

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2852

jazz piano groats

Compiled by David A. Jasen

From Original Piano Solo Recordings by Moses Asch, 1944-45

ART TATUM

ERROLL GARNER

TEDDY WILSON

MARY LOU WILLIAMS

WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH

MEADE "LUX" LEWIS

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SIDE 1

1. I Know That You Know (Mar. 1944)
Teddy Wilson
2. Blue Skies (Feb. 1944)
Mary Lou Williams
3. Caravan (Feb. 1944)
Mary Lou Williams
4. Yesterdays
Mary Lou Williams
5. Lady Be Good (Oct 1944)
Erroll Garner
6. Woodland Fantasy (June 1944)
Willie the "Lion" Smith
7. Honky Tonk Train Blues (Aug. 1944)
Meade "Lux" Lewis
8. Medium Blues (Aug. 1944)
Meade "Lux" Lewis

SIDE 2

- Art Tatum - March 15, 1945
1. Fine & Dandy
 2. Danny Boy
 3. Ja-Da
 4. Where or When
 5. It Had to be You

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jazz
piano
greats

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2852

JAZZ PIANO GREATS

COMPILED BY DAVID A. JASEN
FROM ORIGINAL PIANO SOLO RECORDINGS
BY MOSES ASCH, 1944-45

Notes & Programming by DAVID A. JASEN
Mastered by Nick Perls
Original Piano Solo Recordings by MOSES ASCH

Willie "The Lion" Smith (1897-1973), Meade "Lux" Lewis (1905-64), Art Tatum (1910-56), Mary Lou Williams (1910-), Teddy Wilson (1912-), and Erroll Garner (1923-). We all know these six master jazz pianists on this album. What can be said that hasn't already been said about such brilliant artists? Each is musically individualistic, coming from different geographic areas of this country, and developing dissimilar styles at separate times during the Twentieth Century. Why then are they being brought together for this album? What do these incomparable have in common? The answer is documentary rather than musical: they were all recorded by Moses Asch.

Moses Asch, second son of the famed novelist and playwright Sholem Asch, was born in Warsaw, Poland on December 2, 1905. With the outbreak of World War I, he and his family emigrated to the United States. Settling down to a new way of life, Moses became fascinated with the then new field of international communications as a ham radio operator in 1915. What started out as a hobby soon took root and developed into his major field of study. From 1922-26, Moe went to the Bingen Hochschule, Rhine, Germany, where he studied electronics.

While his contact with jazz came early (1919), it was American folk music which captivated and excited him. However, it was not the music itself which gener-

ated this enthusiasm, but the lyrics and central ideas of the songs. That philosophy expressed in literature would dominate his thinking is natural, as he was surrounded by the world's finest thinkers with his father holding court at home. But it wasn't his father who exerted the greatest influence on Moses, but an aunt whose friendship with Lenin caused her to create children's day care centers in the U.S.S.R.

Combining his interests in the workings of the phonograph with the ideas contained in folk (notably Blues) recordings, Moe collected the discs and built record players from scratch. Being ready for events with proper knowledge and being in the right place at the right time occurred for Moe when radio station WEVD was granted a license to program shows in the various foreign languages for the people living in New York City. Moe was asked to build the electrical equipment for the station and when that was finished, he was then asked to help them find suitable material for them to put on the air. In 1935, he began recording Yiddish folk singers for the station, eventually building up an extensive folk music library for them. Then came his recordings of Leadbelly singing his songs for children, followed by Sholem Asch's stories for children, and Moe Asch found himself with a full-fledged recording company. With the musicians' ban on studio recordings in the early forties, such outstanding jazz artists as those appearing on this album had no showcase for their talents. James P. Johnson (Folkways FJ 2850) was the first to come to Moe as he wanted to record his biggest selling composition again, Snowy Morning Blues. It was Charles Edward Smith, an early enthusiast who worked with Moe's older brother Nathan for the W.P.A., who knew all of the great jazz

performers and who brought them to Moe.

Moses Asch has built up an extraordinary catalog of original recordings which document a large segment of the world's folk music, by some of the finest creator-performers of this music. Because Moe was primarily interested in recording as a living document, with the composer's own rendering of his material as the apex of the art of recording, his cumulative achievement is unique in the annals of the recording industry.

In every sense then, this album is a special tribute to Moses Asch. It was he who recorded these extremely creative people, paid homage to their art, and in several instances became their very good personal friend. With one exception, listen to never before issued recordings of these inimitable masters of the jazz piano, offering a panoramic view of jazz, with timeless and always appropriate interpretations.

SIDE ONE

1. I Know That You Know - TEDDY WILSON - March, 1944
2. Blue Skies - MARY LOU WILLIAMS - February, 1944
3. Caravan - MARY LOU WILLIAMS - February, 1944
4. Yesterdays - MARY LOU WILLIAMS - February, 1944
5. Lady Be Good - ERROLL GARNER - Oct., 1944
6. Woodland Fantasy - WILLIE THE LION SMITH - June 20, 1944
7. Honky Tonk Train Blues - MEADE LUX LEWIS - August 20, 1944
8. Medium Blues - MEADE LUX LEWIS - August 20, 1944

SIDE TWO

ART TATUM - March 15, 1945

1. Fine and Dandy
2. Danny Boy
3. Ja-Da
4. Where or When
5. It Had to Be You



design:wasserfish

MADE IN U.S.A.

STEREO 199



FJ 2850 JAMES P. JOHNSON,
Piano solos: Compiled by David
A. Jansen from original never be-
fore released masters recorded by
Moses Asch. 16 selections include
Snowy Morning Blues, Jungle
Drums, Euphonic Sounds, Twi-
light Rag. Notes



FJ 2851 JOE SULLIVAN /PIANO. Rare
recordings made 1944-46 by the
outstanding jazz pianist who inspired
many musicians. Joe Sullivan was born
in Chicago in 1906 and died in 1971.
Although he was admired by musicians
and jazz fans, little is written about him
or recorded by him. Solos, quartet,
band, and a blues singer...with Sidney
Bechet, George Wettling, Yank Lawson,
Bob Haggart. Notes by David A. Jansen
enclosed. None of the material previously
released; 3 selections are alternate takes
of tunes previously released.