

JAZZ



COLEMAN HAWKINS & FRIENDS
The Savory Collection, Volume No.01:
Body and Soul

Coleman Hawkins, Herschel Evans, tenor saxophone; Ella Fitzgerald, vocal; Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Emilio Caceres, violin; Carl Kress, Dick McDonough, guitar; Fats Waller, piano, vocal; Lionel Hampton, vibraphone, piano, vocal; Milt Hinton, bass; Cozy Cole, drums; others

National Jazz Museum in Harlem NJMH-0112 (MP4). 2016. William Savory, orig. prod., eng.; Ken Druker, Loren Schoenberg, reissue prods.; Doug Pomeroy, restoration, mastering, A-D. TT: 70:43 See <http://jazzmuseuminharlem.org/the-museum/collections/the-savory-collection>

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

This music is culled from aluminum and lacquer discs that, over the course of decades, rotted in the home of one Bill Savory. An audio engineer (and many other things) by trade, Savory (1916–2004) worked in a transcription studio and took this music straight off the airwaves as it was broadcast live in the late 1930s. And then, there it sat, boxes and boxes of it, unheard by anyone until now.

This is nothing less than a secret history of the Swing Era. *Volume No.01* alone contains the rarest of performances by Coleman Hawkins, Ella Fitzgerald, Fats Waller, Lionel Hampton, and more. The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, which acquired the Savory Collection in 2010, six years after Savory's death, has already issued *Volume No.02*, wholly devoted to previously unreleased recordings by Count Basie with Lester Young. More volumes are in the works.

How does it sound? Considering the damage to the original discs, one has to marvel at the result. Doug Pomeroy came out of retirement to clean these materials by hand, digitize them one by one, and painstakingly optimize every track. They are being released exclusively via Apple Music as MPEG4 audio files. Higher-resolution transfers for audiophiles would have been welcome, but that might be a lot to expect from a cash-strapped museum that had already gone to enormous lengths.

Through Grado SR-225 headphones, the clarity is jaw-dropping. Yes, surface noise is significant, but it varies throughout, sometimes within a single track. Balancing pros and cons of sound quality versus historical value can make bootleg releases an iffy proposition in general, but in this case the latter priority wins out.

The historical importance of the 1940 recording of "Body and Soul" by Coleman Hawkins that begins this collection can't be overstated. Two more swinging, beautifully arranged Hawkins numbers follow, then two from Ella with Chick Webb. Then come roughly 25 blissful minutes, six tracks in all, from Fats Waller and His Rhythm (before nearly every number, Fats implores his public to "Latch on!"). Next, in a Lionel Hampton-led jam session with Herschel Evans, Charlie Shavers, Milt Hinton, Cozy Cole, and others, Hamp plays vibes and piano and sings, blowing them all off the bandstand. Herschel's ballad feature, "Stardust," compares interestingly with Hawk's "Body and Soul."

The last two tracks are more intimate curiosities, wonderful in their way, that hint at the period's aesthetic range and inventiveness: "Heat Wave," a genre-defying guitar duet by Carl Kress and Dick McDonough, and way ahead of its time (1936); and a roaring, up-tempo "China Boy" from Texan violinist Emilio Caceres and a drumless trio (1937).

Because reissue producer Loren Schoenberg and the NJMH handled matters correctly, obtaining permission from musicians' estates and getting publishing credits impeccably in order, it took a while to get this music out. But far better to honor this priceless legacy of swing and creativity than to take the easy route. We waited 70 years to hear it; another little delay couldn't have mattered. —David R. Adler

HAWKINS 101

Although he never had his own lexicon like his chief rival and sometime friend, Lester Young, the great swing tenor saxophone player Coleman Hawkins got off more than his share of classic one liners:

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