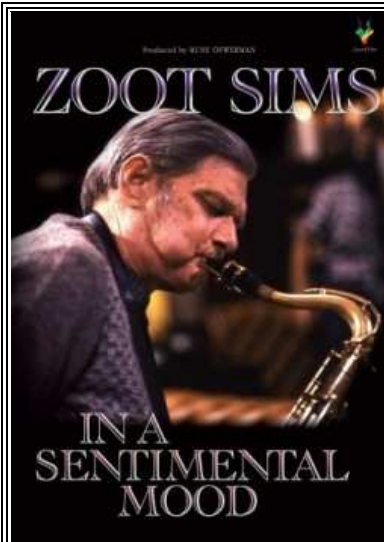


Zoot Sims: In A Sentimental Mood (1985)


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Do you know much about the jazz scene? Well, no I don't either, and I'm a long time musician. Rock and roll and jazz are miles apart though, so I figured I'd educate myself with this DVD of one of the premier jazz musicians, Zoot Sims. It was a fun time and a journey you should take as well. Let's get the background story on this jazzman, then we'll talk a bit about the performances on this disc.

Wikipedia

He was born in Inglewood, California, the son of vaudeville performers Kate Haley and John Sims.[2] Growing up in a performing family, Sims learned to play both drums and clarinet at an early age. His father was a vaudeville hooper, and Sims prided himself on remembering many of the steps his father taught him.

Following in the footsteps of Lester Young, Sims developed into an innovative tenor saxophonist. Throughout his career, he played with renowned bands, including Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Stan Kenton, and Buddy Rich. Sims was also one of Woody Herman's "Four Brothers", and he was known among his peers as one of the strongest swingers in the field. He frequently led his own combos and sometimes toured with his friend Gerry Mulligan's sextet, and later with Mulligan's Concert Jazz Band.

In the 1950s and '60s, Sims had a long, successful partnership as co-leader of a quintet with Al Cohn, which recorded under the name "Al and Zoot". That group was a favorite at the New York club The Half Note. Always fond of the higher register of the tenor sax, Zoot also liked to play alto and late in his career added the soprano saxophone to his performances, while recording a series of albums for the Pablo Records label of impresario Norman Granz. Zoot also played on some of Jack Kerouac's recordings.

Sims acquired the nickname - Zoot - early in his career while he was in the Kenny Baker band in California. The name was later appropriated for a sax-playing Muppet.

Zoot Sims died in New York on March 23, 1985.

/Wikipedia

This performance takes place at the library of the Sonet headquarters building in Lidingo, Sweden in 1984, only four months before Zoot died at the age of 60. These songs are performed in a casual setting, with only bass and guitar for augmentation. There are titles at the beginning of each song, which helped me out, being unfamiliar with the material being played. Between each song is a small interview clip with Zoot. Personally, I felt they should have had the entire performance done without breaks, and had the interview at either the beginning or the end of the show. The music is so relaxing that the clips in between take you out of the mood that was built up with the previous song.

This DVD reminds me of something that you would see on a public television special. It's informative, professional and well filmed. It's quite amazing to watch them play as they're reading the song from sheet music in some performances, as I'm not able to read sheet music myself.

This DVD is filmed in full screen, and the stereo sound is very nice. The guitar is slightly buried in the mix though, except for the guitar solos. The stand-up bass is front in the mix, all most drowning out the guitar phrasing at points. But the important part is Zoot, and his saxophone levels are just right at all times, and every performance is impeccable. Here are the songs performed;

1. In A Sentimental Mood
2. Gone With The Wind
3. Castle Blues
4. Sweet Lorraine
5. 'Tis Autumn
6. Autumn Leaves

This is a great DVD for jazz purists, or a novice like me. Pick it up, you'll be glad you did.

8/10.



Review by **Bill Wolford**

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