

**UMBERTO CESARI, NUNZIO ROTONDO,
ARMANDO TROVAJOLI
JAZZ IN ITALY IN THE 50S
RJR CD 012**

Nunzio Rotondo (tpt) Marcello Boschi (as) Gino Marinacci (ts) Bruno Campilli (p) Carlo Loffredo (db) Roberto Zappulla (d) Piero Morgan (arr). Rome, 8 March 1950:

Boppin' for Bop / The Man I Love / Helzaboppin'

Umberto Cesari (p) Carlo Pes (g) Carlo Loffredo (db). Rome, 8 March 1950: Begin the Beguine

Armando Trovajoli (p) Franco Cerri (db) Paolo Taglioferrri (d). Rome, 9 March 1950: Body and Soul / Afternoon Blues / What is This Thing Called Love / Lullaby in Rhythm / Big City Boogie

Armando Trovajoli (p) Roberto Nicolosi (db) Gilberto Cuppini (d) unknown string orchestra (except *). Milan, November 1950 – March 1951: Fascinating Rhythm / Opus 3/5 / Stars to Sailors / Sophisticated Lady / My Foolish Heart / Sid's Bounce* / My Dream is Yours / This Heart of Mine / The Man I Love / Yesterdays / All the Things You Are / I Can't Get Started / Lady Bird / Easy to Love



Jazz being worldwide before some of the players on this CD were born, nothing within should come as a surprise, even the high level of musicianship. All the tracks were freshly brewed and steeped in jazz modernism, in case you like yours strong. A few of the tracks are ultra fox and jumpy to a sweltering degree, as befitting the bop lifestyle and the Big Town attitude of Rome. But the winning windfalls in this compilation are the generous nineteen tracks by pianist Armando Trovajoli's Milan trio, many with the most thoughtful and sympathetic string section. The 'unknown' strings are sparingly if heartily lush.

Thanks to the similarly unidentified arranger, they lay back, they lay out, and the colourings, the voicings are so apropos, deceptively understated and clever. You'd wish that Charlie Parker, Clifford Brown, and Stan Getz had been as lucky. They're as lovely as any of Artie Shaw's double-ork'd tracks. To wax on here would be just needless excess. Riviera Jazz has an outstanding series of vintage Italian jazz, available via: www.rivierajazz.it

---Andy Simons

**LEE YOUNG & WOOLF PHILLIPS' ORCHESTRA
ROCK ROCK ROCK
ENCORE RECORDS**

This is indeed a curiosity. Billed as the First Ever British 'Rock' Record, the inverted commas qualify the list of ingredients, for the contents of this record is not quite what it says on the packaging. Discerning *IAJRC Journal* readers would've passed on this back in 1953 and absolutely no one then covered the number, save for one Malcolm Lockyer and his Strict Tempo Music for Dancing.

Lee Young was a singer-dancer in London's most successfully surviving variety showplace, the London Palladium. Headlining comedian Frankie Howerd, later a star in the *Carry On* films, sung praises of the remarkable quality of the young Mr Young's singing voice to a daily tabloid newspaper. Then the rest was obscure history. Palladium bandleader Woolf Phillips was enlisted to arrange a new song that Lee liked, *Rock, Rock, Rock*, cut quickly for the indie label Melodisc, which started out as a jazz label, ironically releasing the first JATP (with a different Lee Young), but, by 1953, had switched to largely a media for vibrant Caribbean music. So no hope then, especially as *Rock, Rock, Rock* wasn't a particularly strong song. It clearly isn't early rock'n'roll, which is a shame, because many British jazz musicians later in the 1950s dug it and could play it swingingly well. This is a compelling reason for anyone interested in the overlap of musical styles to hear this disc. It doesn't help that Woolf's arrangement is uncharacteristically unimaginative. And the lyric, rather than pawing at any metaphor for sex, disappointingly details the interpreter's longing for his sweetheart to come home. Even the rocking is done in that ol' rockin' chair.

Given the situation, this *Rock, Rock, Rock* is teetering on the cusp of early rock'n'roll. Lee proves a belter of quality and he's in the groove as his occasional finger snap proves. The brassy big band swings too, but the record falls short of the mark because it ain't got no Big Beat, the hard-to-ignore drum quality that early rock'n'roll picked from the pocket of rhythm'n'blues. Lee Young emigrated to Australia in 1972 and still performs and a well-rounded singer, hence this release, which also contains some 1969 tracks and interview.

www.encorepresentations.com.au.

---Andy Simons.