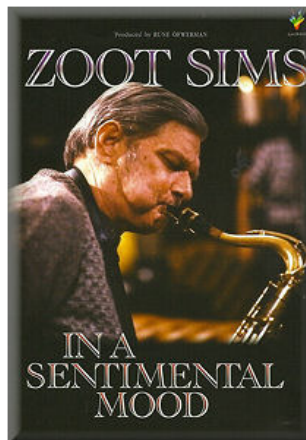


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DVD REVIEW

ZOOT SIMS

In a Sentimental Mood

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Zoot Sims - Tenor sax
Red Mitchell - Bass
Rune Gustafsson - Guitar

This DVD was filmed in Sweden in November 1984 and originally issued on an LP, released by Sonet and Pablo. It may have been prophetic that the last two tunes are autumnal, as this set was filmed only a few months before Zoot Sims died. It is a very informal session, recorded in the rather gloomy library of Sonet Records without an audience. Sims is accompanied by bassist Red Mitchell and guitarist Rune Gustafsson. The music is interspersed with Red and Zoot exchanging reminiscences.

I remember seeing Zoot Sims in a London JATP concert and

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being amazed at the antique, almost rusty, tenor saxophone that Zoot played. Here he tells Mitchell that the sax is 45 years old. Despite this, he produces a wonderfully warm, sweet tone from the instrument - a sound only surpassed by such smoothies as Stan Getz and Ben Webster.

Most of the programme consists of slow or mid-tempo tunes played with subdued relaxation. Although Zoot Sims is the featured artist, one's attention is continually drawn to Red Mitchell, who not only supplies a solid bass line throughout the set but also contributes some remarkable solos. Note particularly his quotations from *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Alice Blue Gown* in *Castle Blues*, and the effective slides he produces on the strings in *Sweet Lorraine*. There is also a masterly bass solo in *Autumn Leaves*. Bass solos often leave me cold but I could watch and listen to Red Mitchell all day. Rune Gustafsson is more in the background, although he plays a few skilful solos.

Most of the repertoire comprises jazz standards, although it is good to hear Henry Nemo's rare *'Tis Autumn*, performed tenderly by Zoot and his colleagues. Despite its short length (lasting just above 51 minutes), this DVD is worth getting for the superb musicianship. Dialogue in concerts sometimes seems unrepeatable but it is fun to hear Zoot's anecdotes about the time he kicked his sax case downstairs and when Benny Goodman made him play a long solo because Benny was intent on stealing an apple from Zoot's music stand!

Tony Augarde

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