

RF 29

The Tuneful Twenties Compiled & Annotated by David A. Jasen



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FOLKWAYS RF 29

SIDE ONE

1. Who's That Pretty Baby – Jack Crawford Orch.
2. Sittin' in a Corner – Broadway Syncopators
3. Too Tired – Jan Garber's Orch. w/Reser
4. Come On, Red – Whitey Kaufman Orch.
5. Where Can I Find You – Keystone Serenaders
6. Whoa Tillie, Take Your Time – Virginians
7. Steppin' in Society – Ben Selvin Orch.
8. Charleston Baby of Mine – Don Bestor Orch.

SIDE TWO

1. In My Dreams – Curtis Mosby's Blue Blowers
2. My Sunday Girl – Edwin J. McEnelly Orch.
3. I Wonder What's Become of Joe – Seven Little Polar Bears
4. She's Got 'Im – Fred Hamm Orch.
5. Who'll Take My Place – Bennie Krueger Orch.
6. Say It While Dancing – Benson Orch.
7. High High High Up In The Hills – Nat Shilkret Orch.
8. Steppin' Fool – Perry's Hot Dogs

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER STATUE, "DANCER" BY PHILIPPE DEVRIEZ, 1920

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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THE TUNEFUL TWENTIES

Compiled and Annotated by David A. Jasen

The nineteen-twenties produced more than its fair share of musical hits. There wasn't time for nostalgia then, no time to reflect, look back or even contemplate the future. There was too much excitement, too many new things to do, new sounds to hear. No need for a disc jockey to tell you the favorites of the time, you'll hear them yourself at night, dancing in nightclubs or in a dance hall.

Everyone is familiar with such outstanding hits of the period as YES, SIR! THAT'S MY BABY; IF YOU KNEW SUSIE; and WHO'S SORRY NOW? This album is devoted to those songs which were popular in their immediate time but escaped immortality. As we look back into our glorious heritage of American popular music, we can pick out gems heretofore overlooked and make them available to an ever increasingly aware public.

In addition to featuring some fine tunes from the twenties, this is a study of the fine, unsung (if you'll pardon the pun) arrangers and orchestrators of the period. Not just a jam session, or reading from the stock arrangements given freely by the music publishers, all of these groups took special pains to make the joys of each piece blend with the highly personal sounds of their bands. This is the irresistible music of the twenties. Take off your raccoon coat, put on

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your spats, slick down your hair, wind up the phonograph and
enjoy the musical twenties!

SIDE ONE

WHO'S THAT PRETTY BABY was written in 1927 by Bobby Heath and Alex Marr. A delightful way to start off our survey of flapper music, Jack Crawford was noted for his humor and this rendition sparkles with unaccustomed gaiety.

SITTIN' IN A CORNER was veteran Tin Pan Alleyite George Meyer's 1923 contribution. A very pretty ballad, the Broadway Syncopators add their special enthusiasm to make this a particular favorite.

TOO TIRED was the 1924 entry by George Little, Arthur Sizemore, and Larry Shay. Recorded by Jan Garber, who started out playing the violin and leading a band, this is a snappy fox trot with short solos featuring the saxophone and banjo, the two instruments most closely identified with this period.

COME ON, RED seems to have been quite popular by mid-1924. Composed by one of Tin Pan Alley's great hit-makers, Fred Fisher, this tune has the ragtime flavor with some tricky syncopation -- unusual in pop songs. Banjoist Whitey Kaufman's Original Pennsylvania Serenaders render it with appropriate verve.

WHERE CAN I FIND YOU is one of the more obscure tunes from 1925. The Keystone Serenaders, under the direction of Ray McConnell, is an even more obscure group. The very fine piano solo following the brisk introduction indicates that this band was much better than average and it is a shame that there isn't more information about it.

WHOA TILLIE, TAKE YOUR TIME, written by the famous team of Henry Creamer and Turner Layton in 1923 gets a spirited treatment from Ross Gorman's Virginians. Gorman, one of the outstanding reed players, first attracted attention when he originated the famous opening glissando for clarinet in Gershwin's RHAPSODY IN BLUE. Until he became a bandleader, he was part of the famous Paul Whiteman Orchestra.

STEPPIN' IN SOCIETY was pianist Harry Akst's 1925 tune which received its share of recordings. Ben Selvin, probably the most prolific recording artist throughout the twenties, was a violinist, orchestra leader, and musical contractor, who recorded for every major label in New York City.

CHARLESTON BABY OF MINE was one of the many take-offs written with the Charleston rhythm, by Bernie Grossman and Danny Dougherty in 1925. Although written for a Broadway show in 1923, the original Charleston became wildly popular two years later, inspiring many uses of that unique rhythm. Don Bestor, a Chicago pianist, was also an excellent arranger, and this recording bubbles with high good humor.

SIDE TWO

IN MY DREAMS seems to have been popular in mid-1927 on the West Coast. Curtis Mosby and his nine Dixieland Blue Blowers were a tightly knit group who were featured in a couple of movies. They played nightly in a dance hall in Los Angeles. Henry Starr, their pianist, also sings the lyrics. This remarkable group was distinguished for having the Guy Lombardo sound (of an out-of-tune saxophone section) a full year before Lombardo used it!

MY SUNDAY GIRL is the work of composer-publisher Sam Stept with lyrics by Herman Ruby and Bud Cooper, veterans of many a hit. This bright tune of 1927 is performed by violinist Edwin J. McEnelly's orchestra. Fred Wade is the vocalist.

I WONDER WHAT'S BECOME OF JOE was Maceo Pinkard's bouncy fox trot of 1926. The Vocalist (?) is drummer Tom Stacks, who has a most distinctive voice. The Seven Little Polar Bears was one of the many pseudonyms used by Harry Reser for recording.

SHE'S GOT 'IM was famous bandleader Isham Jones' syncopated tune of 1925. Fred Hamm and his orchestra was part of the vast midwest chain of orchestras known as the Benson Organization.

WHO'LL TAKE MY PLACE was written by an extraordinarily talented pianist, Bill Fazioli, with words by Ray Klages. Bennie Krueger was a virtuoso on the alto saxophone and can claim to be the first sax man to play with a jazz band, as he joined the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in 1920 and recorded with them. Two years later, he organized his own band and this is a representative selection from his vast recorded repertoire.

SAY IT WHILE DANCING is another tune from 1922 and came from the pen of prolific writer, Abner Silver. The original Benson Orchestra recorded this under the direction of pianist-arranger, Roy Bargy. He is featured in this fine version.

HIGH, HIGH, HIGH UP IN THE HILLS was Maurice Abrahams' contribution in 1926. A popular number then, Nat Shilkret's smooth studio orchestra was augmented for this occasion by Harry Reser's banjo. Charles Harrison sings the words by Tin Pan Alley regulars, Sam Lewis and Joe Young. The piano break was performed by Milton Rettenberg.

STEP'IN' FOOL is another in the 1925 Charleston-like numbers. It is a perfect ending to our trip of musical delights in the twenties. Perry's Hot Dogs was a spirited six piece group with Arthur Fields brought in to sing the lyrics. The pianist sounds like Frank Signorelli, usually with the superb Original Memphis Five (see RBF-26).