

The Earl 'Fatha' Hines All Stars

**Live at The Black Sheep,
San Francisco, 1961**

Acrobat: ADDCD3075 (2 x CD)

No playing times available

CD1

Recorded 14 April, 1961

Earl Hines (piano), Eddie Smith (trumpet), Jimmy Archey (trombone), Darnell Howard (clarinet), Pops Foster (bass), Earl Watkins (drums)

Deep Forest (Theme); Beale Street Blues; Riverboat Shuffle; Lonesome Road; Dark-town Strutter's Ball; The Song Is Ended

Recorded 20 April, 1961

Personnel same

Deep Forest (Theme); Fidgety Feet; I Love You Because I Love You; Mahogany Hall Stomp; Stardust; The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise; Lady Be Good

Recorded 27 April, 1961

Personnel same but Ernie Figueroa (trumpet) replaces Eddie Smith

Deep Forest (Theme); I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate; Panama; St. James Infirmary; Limehouse Blues; Lady Be Good

CD2

Recorded 4 May, 1961

Personnel same but Byron Berry (trumpet) replaces Ernie Figueroa

Deep Forest (Theme); South Rampart Street Parade; Yes Sir That's My Baby; Clarinet Marmalade; The Memphis Blues

Recorded 11 May, 1961

Personnel same

Deep Forest (theme); Jazz Me Blues; Lonesome Road; Dippermouth Blues; Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans; The Bucket's Got A Hole In It

Recorded 25 May, 1961

Personnel same but Eddie Smith (trumpet) replaces Byron Berry

Deep Forest (Theme); Dallas Blues; Manhattan; West End Blues; Wolverine Blues; Please Play For Me The Sweet Melody Doodle-Dee-Doo

All tracks taken from radio KCBS broadcasts from the the Black Sheep Club, 645 Geary Street, San Francisco

The chaps at Acrobat have done us proud again. This is their latest album taken from KCBS radio broadcasts, following on from three very interesting double CDs which featured the bands of Kid Ory, Teddy Buckner and Muggsy Spanier. The ambience and sound are excellent, and remember this was over fifty years ago! To my ears there are not many club recordings being issued these days with fidelity half as good as these, or clubs with such good pianos!

Earl Hines was the true pioneer of jazz piano. His much quoted 'trumpet style' is not that noticeable here, but his ensemble backing, combined with spectacular solos certainly keeps him in his rightful place among the keyboard greats.

Hines, as the sleeve note states, found himself almost by accident playing with a Dixieland band. He had led a Swing group, the Esquire All Stars, at the Club Hangover in 1954, but was asked by the club's proprietor Doc Dougherty to front a more Traditional group. After all, this was San Francisco, where the jazz revival started in America. He came to England in September, 1956, as co-leader with Jack Teagarden, of an all star line-up which included Max Kaminsky, Peanuts Hucko, Jack Lesberg and Cozy Cole. He returned to Europe in 1966, and had a very successful visit backed by the Alex Welsh band. I was lucky to hear him play at a memorable St. Patrick's night concert in Dublin on that tour.

The other musician that impresses me on these discs is Darnell Howard with his very individual quirky style. He seems to get overlooked when they talk about the great clarinetists. I hope these CDs will remedy that. I believe he had lessons from the New Orleans reed master Lorenzo Tio, which would explain why he blends into the ensembles so well. Another favourite of mine, Jimmy Archey, fits in nicely with his impish and bouncy tailgate style, alongside Pops Foster, Earl Watkins, plus three very capable trumpet players that make for an exciting swinging band sound.

All these sidemen were experienced players (Howard was a member of Hines' own Big Band in the 1930s) and it shows. All are spurred on by the enthusiastic shouting from their bandleader, and they show professional confidence in their interpretation of the little-arranged passages. Two other piano players, Joe Sullivan and Cedric Haywood are mentioned, but we don't get to hear them, as I presume they played the intermissions at the club.

Going by the quality here, I await with anticipation future CDs from Acrobat. Meanwhile, why not take a look at www.acrobatmusic.net ■

Sid Bailey

