

The Ultimate Jazz Archive CD20 – The Rhythmakers [1932] [2005]



01. Bugle Call Rag 02. Oh! Peter 03. Margie 04. Spider Crawl 05. Who's Sorry Now 06. Take It Slow And Easy 07. Bold-Headed Mama 08. I Would Do Anything For You 09. Mean Old Bed Bug Blues 10. Yellow Dog blues 11. Yes Suh! 12. Who Stole The Lock 13. Shine On Your Shoes 14. It's Gonn Be You 15. Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn

As the Great Depression really began to set in, 1932 was not a good year for the recording industry and was even worse for jazz musicians struggling to earn a living. Fortunately for both players and posterity, on four separate occasions, an exceptionally fine lineup was assembled to make a series of hot, swinging jazz records under the joint leadership of guitarist Jack Bland (born 1899) and vocalist Billy Banks (1908-1967).

Most reissues have gathered these recordings together under the banner of the Rhythmakers, although some titles originally appeared as by Billy Banks & His Orchestra or Billy Banks & His Chicago Rhythm Kings. EPM's Rhythmakers 1932 edition of 1997 includes nearly every alternate take, which is more thorough than the "master-takes-only" collection presented by Classics in 1998. Retrieval outdid even EPM in 2007 by unearthing two extra takes of "Shine on Your Shoes" for a total of 26 tracks. While any of these editions will do, EPM's Rhythmakers 1932 contains all of the essential material along with enough extra versions to satisfy and thrill any lover of old-fashioned jazz. What makes these recordings so rewarding is the participation of some of the best jazz musicians operating out of Chicago and New York at that time. These include trumpeter Henry Red Allen, trombonist Tommy Dorsey, reedmen Pee Wee Russell, Jimmy Lord and Happy Caldwell; pianists Joe Sullivan, Fats Waller and Frank Froeba; banjoist Eddie Condon, guitarist Jack Bland, bassists Al Morgan and Pops Foster, and drummers Gene Krupa and Zutty Singleton. Vocals are by Red Allen, Fats Waller, Billy Banks, and Chick Bullock. Banks also recorded with the Mills Blue Rhythm Band in 1932; he joined Noble Sissle's International Orchestra in 1934, relocated to Europe during the '50s, subsequently traveled through Asia and Australia, and lived his final decade in Tokyo. Like Bullock, Banks sang in a bright tenor voice that would have been suitable for oratorio or operetta, but if he ever "crossed

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over," the recordings have yet to come to light. ---arwulf arwulf, Rovi

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