

Buck Clayton - How Hi The Fi (1954)

Written by bluesever

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A1 How Hi The Fi 13:40 A2 Blue Moon 14:00 B1 Sentimental Journey 14:45 B2 Moten Swing 13:30 Alto Saxophone – Lem Davis Baritone Saxophone – Charlie Fowlkes (tracks: B1, B2) Bass – Walter Page Clarinet – Woody Herman (tracks: A1, A2) Drums – Jo Jones Guitar – Freddy Green (tracks: B1, B2), Steve Jordan (tracks: A1, A2) Piano – Jimmy Jones (tracks: A1, A2), Sir Charles Thompson (tracks: B1, B2) Tenor Saxophone – Al Cohn (tracks: A1, A2), Julian Dash Trombone – Benny Powell (tracks: B1, B2), Trummy Young (tracks: A1, A2), Urbie Green Trumpet – Buck Clayton, Joe Newman (tracks: B1, B2), Joe Thomas (tracks: A1, A2)

A cornerstone of jazz culture has been the jam sessions. Many groups (regardless of stature) that appeared in the same town concurrently gathered for late-night, jam festivities. Amid the aura of improvisation and camaraderie, legends (and future legends) refined their craft as soloists and ensemble performers. Unfortunately, the results of these collaborations were rarely preserved on vinyl (adding to the legend). But in the early fifties, Columbia Records captured all-star glory with its Buck Clayton jam catalog. Now, Pure Pleasure Records has re-mastered *How Hi The Fi* to 180-gram vinyl.

Following the success of Buck's first jam session, *Huckle-Buck And Robbins' Nest* (Columbia CL 548), producer George Avakian (with the help of John Hammond) assembled a veteran cadre of musicians. Many of these players were part of Count Basie's band and the group dynamics are present. A last-minute surprise addition (on two sides) was clarinetist Woody Herman, in town on his way to Europe. *How High The Fi* was recorded in two dates, with an emphasis on spontaneity.

Pure Pleasure Records has brought this mono fidelity session to life on 180-gram vinyl. The original, meticulous engineering sounds flawless. The instrumentation (both individual and

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combined) is pristine in clarity and mixing. All of the horns and reeds sound great, without a trace of shrillness. The reproduction of the original gatefold is top-notch (including the plug for Columbia needles). [Interesting how the audiophile vinyl reissues often look so much like the original LP release (if someone has it) that even the name of the repressing label doesn't appear anywhere, even on the vinyl's center label...Ed.] How Hi The Fi is jazz at its best! ---audaud.com

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