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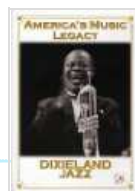
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Home Music DVD Review: America's Music Legacy: Dixieland Jazz

"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

# DVD Review: America's Music Legacy: Dixieland Jazz



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Author: Jack Goodstein — Published: Dec 20, 2010 at 7:04 pm

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Readers familiar with the America's Music Legacy series will find that the Dixieland Jazz DVD follows their typical formula. A concert of some dozen or so performers, some well known, some not so well known, is presented in a night club setting hosted by one of the stars of the genre. Interspersed between many of the musical performances there are snippets of interviews with the musicians, vintage film clips and still photos of some of the greats of the genre. The emphasis is not on creating a documentary history of the music; the emphasis is on the performance.

Dixieland Jazz is hosted by New Orleans trumpet virtuoso, Al Hirt complete with tuxedo and cigar. He reminisces a bit about his life and career, introduces the other performers, and most importantly he plays his trumpet both with some of the other acts and with his own all star band. Major names on the DVD include Woody Herman, Bob Crosby, and Della Reese. Hirt is of course a consummate master. Woody Herman still has something going for him as he shows in the opening number, "Jazz Me Blues." Bob Crosby does little more than stand in front of the group. Della Reese, on the other hand, is a brilliant singer with the richest of voices. Her "Blue Skies" is a vocal gem, and her duet with Hirt on "Man With a Horn" is one of the highlights of the showcase. And while these are the names that provide the star power, in many cases it is the lesser known musicians that supply the highlights.

It is exciting how many of the other spotlight performances come from the less well known musicians. Trumpeter Teddy Buckner does a beautiful take on the traditional "Struttin' With Some Barbeque." Clara Bryant shows what a female trumpeter can do with a sensational version of "When It's Sleepytime Down South." Usually when it comes to music it's what you hear that's important, but in the case of banjo star, Scotty Plummer you have to see his lightning finger strumming to believe it. He plays "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" like you've never quite heard it before. Judy Carmichael chimes in with some nice solo piano work on "Honeysuckle Rose" right after an old movie clip of Fats Waller hamming it up with some dancing beauties. Singer Irma Thomas joins with Hirt for an eloquent "Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans." Old timer Scatman Crothers does an audience pleasing "The Gal Looks Good." And these are just the

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highlights there really isn't a dud on the DVD.

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America's Music Legacy - Dixieland Jazz

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