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Serial No.

9386

NEOVOX JAZZMEN!

SCANIAZZ IN ENGLAND 1978

528



SCANIAZZ IN ENGLAND

1978

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SCANIAZZ: 1978.

Side A: Flock O' Blues  
Pile Of Logs and Stone \*  
Without That Gal \*\*  
Crazy Blues \*  
Sister Honky Tonk  
Mint Julep  
Chicago Breakdown

Side B: I'm a Mighty Tight Woman \*  
Birmingham Black Bottom \*  
You Can Have Your Chill \* \*\*  
After All I've Done \*\*  
Why Put the Blame on Me?  
Daddy Won't You Please Come Home \*

SCANIAZZ: Neta Engström (vocal \*); Paul Strandberg (cornet, vocal \*\*); Stefan Olsson (soprano saxophone); Stefan Kårfve (tuba); Rolf Kårfve (banjo); Per Oldeus (drums). Recorded at 'Jazz at the Strathallan' by Norman Field, Sunday 8-10-1978.



We all listen to Jazz in different ways at different times: occasionally, we may simply want an agreeable sound in the background while we drive on a long journey. At other times, we wish to hear something that will strongly engage our attention, and provide us with continually interesting and entertaining diversion, minute by minute.

Almost all Traditional Jazz will fulfil the first requirement above; it is however, a different thing altogether to satisfy the second. SCANIAZZ DO IT! Their relaxed and creative approach to the Classic Jazz of the 1920s, together with the elegant singing of Neta Engström, made their session at Jazz at the Strathallan, Birmingham, England, (from which these recordings are taken), a positive joy from start to finish. I had already become familiar with Scaniazz' L.P. on the Growl label, and was looking forward to an evening of excellent Classic Jazz. I was unprepared, however, for the sheer voluptuousness

of the sound of the band 'live', and can only hope that we have managed to capture some of it! Scaniazz have discovered the simple (but to listen to many Traditional Jazz bands, very elusive) fact that the basic rhythmic impulse comes not from the banjo, but the bass. True, this demands that the bass player possess very great skill: you can hear that Stefan Kårfve has it, in abundance! The splendid tuba work means that his brother, Rolf Kårfve on banjo, can put in rhythmic embellishments that would cause disaster to the ordinary 'clockwork-banjo' rhythm section. Rolf's right-hand rhythm style is excellent, as witness his solo in 'Why Put the Blame on Me' and his magnificent break in 'Chicago Break down'. Much of the 'heat' in the music of Scaniazz comes from Paul Strandberg's accomplished cornet style. As leader and mentor of the band, he shoulders most of the responsibility for repertoire and arrangements, no small task in view of the complex and esoteric nature of this; besides

this, he works overtime with some very nice vocals, as you can hear. I was happy to have a talk with Stefan Olsson in the session interval and discovered that he had only recently joined the band. To tackle a large and complex repertoire is no easy task as I know from personal experience; occasionally, the memories of a musically nightmarish week spent in the amazingly tolerant ranks of the Temperance Seven cause me to break out anew in a feverish sweat! Stefan Olsson is therefore to be congratulated in sounding so much 'at home' in Scaniazz.

Per Oldeus presides in the percussion department, and has successfully discerned the true role of the drums (no pun intended) in the Classic Jazz Band. This is also an unusual achievement because of the rareness of normal drumming on most 1920s recordings. However, it is possible to fit together various small pieces of evidence from rare examples, and synthesise the drumming

that we might have heard fifty years and more ago. Per Oldeus has done this, and besides, executes what he has rediscovered extremely well.

In Neta Engström Scaniazz have a singer without peer in the classic idiom. She is equally at home with the ordinary 12-bar blues form, and the Vaudeville Blues Song. One detects a pleasant influence of Eva Taylor, who was the wife of pianist/composer/publisher Clarence Williams, active in New York during the 1920s and 1930s: separately and together, they made literally hundreds of recordings of impeccable taste and mostly using Clarence Williams own characteristic compositions. Scaniazz delve deeply into this rich legacy for some of their material; for example, 'Pile of Logs and Stone' is a very little-known but good melodic number dating from 1924, recorded by Eva Taylor with Clarence Williams in early 1926 (though not written by him). Several more Williams-type numbers can be heard on Scaniazz' Growl L.P. Neta Engström makes use of her good vocal range, which is wider than the late Miss Taylor's,

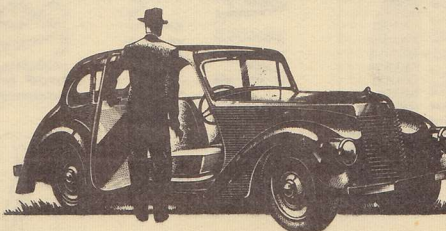
to make the most of the popular song format, as well as the 'low-down' blues, building her own style on this.

Not many bands draw on the fine repertoire left by Tiny Parham, a pianist who occupied a position in Chicago somewhat analogous to that of Clarence Williams' in New York. His fine series of Victor recordings contain many 'hot' numbers as well as the wistful 'After All I've Done' which Scaniazz play so well here.

Special mention must definitely be made of the beautiful version of 'Daddy Won't You Please Come Home' with which the band sign off. Like most of Scaniazz' repertoire, it is very seldom heard - indeed, Scaniazz must be the only band in existence playing many of the numbers you hear on this cassette! - but this is quite inexplicable for a tune of such melodic appeal. The band have discerned that which so many overlook, namely the delicacy of approach essential to bring out the best in this type of number: thus the normally quite reserved audience at the "Strathallan" broke into spontaneous applause for Neta Engström's sensitive performance.

In short, like the gentleman below, don't miss the opportunity of hearing Scaniazz 'live', and this writer will certainly be eagerly awaiting their next U.K. tour, like so many in this country to whom they conclusively proved that 'Hot Jazz is alive and well, and living in Malmö, Sweden!!'

Norman Field.



Ardent fan of Vintage Jazz hurrying to the next superb SCANIAZZ concert . . .

This cassette is a co-production of Neovox and 'Jazz at the Strathallan', the Midlands' best Jazz Club, which holds weekly Sunday evening sessions at the Strathallan Hotel, Hagley Road, Birmingham, England. See you there one night soon!

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