

Benny Goodman and Rosemary Clooney □ – Date With The King (1956)

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A1 Memories Of You 3:35 A2 Can't We Talk It Over 3:36 A3 That's A-Plenty 4:05 B1 A Fine Romance 3:06 B2 It's Bad For Me 3:00 B3 Goodbye 3:50 Benny Goodman Sextet: Aaron Bell - bass, Bobby Donaldson - drums, Buck Clayton - trio, Claude Thornhill - piano, Urbie Green - trombone Benny Goodman - clarinet Rosemary Clooney - Vocals

No, not Elvis -- or even B.B. King. This would be a date with the King of Swing, Benny Goodman, made near the height of Rosemary Clooney's pop fame and released on a 10" LP. We tend to forget that bebop and hard bop were not the only jazz styles that were recorded in the mid-'50s, for Goodman was still a potent force on the sales ledgers then -- and thus an equally potent draw. Indeed, Clooney sings on only three of the six tracks here ("Memories of You," "It's Bad for Me," "Goodbye"), essentially assuming the role of the resident thrush with her hard-driving, edgy voice of the Mitch Miller era. On "It's Bad for Me," Goodman warms up his rusty vocal pipes and trades off with Clooney, who is totally at home with the swing idiom. The Goodman Trio, with Dick Hyman on piano and Bobby Donaldson on drums, handles "Memories Of You," while the sextet takes care of the rest. On "Can't We Talk It Over" and "A Fine Romance," pianist Claude Thornhill makes a rare appearance with his fellow bandleader (they had played together once over 25 years before), replacing Hyman. The underrated trombonist Urbie Green gets a lot of solo space on the sextet sides, and trumpeter Buck Clayton produces some crackling solo work as well. While "That's a Plenty" has the romping, outgoing flavor of Dixieland, which also happened to enjoy a revival during the '50s, Goodman is mostly content to revive the sound of small group swing -- which he does impeccably. This collectible also has extensive liner notes, a rarity for the Columbia House Party series. ---Richard S. Ginell, allmusic.com

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