



DVD: Jazz Shots from the West Coast Vol. 2 (2006)

Review Rating: Standard

Label/Studio: EFORFilms / MVD (Music Video Distributors)

Catalog #: DVD-2869056

Region: 0 (NTSC)

Released: June 20, 2006

Genre: Jazz Performances / Jazz Concerts

Synopsis: Anthology of live and filmed jazz performances of famous west coast musicians.

Directed by: none credited

Screenplay by: none credited

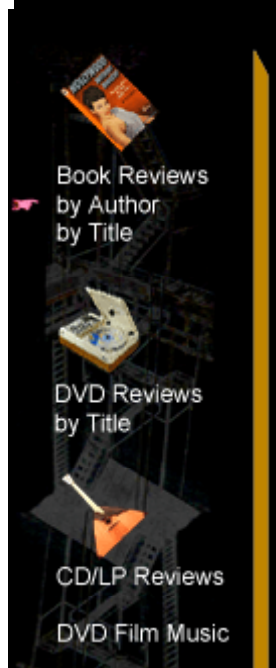
Music by: various

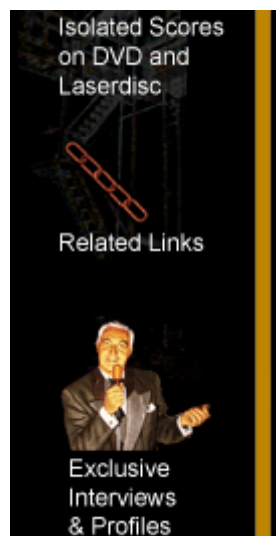


[...back to Index](#)



[...or start from scratch](#)





Produced by: none credited

Cast: Wes Montgomery, Gerry Mulligan, Bob Brookmeyer, Shorty Rogers, Lou Levy, Paul Desmond, Lester Young, and Teddy Edwards.

Film Length: 67 mins

Process/Ratio: 1.33:1

Black & White / Colour

Anamorphic DVD: No

Languages: English Mono

Subtitles:

Special Features :

(none)

Comments :

EFORFILMS' ongoing anthology of vintage jazz performances on film and video returns with Vol. 2 of **Jazz Shots from the West Coast**, featuring clips from a diversity of sources, and while the selection is first-rate, neither the DVD sleeve nor DVD has a credit list - leaving the source of some clips occasionally a mystery. (Note: the sleeve track list accidentally reprints the cues from **East Coast Vol. 2.**)

The label's format is very plain and straightforward: plop the disc in the tray, hit Play, and some of the best live performances from TV (plus a few filmed works) fill a roughly 70-90 minute program, with a quick title and lead musician banner at the beginning of each set.

The most recognizable sources in both **West Coast** and **East Coast** series are **Jazz Casual** [JC], which ran on PBS from 1961-68, and the legendary **Jazz Scene USA** [JSU], the Steve Allen-Oscar Brown, Jr. syndicated show that lasted one season in 1962 - two shows that exist in harder-to-find and sometimes pricier incarnations, making this DVD anthology a good sampler for what's available in scarcer form, before starting the hunt and plunking down major cash.

West Coast Vol. 2 begins with guitarist Wes Montgomery, who performs three songs with his quartet: "Full House," "Round Midnight," and "Yesterdays" from the JSU archives. The best is the Brubeckian "Full House," which has a repetitive 3/3 hook that Montgomery and his pianist spin into some lovely solos.

The Gerry Mulligan Quartet follow, featuring trombonist Bob Brookmeyer on "Open Country," and Mulligan switching from tenor sax to an initial solo piano in "Darn That Dream" from the group's JC session. Part of the half-hour JC format included casual Q&As with the musicians, and the finales were sometimes pretty abrupt; the ends of songs were sometimes clipped, and brief words from the show's host occasional bled over the performance intros and outros. Previously available on separate Rhino DVDs and in a giant [boxed set](#), the JC extracts are complete songs, and are in their original mono. (The Rhino editions, while boasting full episodes, also had mono and ersatz 5.1 tracks.)

A return to the JSU series has the Shorty Rogers Quintet with pianist Lou Levy performing "Martians Go Home," "Time Was," and the traditional "Greensleeves." These extracts are among the best examples of why JSU was such a beloved program,

mourned by fans for decades until a few episodes popped up on the Shanachie label, between 1999-2001.

JSU featured long, chunky sets with each group, and the taped performances are startling in their technique: every shot is composed like a living William Claxton image, capturing each musician's performance in detailed close-ups, innovative overhead shots for drummers and pianists, and flawless editing that never misses a musician's solos. The multi-camera setups also showed off some balletic movements that began and ended on perfectly composed images - a sign the rehearsals and blocking had to be letter-perfect for each episode.

Every musician really grooves in the Quintet's trio of songs, and those familiar with the short, catchy tunes from Rogers' EMI albums will relish the long and dense solos in works like "Greensleeves." Maybe taking a nod from John Coltrane's own rendition, and showing the east what the west can do with the beloved traditional, the real star in the number is Levy and his rock-steady hands, hammering the bass line so the group can recap the melody before gliding into separate improvs for flute, bass, and flugelhorn. When it's Levy's turn, the camera holds on his steady hands (double-reflected on the piano cover), the calm of his face, and his casual glances to see when it's time to move on to the bass.

Next on the DVD is a nice rendition of the Paul Desmond Quartet playing Johnny Mandel's theme from **The Americanization of Emily**, the simply titled "Emily," at an outdoor venue from the early seventies. The extract from a performance called Jazz Vignettes has OK sound - a plane scrapes by overhead - but as with all of Desmond's work, the tone is still warm, cozy, and cheerfully reassuring.

Lester Young appears in the well-known, Oscar-nominated short from 1944, **Jammin' the Blues**. Combining stark black & white cinematography with a casual improv mood, the short features brief versions of "The Midnight Synphony" and "On the Sunny Side of the Street." The only film directed by photographer **Gjon Mili**, the short has also appeared in a French Region 2 disc, **Norman Granz: Improvisation**, and in the 2-disc Region 0 PAL/NTSC flipper set, **The Greatest Jazz Films Ever**.

Closing this disc is saxophonist Teddy Edwards from another JSU episode, playing their versions of "Sunset Eyes," "Afraid of Love," and "The Cellar Dweller." Typical of the show's design are some artful visuals, like a superimposition of Edwards' saxophone mouth that forms a glimmering halo under the studio lights during the song, "Afraid of Love." There's also the driving "Cellar Dweller," which wraps up the disc. Tiered musicians and their brass barrels are kept in deep focus, and the camera then tracks closer when Edwards begins his solo. Great stuff.

Available separately, this excellent title is part of a new four-part wave that includes **Jazz Shots from the East Coast Volume 2** & **Volume 3**, and **Jazz Shots from the West Coast Volume 2** & **Volume 3**. **East Coast Volume 1** and **West Coast Volume 1** are also available.

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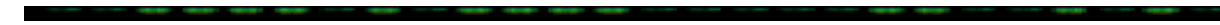
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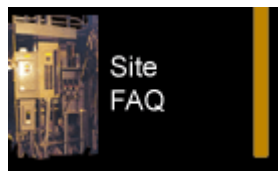
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[Top of Page](#) _____ [DVD Index "J to L "](#) _____ [DVD Index "A"](#)

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