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BIG BAND NEWS

by Music Librarian **CHRISTOPHER POPA**

Say “Si Si” to Cugie!



Throughout his life, Latin legend Xavier Cugat (1900-1990) had a talent for drawing, an ear for music, and an eye for women—and not necessarily in that order. While spotlighting 29 examples of Cugat’s vibrant orchestra, this CD touches on all three of those interests.

It begins with the complete, rare 10” album, “Dancetime with Cugat” [RCA Victor LPM-3170], recorded in 1953 and never before available on CD. It contains a new version of one of his very biggest hits, *Say “Si Si,”* featuring a vocal by his then-wife, Abbe Lane, as well as the romantic ballads *Quizas, Quizas, Quizas* and *You Too, You Too?* (*Piel Canela*).

Nine lesser-known songs from the same time period, including an encore vocal for Lane, *The Brand New Cha-Cha-Cha*, follow as a bonus, along with the complete 12” stereo album “Chile Con Cugie” [RCA Victor LSP-1987], a Mexican fiesta from 1959 which includes no less than 20 beloved melodies, such as *Cielito Lindo* and *Jarabe Tapatio* (*The Mexican Hat Dance*), in medley or complete form.

Recommended for attractive artwork, fine sound, and pertinent notes with a discography that provides dates, personnel, and corrected spellings to the names of Cugat’s sidemen.



Michael Highton, a longtime expert on Tex Beneke, has compiled for Sounds of YesterYear (catalog number DSOY2090) a compact disc of recordings by The Glenn Miller Orchestra under Beneke's direction that didn't come out on 78 rpm overseas, "Hits Not Issued In Britain." In other words, though Beneke had no fewer than 17 entries on the RCA Victor label which made the U.S. pop charts between 1946 and 1950, His Master's Voice in England—curiously—only released 5 of them. Michael has included all of them on this CD.

By the way, according to my calculations (not to be confused with *Shanghai Calculations*, an inside joke for hardcore Beneke aficionados), there remain about 11 more Beneke Thesaurus selections that are not yet on a Sounds of YesterYear CD. Michael, is there one more "Glenn Miller Formula" coming? Unless I have overlooked them, all that we need are *Serenade in Blue* (Thesaurus disc 1565), *Everything Happens to Me* (1631), *Charmaine / Greensleeves / Laura / The Moon Was Yellow / Tea for Two* (1731), and *Lovely to Look At / Memories of You / The Man I Love / The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise* (1782), and they're done! If you are able, you could fill in that last volume with some Beneke Thesaurus voice tracks.



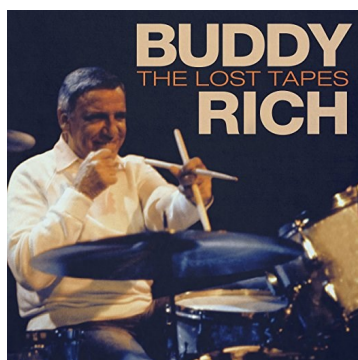
Another wrong is righted with the CD release of what, up to now, had been the digital-only issue of selections from Bill Savory's personal treasure trove. In fact, "The Savory Collection 1935-1940," Mosaic MD6-266, has a half-dozen CDs of material, by performers including Coleman Hawkins, Fats Waller, Lionel Hampton, Roy Eldridge John Kirby, Benny Carter, Bobby Hackett, Jack Teagarden, Teddy Wilson, Glenn Miller, and (with two discs of his own) Count Basie. After hearing music from the Savory Collection, Loren Schoenberg, head of the National Jazz Museum of Harlem in New York City, where Savory's original discs are now held, said, "Imagine finding an unknown play by Shakespeare or an unknown novel by Mark Twain. That's what this is." Of note to collectors who already bought the downloads of The Savory Collection: it appears that this CD set has a total of 108 tracks, so there are many more additional Basie selections, plus tunes by, for example, Mildred Bailey, Stuff Smith, and Joe Sullivan.



What has been a nice cover design for Squatty Roo’s Illinois Jacquet “Files” series takes on a psychedelic tone for Volume 3. The contents are from a 1987 engagement by Jacquet and his big band at the Village Vanguard in New York City.



In 1983 Giants of Jazz issued the soundtrack of the 1947 motion picture “New Orleans” on both LP and CD (as GOJ 1025). Here it is again on CD, now from Jasmine, number JASMCD 2638, starring Louis Armstrong and Woody Herman’s bands.



With material from Rich’s 1985 concert at King Street Studio in San Francisco thought to have been lost, but subsequently re-discovered and remastered, Lightyear Entertainment’s “Buddy Rich: Channel One Set” and “Buddy Rich: The Lost Tapes” each gathers eight tunes, including *One O’Clock Jump*, *Love for Sale*, and *Channel One Suite* on the first disc and *Mexicali Nose*, *The Red Snapper*, and *West Side Story* on the second. These both have much nicer covers, especially the “Channel One Set,” but collectors are cautioned that this all was previously available on the 1985 2-CD set “Mr. Drums: Buddy Rich And His Band: Live On King Street San Francisco,” Café Records CD 2-732.



A 4-CD set, with lots of alternate takes, of “The Complete Duet Recordings” of Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong made for Decca and Verve. Included are the albums “Ella And Louis” (Verve MG V-4003), “Ella And Louis Again” (Verve MG V-4006), and “Porgy & Bess” (Verve MG V-4011), along with their eight Decca singles and live recordings from “Jazz at the Hollywood Bowl.” Ricky Riccardi of The Louis Armstrong House and Museum wrote the set’s extensive essay. Needless to say, this is the ultimate issue of these performances!



When bandleader Louis Prima and his vocalist (and wife) Keely Smith appeared at The Casbar Theater of The Hotel Sahara in Las Vegas in 1958, Capitol Records taped the show and released an LP (catalog number T 1010). This CD, “Las Vegas Prima Style: The Complete Performance,” by Jackpot Records, expands the album with more than a dozen additional songs from that engagement, such as *Robin Hood*, *Don’t Take Your Love From Me*, and *Buona Sera*, that weren’t part of the original LP. Total playing time 69:02. Una buona sera, davvero! But wait- - before you go ordering this, be sure that you don’t already have the 8-CD Prima Bear Family set, BCD 15 776 HI, “The Capitol Recordings: Louis Prima / Keely Smith / Sam Butera” or Capitol 75937, “The Las Vegas Centennial Collection: Louis Prima & Keely Smith: Live From Las Vegas,” because you might not really need this one then.



Be sure to see the “Band Itineraries” listed on my website, so you can see the big bands in-person. For example, The Glenn Miller Orchestra directed by Nick Hilscher will be traveling from Florida... to New York... to Texas this month, with many one-night stands along the way. Here is the URL to find the latest tour dates: bigbandlibrary.com/banditineraries.html