

JOE SULLIVAN

PIANO

Notes and Programming by David A. Jasen

Mastered by Nick Perls

Original piano solo recordings by Moses Asch

NEVER PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

Begin the Beguine—piano solo

Timothy—piano solo

Got It and Gone—with Sidney Bechet and group

Only a Dream—piano solo

Rabbit Foot Blues—vocal Stella Brooks

What a Life!—piano solo

Fidgety Feet—piano solo

St. Louis Blues—with Yank Lawson and group

Blues in my Heart—piano solo

Sister Kate—with Sidney Bechet

The Way You Look Tonight—piano solo

Keepin' Out of Mischief Now—piano solo



FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2851

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 73-750699

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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THE MUSICAL MOODS OF JOE SULLIVAN PIANO

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THE RECORDINGS

Joe Sullivan was born Dennis Patrick Terence Joseph O'Sullivan on November 5, 1906 in Chicago, Illinois and died on October 13, 1971 in San Francisco, California. Although he was much admired and respected by musicians and jazz fans alike, there is not much written about him or his music. For that matter, he didn't record that much, either. And, while he was a fine composer, his published output wasn't very large. But Joe Sullivan was an outstanding professional jazz pianist who played in many bands during this century and inspired a great many musicians who played with him, as well as astounding his grateful listeners.

Joe started taking classical piano lessons when he was five years old and continued until he was seventeen at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. His formal education stopped with his graduation from Lakeview High School. His professional career as band pianist started when he was twelve and organized a four piece band. Two years later he joined the musicians' union and worked steadily with many dance orchestras through the nineteen twenties. At the same time, he worked for early radio stations in Chicago. His first recording took place on December 9, 1927 when he recorded China Boy with the McKenzie-Condon Chicagoans.

At the end of the twenties, he came to New York City, made a few band recordings and worked in various dance bands, most notably with the Roger Wolfe Kahn Orchestra. His stint as solo pianist at the speakeasy, The Onyx Club, on 52nd Street, was memorialized by one of his infrequent compositions, The Onyx Bringdown. He made the first of his rare solo recordings on September 26, 1933 when he recorded three originals and one by Fats Waller.

Joe went to the Coast playing in a band and soon found steady employment as accompanist for Bing Crosby and even appearing with him in movies. In addition, Joe became pianist in a studio orchestra led by George Stoll. In 1936 we find Joe back in New York, joining brother Bob Crosby's Orchestra, where he became internationally famous with their recording of his composition Little Rock Getaway. This tune has great affinity with James P. Johnson's Carolina Shout and Charlie Straight and Arnett Nelson's Buddy's Habits. Late in 1939 he formed his own orchestra and played at the Cafe Society in New York. Another quartet of solos were recorded in 1941, again three of his own compositions and one by Gershwin. During the fifties and sixties he made his home near San Francisco. His long engagement as solo pianist at The Hangover Club in San Francisco lasted over twelve years.

Joe Sullivan was a completely original performer who was initially influenced by Earl Hines and Fats Waller. We are delighted and proud to present these timeless performances of an extraordinary jazzman.

THE RECORDINGS

These eight solos were made between 1944 and 1946, as were the two quartet, one band, and one accompaniment-to-a-blues-singer recordings on this album. Each contributing a different musical mood, all of them giving a rounded view of the comprehensive versatility of this incomparable jazz musician. None of this material has ever been released before, although three selections are alternate takes of tunes previously issued.

SIDE ONE

Begin the Beguine started out as an indistinguished melody in Cole Porter's musical JUBILEE. Here, Joe runs the gamut in this version from quiet introspection through a rollicking boogie at the end.

Timothy is a lovely original composition which Joe wrote for his son. It is an entirely different conception from the version issued originally in 1946.

• Got It And Gone is a Sidney Bechet original which he plays with Joe, Pops Foster on bass, and George Wettling on drums. All are in top form and are obviously enjoying themselves. Joe's long solo break clearly demonstrates his inventiveness as well as his sympathy with the music he is playing.

Only a Dream is a Sullivan original, recorded this once almost thirty years ago and just recently discovered. This shows off Joe's ability to improvise on an original blues format.

Rabbit Foot Blues features singer Stella Brooks in a delightful number. Joe highlights this remarkable

accompaniment with some fabulous stride playing during his break.

What a Life! is another Sullivan original which is performed here for the first time and shows two sides of the musical coin. An amusing feature is the inclusion of Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms at the end.

SIDE TWO

Fidgety Feet is an exuberant piano solo (surely the first time ever played as a piano solo) of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's classic composition.

- St. Louis Blues sports an unusual line-up of musicians surrounding Joe: Yank Lawson with a beautiful trumpet solo, Bob Haggart whistling and playing string bass, Ray Conniff on trombone, Jerry Jerome on tenor sax, and George Wettling on drums. Joe's break contributes just the right (begging the pun) touch.

Blues in My Heart is the last original composition on this album and blends the blues and boogie styles with a short stride riff to make another exciting Joe Sullivan performance.

- I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate again features that great Creole jazzman, Sidney Bechet on soprano sax, with Joe, supported by Pops Foster and George Wettling. An old favorite tune presented here afresh.

The Way You Look Tonight is Jerome Kern's academy award winning tune of 1936, here given a thoughtful treatment in a solo performance.

Keepin' Out of Mischief Now is Joe's tribute to his musical inspiration and great friend, Fats Waller. A marvelous finish to an outstanding series of performances.

Side One

1. Begin the Beguine - piano solo
2. Timothy - piano solo
3. Got It and Gone - with Sidney Bechet & group
4. Only a Dream - piano solo
5. Rabbit Foot Blues - with Stella Brooks
6. What a Life! - piano solo

Side Two

1. Fidgety Feet - piano solo
2. St. Louis Blues - with Yank Lawson & group
3. Blues in My Heart - piano solo
4. Sister Kate - with Sidney Bechet & group
5. The Way You Look Tonight - piano solo
6. Keepin' Out of Mischief Now - piano solo

For Additional Information About

FOLKWAYS RELEASES

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43 WEST 61 ST STREET NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023

Side One

1. Begin the Beguine
2. Timothy - piano solo
3. Got It and Gone - with Mary Bechet & group
4. Only a Dream - piano solo
5. Rabbit Foot Blues - with Stella Brooks
6. What a Life! - piano solo

Side Two

1. Fidgety Feet - piano solo
2. St. Louis Blues - with Yank Lawson & group
3. Blues in My Heart - piano solo