

Glenn Miller - In The Digital Mood (1991)

Written by bluesever

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01. *In The Mood* (03:40)
02. *Chattanooga Choo-Choo* (03:42)
03. *The American Patrol* (03:25)
04. *String Of Pearls* (03:16)
05. *Little Brown Jug* (03:10)
06. *Kalamazoo* (02:41)
07. *Tuxedo Junction* (03:40)
08. *St. Louis Blues March* (04:20)
09. *Pennsylvania 6-5000* (03:13)
10. *Moonlight Serenade* (03:18)

Wayne Andre - Trombone Phil Bodner - Sax (Tenor), Saxophone, Tenor (Vocal) Paul Faulise - Trombone Bill Finegan - Arranger John Frosk - Trumpet Jerry Grey - Arranger Dave Grusin - Piano, Producer Julius LaRosa - Vocals Bernie Leighton - Piano Jay Leonhart - Bass Walter Levinsky - Alto (Vocals), Clarinet, Saxophone Morty Lewis - Sax (Tenor), Saxophone, Tenor (Vocal) Michael Mark - Vocals Irvin "Marky" Markowitz - Trumpet George Masso - Trombone Jimmy Maxwell - Trumpet Marty Nelson - Vocals Larry O'Brien - Conductor Bucky Pizzarelli - Guitar Sonny Russo - Trombone Sol Schlinger - Saxophone Billy Slapin - Saxophone Marvin Stamm - Trumpet Mel Tormé - Vocals, Whistle (Human) Marlene VerPlanck - Vocals Ronald Zito - Drums

This CD may be scoffed at by serious jazz listeners, and even by big-band devotees wary of modern "ghost band" performances, but the fact is that it sold over 100,000 pieces when it first appeared in 1983, and its CD version was among the very earliest compact discs ever released commercially in the United States (indeed, so early that the actual CDs had to be imported from Japan). The second-ever release by GRP Records, it put the label on the map, and it also stood as testimony to how good those original arrangements of the Glenn Miller Orchestra were. So how is it as music? At worst entertaining, and at best revealing, and also at times a little frustrating -- on the plus side, even heard in 2007, twenty-four years after the fact, the sound here is damned impressive; you can safely rank this release as one of the very earliest, if not

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the very first audiophile CDs to be released. The fact that it features 18 top-flight musicians under the baton of Larry O'Brien, then the leader of the touring Glenn Miller Orchestra, only makes it more impressive. What's more, with the quality of the playing, one will be able to make out minuscule elements of the original arrangements that were long obscured on the classic late-'30s/early-'40s Glenn Miller sides. Musicians with an appreciation of these arrangements will probably love this recording, and casual fans should embrace it heartily: these boys swing in 1983 about as well as their predecessors from 41 years earlier did. And the vocal numbers are no exception -- in contrast to Columbia Records' mid-'60s efforts to revive the Miller orchestra as a recording unit (which failed not just because of the timing of the project but also the uneven quality of the resulting albums), numbers like "Pennsylvania 6-5000" and "(I've Got a Gal In) Kalamazoo" are as hot here as there were four decades before. And the singers include Mel Tormé and Julius LaRosa (doing a solo) in their ranks. Still, it's the instrumentals that make up the bulk of this album, and on that level it's similarly unimpeachable, at least most of the way through -- "Tuxedo Junction" (which includes Dave Grusin sitting in on piano) is so close to the original that it's easy to forget who you're listening to and when they put this track down; and serious listeners should probably hold out for the "Gold Disc" edition or the Japanese version of this CD, which contain a bonus track, "At Last," featuring a trombone solo by Urbie Green that is worth the price of the CD by itself. Now, all of that said, there are a couple of quibbles: the absence of the cowbell on "In the Mood," and the "clever" notion on "Pennsylvania 6-5000" of ending the number with -- well, you can guess. This is still one cool, swinging release and, with its virtuoso musicianship, offers many of the same appealing qualities as the original Miller recordings. ---Bruce Eder, Rovi

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