

Jubilee

Phil Mattson and the pm singers

ALBUM NOTES - 1

The art of jazz-oriented group singing has had a somewhat sporadic life. True, there were vocal groups back in the swing era such as the Modernaires, and subsequent units like the Four Freshmen and the Pied Pipers; but a full scale emergence of performances along these lines on a harmonically sophisticated level, arrived along with the development of jazz education, and in particular with the role played in jazz education by men like Phil Mattson.

So rich and full is the blend of these six artists that you may be tempted to assume there was a great deal of overdubbing. Actually except for parts of "Quiet Nights," there was none.

The program opens with the singers and a full orchestra. All the band arrangements, Phil is glad to point out, were written by his talented son, Mark Mattson. "Johnny One Note" is a Rodgers & Hart song dating back to 1937. Patti takes the lead, the buoyant alto sax solo is by Richie Cole and the drummer is Scott Reusser. The ingenious vocal chart was contributed by Gene Puerling of Hi Los! renown.

The treatment of "C'est Si Bon" (vocal arrangement by Michele Weir) does not attempt to duplicate the earthiness of Eartha Kitt's famous version; it has its own character, aided by Patti's confident solo and by the engaging trumpet of Bill Armstrong. Note particularly those last three chords; they are the essence of the Singers' sophistication.

Bobby McFerrin's "Jubilee" is an a cappella (unaccompanied) performance. Michele Weir, who wrote the vocal arrangement, takes the opening lead and Joe Finetti the later scat passage. The laughing, high spirited ending typifies the jubilant togetherness of the group.

Phil Mattson worked out the fascinating vocal arrangement for the Antonio Carlos Jobim "Quiet Nights," with lyrics by Gene Lees. From the long, McFerrin-like intro with its strange wordless effects (ssutt. . . boom boom. . .) through the alternating vocals by Joe and Michele, and the keyboard solo by Phil, this is a technically impeccable cut bolstered by everything from group vocalise to an a cappella interlude. (Note that *vocalise* means wordless singing, whereas *vocalese* is the setting of words to what was originally an instrumental solo.)

Richie Cole returns for "Stella by Starlight," in a Mattson arrangement that begins with vocal unison, fanning out into beautifully integrated harmony at the halfway mark during the first vocal chorus. The Victor Young melody (with a Ned Washington lyric) was first heard in a 1944 film called "The Uninvited".

Jubilee

Phil Mattson and the pm singers

ALBUM NOTES - 2

Phil's vocal arrangement of "Waltz for Debby" is brief, but long enough to capture the beguiling quality of this durable Bill Evans song (to which Gene Lees set lyrics). That's Patti Fletcher again in the lead.

Phil tells me that his arrangement of "Melancholy Baby" is something he did four or five years ago and recently decided to resurrect. There's a lot of kidding around, bits of *dibba-de-dab* scatting, voices trading off with Richie Cole, and a sort of barroom comedy bit with a delayed end that seem to keep the singers on the edge of their tonsils.

Finally there is the extraordinary "Quite Side," composed and arranged by Clare Fischer. "This is strictly for musicians," says Phil. "It's a true work of art. Clare wrote it for the American Choral Directors Association's convention; but they tried it and gave up! Two years ago Clare gave it to me, and I studied it for a year. I believe this is one of the most artistic vocal works of the twentieth century."

If Phil Mattson's words sound excessive, one need only study this performance, not once but several times, to drink in the full meaning of its achievement. That it makes such a unique impact is a tribute, of course, to Clare Fischer's gifts as a writer and arranger, but no less to the ability of the P.M. Singers to deal so brilliantly with what must have been a considerable challenge.

In fact, I am inclined to disagree with Phil's implication that this cut is strictly for musicians. It may well receive the attention it deserves from anyone who appreciates the group vocal art, of which the P.M. Singers are among the world's most distinguished representatives.

—Leonard Feather

1. JOHNNY ONE NOTE

2. C'EST SI BON

3. JUBILEE

4. QUIET NIGHTS OF QUIET STARS

5. STELLA BY STARLIGHT

6. WALTZ FOR DEBBIE

7. MY MELANCHOLY BABY

8. THE QUIET SIDE

Jubilee

Phil Mattson and the pm singers

ALBUM NOTES - 3

VOCAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Phil Mattson ("Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars", "Stella By Starlight", "Waltz For Debbie", "My Melancholy Baby");

Michele Weir ("C'est Si Bon", "Jubilee")

Gene Puerling ("Johnny One Note")

Clare Fischer ("The Quiet Side")

INSTRUMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Mark Mattson ("Johnny One Note", "C'est Si Bon", "Stella By Starlight", "My Melancholy Baby")

PERSONNEL:

*The PM Singers: Jason Smith, Joe Finetti, John Paddock, Mary Heavey,
Michele Weir, Patti Fletcher*

Keyboards: Phil Mattson; Bass: Kelly Kunz; Drums: Scott Reusser

Percussion: Mark Ivester (on "Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars" and "The Quiet Side")

Alto Saxophone Solos on "Johnny One Note", "Stella by Starlight", "My Melancholy Baby", by
Richie Cole (Courtesy of Palo Alto Records)

Band for "Johnny One Note", "Stella By Starlight", "My Melancholy Baby":

Trumpet - Bill Armstrong, Richard Hurwitz, Clay Jenkins, Walt Johnson;

Trombone - Jeff Budin, Ron Glass, Steve Tyler, Jackie Wollinger;

Saxophone - David Koz, Gary Meek, John Mitchell, Lou Price, Fred Selden;

Piano - Phil Mattson; Bass - Kelly Kunz; Drums - Scott Reusser

Band for "C'est Si Bon":

Flugelhorn - Bill Armstrong (solo), Clay Jenkins; Trombone - Ken Kragler, Nick Lane;

French Horn - Bill Allsup, Suzette Moriatti; Flute - David Koz, Fred Selden;

Clarinet - John Yoakum; Bass Clarinet - Mike Vaccaro; Piano - Phil Mattson;

Bass - Randy Landis; Drums - David Crigger.

PRODUCED BY KELLY KUNZ, PHIL MATTSON AND THE P.M. SINGERS

Vocals Recorded and Mixed at Phil Mattson School Studios; Engineers: Amy Alexander,
Sheryl Monkelien, John Paddock; Band Tracks Recorded at Sage And

Sound Recording - Los Angeles Engineer: Jim Mooney; Producer - Mark Mattson;

Mastering: Randy Bobo, Independent Sound, Milwaukee

Special Thanks to: Mark Mattson, David W. Bentley