



Pure Pleasure LPM 1443

Louis Armstrong: Town Hall Concert Plus

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This album is made of six numbers from the famous Town Hall concert of 1947, plus offerings from four others, which if not perhaps quite so famous are nevertheless all more than worthy of your attention. Armstrong's playing in these days was something to marvel at, and his presence a vitalising effect upon any musicians who teamed up with him. Teagarden never played or sung better than he did here ("St. James Infirmary" to note), but nor for that matter did Bigard. Vic Dickenson, Johnny Hodges, or any of the other musicians who haunt these tracks. The standard throughout is very high, but no one, however well they play, can approach the brilliance of Louis as he soars into his first chorus on "Misbehavin'" with the control and majesty of a seagull on the wing. Teagarden plays well enough on this track, but sandwiched between Louis' solo and a fantastic lead-in to his final chorus, he sounds almost dull by comparison. Save it, "Pretty Mama" is another tour de force, with Louis playing a solo that is supreme for tightness, and relaxation. The two tracks with Duke are full of interest. Hodges blows beautifully. Duke plays some pleasant piano on "Journey", and Pops comes on with a blues

vocal which is quite inimitable. "Snafu", a boppish kind of tune, doesn't suit Louis quite so well, but as usual he can dig his way out of any situation with his horn. "Little Girl" and "Mahogany Hall" feature a much more basic beat and Louis plays in a style much nearer New Orleans than was usual in these days. Ory takes a splendid chorus on the second named tune, and the work of both drummers is exceptional. But everything is good and Armstrong's work so consistently brilliant and vastly entertaining, that it is a set you must not miss on any account.

"Town Hall Concert Plus" - Louis Armstrong (tp, voc); Jack Teagarden (tb, voc); Neal Hefti (tp); Kid Ory (tb); Johnny Hodges (as); Don Byas (ts); Jimmy Hamilton (cl); Johnny Guarnieri, Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington, (p); Bud Scott (g); Red Callender (b); Sid Catlett, Cozy Cole, Sonny Greer (dr); a.o.