Benny Goodman - Hello Benny (1964)

1. Great Day 2. La Boheme 3. Call Me Irresponsible 4. People 5. Hello Dolly 6. The Girl From Ipanema 7. The Pink Panther Theme 8. The Lamp Is Low 9. Hallelujah, I Love Her So 10. Them There Eyes Benny Goodman (clarinet) Benny Garcia (guitar) Herbie Steward, Skeets Herfurt (alto saxophone) Bob Hardaway, Teddy Edwards (tenor saxophone) Tay Triscari, Jimmy Zito, Tony Terran (trumpet) Vern Friley, Bob Edmondson (trombone) Pete Jolly (piano); Colin Bailey (drums). Arrangers: Fletcher Henderson; Joe Lipman; Gerald Wilson; Tommy Newsom; Bill Holman.

All performers, no matter how great, are bound to make one real bad recording during their career, especially if it is a long career. For Benny Goodman it's this strange 1964 album for the Capitol label. Despite heading a band chaired with outstanding West Coast musicians like Ray Triscari, Teddy Edwards, Pete Jolly, and Monty Budwig, playing charts by Gerald Wilson, Bill Holman, and Tommy Newsom, the result is dull and listless. None of those involved seemed to be very interested in playing tunes like "People," "The Pink Panther Theme," or "Hello, Dolly," perhaps feeling that this music was not up to their standards. There are even some Goodman fluffs on clarinet which Goodman, or the producer, didn't bother to remove from the master. Given Goodman's legendary attention to detail and professionalism, it is a surprise he let this album be released at all, much less with his playing below par. To be fair, the session is not a total loss. There are a couple of interesting cuts like "The Lamp Is Low" and a Fletcher Henderson chart for "Them There Eyes," with some good solo work by Pete Jolly andTeddy Edwards, respectively. But over all, this is substandard Goodman which should not be transferred to CD. ---Dave Nathan, Rovi

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