Stuff Smith - The Stuff Smith Memorial Album [Black Violin] (1967)



1 Ain't She Sweet 3:55 2 April In Paris 4:13 3 Sweet Lorraine 5:40 4 One O'Clock Jump 4:40 5 Cherokee 6:03 6 Yesterdays 3:20 7 What Is This Thing Called Love 6:20
Bass – Peter Witte Drums – Charly Antolini Piano – Otto Weiss Tenor Saxophone – Heribert Thusek Violin – Stuff Smith

Stuff Smith's poor health in his later years didn't stop him from performing or recording, this studio date in Germany was recorded not long before his death on September 25, 1967. With a band of competent but not well known European musicians backing him, the violinist completed seven numbers for his final record, all standards of various vintage. Smith, of course, is the centerpiece of the LP; although he only uses a small portion of his bow, his unorthodox approach to the instrument produces a very distinct sound all his own. His vibrato-filled introduction to "Cherokee" is followed by a fine solo by pianist Otto Weiss and several brief drum breaks by Charley Antolini. His most adventurous playing takes place during "Sweet Lorraine," in a happy arrangement that almost seems like someone whistling as he jauntily walks down the street, though his second solo within the song makes great use of dissonance. Tenor saxophonist Heribert Thusek plays in unison with Smith during the opening to "One O'Clock Jump" and takes a swinging solo prior to the leader; he is also present on one other number, a foot tapping easygoing take of "What Is This Thing Called Love?" Unfortunately, this LP disappeared from print rather rapidly after its 1972 release when BASF quit the record-making business, so fans of Stuff Smith may have a very difficult time locating a copy of this excellent LP. ---Ken Dryden, AllMusic Review

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