

NEW ISSUES



Eddie Henderson by Wendy Ashton

ROYCE CAMPBELL, JOE KENNEDY, PAUL LANGOSCH GET HAPPY

FOXHAVEN 70022

*I WANT TO BE HAPPY / PICK
YOURSELF UP / JOYOUS BLUES
/ I'M ON A CLOUD / GET HAPPY
/ I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE
LIGHT / S'WONDERFUL / SMILE
/ HAPPY RHYTHM / BEAUTIFUL
FRIENDSHIP. 62:15.*

Campbell, g; Kennedy, vln;
Langosch, b. December, 2003,
Sandy Spring, MD.



Chuck Burdellik by Wendy Ashton

changing and developing all the time. Like Jazz itself . . . My own preference is for the Wallenstein date, but both records contribute to this hybrid form.

Michael Coyle

Royce Campbell conceived of this recording with a goal of featuring all “happy” songs using an all-string trio. He was able to enlist the eminent violinist Joe Kennedy, who toured and recorded with Ahmad Jamal and Billy Taylor and was the director of the Jazz program at Virginia Tech University for many years. Sadly, this turned out to be Joe Kennedy’s last recording before passing away in July, 2005.

It is a worthy tribute to Kennedy, whose stature as a premier Jazz violinist deserved greater recognition, as liner notes writer Luke Hobel maintains. Campbell agrees, noting that “Joe could swing and swing hard. To me he represents the elite of Jazz violinists.” On this program of upbeat standards, Kennedy and guitarist Campbell are joined by bassist Paul Langosch.

The proceedings begin unpretentiously with Kennedy plucking out “I Want to Be Happy” in a light Latin vein, featuring a tasteful Campbell. But the real spirit of the session is established on “Pick Yourself Up,” a swinging pick-me-up with Kennedy and Campbell sharing the melody, followed by a Campbell solo demonstrating both fine lines (first chorus) and fine chords (second chorus). Unafraid of the brisk tempo, Kennedy bows a couple of choruses deftly. Before it’s over the inspired pair trade eights for two more choruses, a real treat in musical interaction. Next up is a Blues, and Kennedy’s own “Joyous Blues” lives up to its name. Following lucid solos by his mates, Langosch makes a well-developed three-chorus statement before modestly retreating early to close out this happy Blues vehicle. Time for a ballad, and in Campbell’s outstanding composition, “I’m On a Cloud,” Kennedy finds a medium to express his songlike qualities on violin. Kennedy glisses and bends notes and phrases, Grappelli-like, and expresses ideas that always have movement and shape. Kennedy’s singing lyricism on violin re-emerges strongly in “Smile,” a tune on which Campbell also shines. Campbell closes on solo guitar with an inspired version of “Beautiful Friendship,” lending homage to Joe Kennedy for his lifetime of making music.

Don Lerman