

Django Reinhardt – Guitar Genius (1993)

Written by bluesever

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1 Ise A-Muggin' 3:08 2 I Can't Give You Anything But Love Baby 3:27 3 Oriental Shuffle 2:41 4 After You've Gone 3:07 5 Are You In the Mood? 2:50 6 Limehouse Blues 2:50 7 Nagasaki 2:51 8 Swing Guitars 2:28 9 Georgia On My Mind Django Reinhardt 3:15 10 Shine Django Reinhardt 2:56 11 In the Still of the Night 3:04 12 Sweet Chorus 2:45 13 Exactly Like You 2:30 14 Charleston 2:52 15 You're Driving Me Crazy 2:54 16 Tears Django Reinhardt 2:38 17 Solitude 3:10 18 Hot Lips 3:05 19 Ain't Misbehavin' 2:55 20 Rose Room 2:46

Guitar Genius would seem like a good title for most any Django Reinhardt collection. Unfortunately, all Reinhardt recordings don't hold the same value, and this collection draws together several pieces of lesser value. Cuts like "I Got Rhythm" bury the Gypsy guitarist in a rowdy Dixieland band, obscuring whatever qualities he might have added to the session. "It Had to Be You" is equally noisy, and although it may qualify as a fine bit of swing jazz, reveals little more than a chugging guitar in the background, reportedly played by Reinhardt. Curiously, these pieces sit beside excellent fare, like spunky versions of "Lady Be Good" and "In a Sentimental Mood," capturing Reinhardt in Hot Club-like settings. Another problem with this collection is that there are no liner notes, so when, where, and with whom each of these recordings were made remains a mystery to the listener. Despite the collection's drawbacks, the listener, in a number of instances, still has a chance to hear the master guitarist at his best. There's a fine, extended version of Reinhardt's own "Nuages," and a pair of Reinhardt/Stephane Grappelli-penned tunes, "Swing Guitars" and "Sweet Chorus." The mixed bag of Guitar Genius could only be justified by a bargain price, but an unfamiliar Reinhardt listener would nonetheless be better off delving into any single album of his '30s' Hot Club work. ---Ronnie D. Lankford, Jr., Rovi

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