

CHET BAKER &

STRINGS

Trumpeter-vocalist Chet Baker had a sound as lovely as his life was ill-starred. Blessed with matinee idol good looks, Baker was at the time of these recordings riding the wave of cool, or West Coast, jazz. His midnight-blue rendering of "My Funny Valentine" with the Gerry Mulligan Quartet made that Rodgers and Hart ballad the jazz hit of 1952.

The following year, having found commercial success so quickly, Baker struck out on his own. Whereas Mulligan's quartet was justly renowned for its



contrapuntal harmonies in a piano-less setting, Baker immediately hired the estimable pianist Russ Freeman, whose "The Wind," destined to become something of a jazz standard, received its premier recording here. (These sessions were done in Los Angeles on the last two days of December 1953, a week after Baker turned 24.)

In addition to the trumpeter and Freeman, the other four jazz players, plus four stellar arrangers, comprised a mini-Who's Who of the West Coast genre. Baker was joined on the front line by Jack "Zoot" Sims, whose playing defined melodic swinging; added at times was alto saxophonist-flutist Clifford "Bud" Shank, a versatile soloist and invaluable presence on countless studio dates of all sorts. The rhythm section, in addition to Freeman, included veteran bassist Joe Mondragon and Shelly Manne, whose listening skills and sensitivity made him for many years a highly sought-after drummer. Writing beautifully for the jazz ensemble, plus nine strings (six violins, two violas, one cello) were Johnny Mandel, Jack Montrose, Marty Paich, and Milton "Shorty" Rogers.

The purity of Baker's tone, understated sense of swing, and vocal-like approach to this program of mostly standard material would serve him well throughout a nomadic life that ended suddenly in 1988. Like Miles Davis, Stan Getz, and Bill Evans, he will be forever associated with the surpassing lyricism of which *Chet Baker & Strings*—one of the scores of albums he made—remains an outstanding example.

CB 741

CDM



Original Recordings produced by Richard Bock

1	YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS	3:28
2	I'M THRU WITH LOVE	2:37
3	LOVE WALKED IN	2:56
4	YOU BETTER GO NOW	3:04
5	I MARRIED AN ANGEL	3:35
6	LOVE	2:33
7	I LOVE YOU	2:47
8	WHAT A DIFF'RENCE A DAY MADE	2:39
9	WHY SHOULDN'T I?	3:34
10	A LITTLE DUET FOR ZOOT AND CHET	2:36
11	THE WIND	4:00
12	TRICKLEYDIDLER	2:40
* 13	YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS (ALTERNATE)	3:28
* 14	YOU BETTER GO NOW (ALTERNATE)	3:09
* 15	A LITTLE DUET FOR ZOOT AND CHET (ALTERNATE)	2:39

*BONUS TRACK NOT ON ORIGINAL LP

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