



by James McQuiston

V/A - Jazz Legends, Volume 14 / 2007 MVD / 54 Minutes /

One would think that by the time that MVD got to the 14th volume of "Jazz Legends", that they would have to be scraping the barrel pretty hard. This time, there are performances by Les McCann, Stephane Grappelli, Ben Sidran, and Mike Mainieri. While I am not familiar with any of these artists, this is due to the fact that jazz is typically not my forte. However, regardless of the fact that I am not familiar with these jazz legends, the music that they play is impressive throughout.

The entirety of the tracks clock in at under an hour, which seems a little short to me, but the compositions are so chock-full of vim and vigor that it is easy to get drawn in. When one is drawn into the hypnotic rhythms that are present during Les McCann's "I'm All Strung Up on You", the 13 minute run time of the composition feels almost like an hour of glory.

The lower MSRP of this disc (\$10 rather than \$20) makes up for the shorter runtime of this disc. The subtitle of this series is "Live!", and this means that there is live footage showcasing each of the legends during different periods, at different times, and at different venues. It is interesting to see how the crowd changes between the Grappelli and the Sidran compositions, for example. However, the appreciation for the legends themselves never change, and the masterful ability shown during each of the DVD's composition never fluctuates. The footage is more or less solid, while the recording is spot on. This, along with the Scott Cossu Trio DVD, is another strong step forward for MVD and for humanity as a whole. While this seems hyperbolic, what I mean is that where there were literally thousands of years where the written record was destroyed by later civilizations (the former Roman colonies after the fall of Rome, for example), there is action in the opposite direction. This means that the most obscure and hard to find recordings are making it into the DVD format, and this is allowing the history to never be lost; the collective memory is growing larger and more diverse, allowing for expansions of the themes explored by these jazz legends. While only individuals really into jazz will know these names, this series is integral in ensuring that these legends are not forgotten by future generations. Buy it.

Rating: 6.8/10