

Just what it says on the label, it is Jazz in Italy in the 1950s, live recordings at various gigs. The booklet notes are informative but restrained. If I'd written them, the question would've been posed as to why these top level players weren't signed-up by foreign labels? Perhaps some were, but they're each new to me and very welcome.

Quintetto Nunzio Rotondo Dell'Hot Club Di Roma does well on Denzil Best's early bebop classic, *Move*, performed here in Paris, and if it's the only Lo-Fi-ish track, people like you and me don't mind because we have the ears to un-dmuffle the audio. It was one of his first Italian Columbia releases just two days before the gig.

Giampiero Boneschi's trio is really strident swing with modern voicings slapped onto his piano keys. It's ever-so-1955, in the best way. And at over seven minutes, he leaves the starting block without any danger of an empty tank. He was recording at least from 1945 and years later would be part of Joe Venuti's 'electric' trio.

From the finger-snapping count-in, his big band wants to express itself. The saxes slip'n'slide, the bass has a groovy pace, and in fact each dog is wagging his tail with great enthusiasm. As my treble antennae have withered a bit, I adjusted the playback EQ and was delighted to hear the drummer really splash out on the cymbals.

Armando Trovajoli's combo is a delightfully tight group, well-arranged on their number, and the altoist Livio Cervellieri should've been signed to an American label. As it was, Trovajoli made records throughout the 1950s and 1960s, on Italian Parlophone and Italian RCA. Why not elsewhere?

Giancarlo Barigozzi's group is also in the pocket. He'd record for another thirty years, at least.

Piero Piccioni's piano trio is rather good too. He would have quite a few recording sessions through the years, including film soundtrack work, which was to be had in Roma.

Silvano Silviati employs a kaleidoscopic jazz history technique to *You Stepped Out of a Dream*, mixing stride, boogie-woogie, and modernist all at once.

Gianni Basso's and Oscar Valdambri's octet works well together, thanks to fleet charts by the latter and a good bopping bomb-dropper in drummer Jimmy Pratt. There's a Lars Gullin arrangement too, making *Fascinatin' Rhythm* a bit more complicated than it needs to be, especially for the bassist, but players of quality of course have no problem.

Trumpeter Valdambri's charts aren't adventuresome, but there's an old musical philosophy, usually applied to vocalists, that the better the composition, the less you have to mess it about. So when you've got a band in which the ensemble players are good soloists too, and repertoire that's 's wonderful, just give them a chance to improvise.

These are vintage concerts and, as documentary recordings, they're one-mic stands. But you'll have the ears to bring the piano closer. Of course, cats of this era knew how to balance themselves and so a sound mixer wasn't necessary. Why weren't these players issued outside of their own country? Prestige or any label could have simply leased the masters; George Wein could've flown 'em to Newport. If I knew the answers I'd be the next Norman Granz.

♪ Andy Simons



Hark!

Cannon ball Adderley



His alto sax —
His sextet
romps through
Broadway's
new hit musical

Fiddler on the roof

