

begun to record when I came along'. All three influences had molded into Teddy Wilson by the time he came to Mildred Bailey's house to jam with Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa in 1935. The rest of Wilson's 1930s glories – Goodman, the springtime recordings with Billie Holiday – are too well known for repetition, but it's interesting to note two less well-acknowledged firsts. One, that Teddy Wilson was probably the first jazzman ever to score then – contemporary jazz solos in five part harmony (for Speed Webb's band around 1929) thus predating Supersax or the New York Jazz Repertory Company by forty years at least. Two, that he was the first jazzman to fully exploit the newly flourishing jukebox industry of the early 1930s, via John Hammond. But it was the partnerships with Holiday and especially Goodman that brought him the kind of exposure – in concerts, radio, recording and films like 'Make mine music' and 'Hollywood Hotel' – that otherwise might not have been so easy to come by. His own short-lived big band (the most musical and cleanest of bands outside Ellington's, according to Billie Strayhorn) failed to follow up the commercial viability of an ex-Benny Goodman star, preferring as it did to concentrate on simply-presented good music. And it was with the declaration of the Swing era that Teddy Wilson widened his horizons to encompass teaching at the Juilliard and Metropolitan Music Schools as well as continuing a successful solo career.

Much of that career – which is on record as well – seems to have been spent helping to support, inspire and promote others. “Very rarely has a leader of a group been willing to feature so strongly a sideman or vocalist as Teddy did Billie Holiday”, says John Hammond of those sunlit thirties days. Later, of course, Wilson remained a strong right arm to Goodman, and went on through a philanthropic career to classic recordings in the 1950s. Like Pres and Teddy which rekindled, late in life, the fires of Lester Young. It is fortunate for us that he hasn’t neglected to record himself as well as a soloist in later years with albums like ‘Striding after Fats’, with ‘Billie in Mind’ and this one, a perfect summation of pianistic art at its purest which sets out to re-portray the Benny Goodman small group repertoire and years, it is home territory in which Wilson, naturally enough, finds a glowing element. He’s partnered by two masters: bassist Jesper Lundgård whose exploration of well-known sequences are consistently inventive (listen to the athletic skating solo that leaps from ‘Sheik of Araby’ and the dapper Ed Thigpen whose credentials for trio jazz – from Oscar Peterson to Jimmy Rowles – are impeccable. Thus supported Wilson moves through his Benny Goodman program with graceful ease, revealing all the much-loved facets of his art: grace with humor, intensity with beauty to spare. There’s that easily relaxed left hand half-stride

that, like all the best walks, never rushes into a run, the perfectly controlled right hand adventures scattering eighth notes like pearls; the sound that, whatever the piano, wherever the studio, emerges unmistakably as Teddy Wilson. And every aspect of jazz improvisation he covers as if by a textbook; the gradual controlled tension-raising of *Rose Room*, the one chorus economy of *More than you know* which – like all the best jazz performances – says what it has to say and stops contentedly. There’s the unexpected moments of special delight, the thrumming intense introduction to *Sheik of Araby*, occasionally quotations (*Pretty Baby* wanders through *Moonglow*) and that magical four bar bars introducing Sweet Lorraine that all of a sudden whisks you back to 1935 and Billie Holiday in all her glory. And sometimes at the end of that final delayed crowning chord – like a magician in front of a rapt audience before he triumphantly conjures his ace from the pack. Magic indeed, of the purest and finest kind, which would surely have the King of Swing himself, happily nodding approval.

Digby Fairweather

TEDDY WILSON

Revisiting the Goodman Years

Teddy Wilson – piano
Jesper Lundgård – bass
Ed Thigpen – drums

Recorded June 15th, 1980 Copenhagen
Engineer: Hans Nielsen
Producer: Karl Emil Knudsen
2xHD Mastering: René Laflamme
2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry
Album cover and booklet concept
and graphics: André Perry
Additional graphics: Sylvie Labelle

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1 | S'WONDERFUL
George Gershwin | 3:06 |
| 2 | SOMEDAY SWEETHEART
John Spikes, Reb Spikes | 3:05 |
| 3 | SHEIK OF ARABY
Eddie Snyder | 3:21 |
| 4 | MORE THAN YOU KNOW
Vincent Youmans | 3:03 |
| 5 | NOBODY'S SWEETHEART
Bill Meyers, Elmer Schoebel, Gus Kahn | 3:43 |
| 6 | ROSE ROOM
Leo Hickman | 4:13 |
| 7 | CHINA BOY
Dick Winfree | 4:20 |
| 8 | SWEET SUE
Victor Young – Will Harris | 2:26 |
| 9 | MOONGLOW
Will Hudson – Eddie Delange | 2:47 |
| 10 | EXACTLY LIKE YOU
Jimmy McHugh – Dorothy Fields | 3:20 |
| 11 | SWEET LORRAINE
Cliff Burwell – Mitchell Parish | 3:41 |
| 12 | WHISPERING
Schonberger | 3:32 |



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 ¼" 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.

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