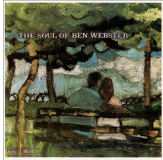


Ben Webster - The Soul of Ben Webster (1995)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 20 December 2012 17:45 -

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CD1 01 *Fajista* 3:40 02 *Chelsea Bridge* 3:38 03 *Charlotte's Piccolo* 15:29 04 *Coal Train* 4:07 05 *When I Fall In Love* 4:57 06 *Ev's Mad* 4:21 07 *Ash* 8:21 08 *Blues For The Blues* 4:49 09 *Blues For Piney Brown* 7:37 10 *Moonlight In Vermont* 3:56 11 *Taste On The Place* 7:02 12 *Blues For The Blues (Previously Unissued)* 5:52 CD2
01 *Gee, Baby, Ain't I Good To You?* 3:31 02 *Blues For Bill Basie* 9:30 03 *You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me* 6:50 04 *I Didn't Know About You* 3:31 05 *Reelin' And Rockin'* 9:37 06 *Gone With The Wind* 3:17 07 *Honey Hill* 4:02 08 *Blues-a-Penty* 3:21 09 *Don't Take Your Love From Me* 3:40 10 *Saturday Afternoon Blues* 5:58 11 *Satin Doll* 5:01 12 *Cool Your Motor* 3:36 13 *Reelin' And Rockin' (Previously Unissued)* 9:40 14 *Don't Take Your Love From Me (Previously Unissued)* 4:58

Personnel: Ben Webster (tenor saxophone); Johnny Hodges (alto saxophone); Harold Ashby (tenor saxophone); Harry "Sweets" Edison, Art Farmer, Roy Eldridge (trumpet); Vic Dickenson (trombone); Oscar Peterson, Jimmy Jones, Billy Strayhorn (piano); Mundell Lowe, Barney Kessel, Herb Ellis (guitar); Milt Hinton, Ray Brown, Jimmy Woode (bass); Dave Bailey, Alvin Stoller, Sam Woodyard (drums).

Although tenor saxophonist Ben Webster gets top billing, this two-CD set actually contains an LP apiece by Webster, trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison, and altoist Johnny Hodges. Webster is on all of the recordings, but really only stars on the first date, a septet outing with trumpeter Art Farmer and fellow tenor Harold Ashby. The great tenor is at his best on a beautiful version of "Chelsea Bridge" and "When I Fall in Love." The Edison session is a sextet outing with Webster, the Oscar Peterson Trio, and drummer Alvin Stoller mixing blues and swing standards; Edison's usually muted trumpet is quite effective. The final set puts the focus on altoist Hodges, who sounds beautiful on "Don't Take Your Love from Me," although the many blues performances also give solo space to trumpeter Roy Eldridge (literally explosive on "Honey Hill") and trombonist Vic Dickenson. A total of three previously unissued performances have been added to the program, and all three of these sessions had been long out of print; they add to the legacy of Norman Granz's Verve label, showing that many top swing all-stars were actually at their prime in the 1950s. Recommended. ---Scott Yanow, Rovi

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This two-CD set is slightly misnamed. Not only does it feature the tenor stylings of the great Ben Webster, it also contains a full album by trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison called GEE, BABY AIN'T I GOOD TO YOU and altoist Johnny Hodges' full LP, BLUES A-PLENTY. Webster appears on Edison's album but does not play on all of Hodges'. In fact, he sits out on five of the eleven Hodges tracks.

The music itself is all quite memorable, featuring notables such as trumpeters Art Farmer and Roy Eldridge, pianists Oscar Peterson and Billy Strayhorn, and trombonist Vic Dickenson. Indeed, this album boasts many legends, and with this caliber of musicianship, you can't go wrong. Highlights include Webster's composition, "Ev's Mad" Sweets Edison's "Blues for Bill Basie," and Hodges' "Honey Hill." On the latter, Roy Eldridge reaches into the stratosphere, playing high notes with great precision. --- vervemusicgroup.com

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