

IT'S STACY AGAIN

PERSONNEL AND ITEMS: Jess Stacy (piano), George van Eps (guitar), Morty Corb (bass), and Nick Fatool (drums), on "Oh Baby" and "If I Could Be With You." Jess Stacy (piano) and Nick Fatool (drums) on "Boo-Boos for Bob" and "Ec-Stacy."

Stacy is a white musician who has completely captured the style and idiom of the great school of pianists headed by James P. Johnson and Earl Hines. The Stacy style has the sharp attack, the crisp rhythm, the love of the melodic line. Each solo is a masterpiece with its tremolo at the end of each phrase and the typical Harlem-style rolling left hand, the excitement building in a logical and well-balanced manner, and the fascinating flares of melodic invention and tasteful chord inversions.

Stacy is mainly remembered for his work with the Benny Goodman band, with which he worked from 1935 to 1939, and over the last 20 years Jess has matured and mellowed into one of the great men of jazz. His playing has that calm and precision that marks the musician who thoroughly understands his medium.

Why then, you ask, is not more heard of this musician? Mainly because Jess doesn't give a hang what the crowd wants—he plays what he likes and if he satisfies two people out of 75 he is quite happy. At 53, Stacy's music career belongs more to the jazz historian rather than the newer jazz fan, and as he says himself, "After all, I go back to the era of Al Capone."

I have always been a Stacy fan, and I find great pleasure and satisfaction in listening to his piano. Here is a musician who plays first to entertain himself and secondly to entertain others. The advantages of this approach to music are many, but perhaps the most obvious is this: Stacy must satisfy himself that what he plays pleases him first and foremost. He therefore plays from the heart and really means what he says. A pity that this cannot be said of musicians generally.

The quartet presents two standards of jazz while Jess solos on two blues. "Boo" is a blues in medium tempo complete with several key changes, and "Ec-Stacy" is a slow blues which has become a standard in the Stacy repertoire. Incidentally, this new programme is made up from the same Brunswick disc that provided the last Stacy session which I reviewed last May 10. Those of you who are Stacy fans will know what to expect and you will not be disappointed: for those of you who do not know of Stacy's work, I strongly recommend that you reserve the 11 or 12 minutes' playing time and make a special point of tuning in. You will find the effort rewarding, for Stacy is one of the most tasteful and delightful pianists in the jazz field.

First Playing: Station 2YA, October 28, 10.30 p.m.

Session at Midnight with the All Stars (Part 2)

Personnel: Edison, Sherock (trumpets), Carter (trumpet, alto), McEachern (trombone, alto), Smith (alto), Johnson, Russin (tenors), Bivona (clar-

inet), Rowles (piano), Hendrickson (guitar), Rubin (bass), Cottler (drums).

Items: "Blue Lou," "Stomp'n' at the Savoy," "Session at Midnight."

This is a "must" for swing fans, for this session recorded late one night in December, 1955, harks back to the swing era. The head arrangements provide loose take-off points for some fine solos, particularly from Bivona, McEachern, Rowles, Sherock, Edison and Carter. Listen especially for the alternating four bars trumpet work of Edison, Sherock and Carter (in that order) after the opening statement of theme in "Blue Lou." This is a follow-up to the programme reviewed last May 10 and all that I said then applies equally to the three items which go to make up this session.

First Playing: Station 2YA, October 28, 10.42 p.m.

The Herbie Fields Sextet

Personnel: Fields (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, clarinet), Black (piano), de Nardo (guitar), Mazza (bass), Root (drums), Norman (trombone).

Items: "A' Train," "Satin Doll," "Undecided," "Moulin Rouge," "Bernie's Tune," "Dark Horse," "You Go To My Head," "Memories of You," "How High the Moon," "Mambo Inn," "Green Eyes," "Flyin' Home," "Soprano Boogie."

Leonard Feather has this to say of Fields, and as it gives us a clue to what to expect in this hour programme, I quote: "Fields won the Esquire New Star Award on alto in 1945. Originally a jazz musician, he later specialised in commercialism."

Recorded at Kitty's Show Bar in Columbus, Ohio, this disc suffers badly from poor engineering. The piano is almost out of audible range and the guitarist does not stand out at all clearly in his solos. Fields is a versatile musician of the Barrett and Ventura school, but is not a force to be reckoned with on the jazz scene. His vibrato is overdone ("Rouge"), he uses numerous tasteless and inept quotes throughout his arrangements, he employs annoying gimmicks ("Memories"), and despite his versatility, his ideas lack imagination. He blows an extremely hard, harsh and thin clarinet reed ("Memories"), which tends to unpleasantness, and on the saxophones he reminds me of Illinois Jacquet in the mid-forties when squeaky and screeching reeds brought the juveniles to their feet yelling with delight.

In places the sextet sounds uninspired and very world weary, and in "Flyin' Home" even plays like a Rock 'n' Roll group. No, I shall not be sorry if I do not hear Herbie Fields in this vein again, for he is no credit to jazz; in fact, heading a group such as this he is doing a disservice to it.

First Playing: Station 2YD, October 31, 9.0 p.m.

Repeat Playings

Station	Date	Programme	"Listener" Review
1YA:	Oct. 21	Woody Herman	Sept. 27
	" 31	Dixie Gillespie	Oct. 11
	" 31	Trombone Panorama	Oct. 11
1YD:	" 21	Harry Edison	Sept. 27
	" 21	Pete Jolly	Sept. 27
3YA:	" 21	Brubeck at Wilshire	Sept. 13
	" 28	Almerico's All Stars	Aug. 16
	" 28	Erroll Garner	Sept. 27
4YA:	" 30	Johnny Guarneri	Aug. 30

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