



COMPACT DISC REVIEW

By

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Hear That Rhythm!

Stephanie Trick, piano

(No number)

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Space Shuffle / Sweet Lorraine / Handful of Keys / Bethena / Intoxication / Echo of Spring / Viper's Drag / Pastime Rag No. 4 / Greased Limelight / Ain't Misbehavin' / Carolina Shout / Honeysuckle Rose / Fingerbreaker

For many years, stride piano was almost exclusively a male-dominated genre. Even today, the number of woman performers whose repertoires are predominantly stride can be counted on one or two fingers. Thus, it's newsworthy when a new name pops up on the horizon and Stephanie Trick is a name to be remembered.

A perfect example of the old axiom, "Good things come in small packages," this slightly-built lass can arguably play faster and cleaner than any pianist (of either sex!) on the ragtime/stride circuit today and she must take great delight in exploding the "delicate female" stereotype wherever she performs. Possessed of a touch that is light but assured and an exquisite sense of timing, she effortlessly whisks her way through a 40-minute playlist on this CD that might well exhaust any seasoned performer.

Robin Frost's *Space Shuffle* seems to have become the "piece de jour" among today's four-alarm players, and Trick's rendition certainly qualifies as the one to beat. Having whetted our appetite, she follows up with equally dazzling versions of Frost's *Greased Limelight*, Fats Waller's *Handful of Keys* and *Viper's Drag*, James P. Johnson's *Carolina Shout*, Jelly Roll Morton's *Fingerbreaker*, and the seldom-heard showstopper by John Novacek, *Intoxication*.

Mercifully, she gives her listeners time to catch their breath by interspersing some slower, more romantic numbers such as Scott Joplin's concert waltz, *Bethena*, Willie the Lion's *Echo of Spring* and Waller's *Honeysuckle Rose* – all played with the care and tenderness that they deserve. *Sweet Lorraine*, to my ears, fares less well; in her effort to infuse this ballad with endlessly cascading arpeggios and runs, Trick allows the melody to suffer.

This album restores my faith in stride and novelty pianists. Stephanie Trick can unleash her flying fingers at will, but, unlike some performers whose addiction to speed has caused them to become one-dimensional, she can also put loving introspection where it is warranted. As earlier noted, hers is a name to be remembered. Highly recommended.

Available for \$20.00 postpaid from Stephanie Trick, P.O. Box 31633, St. Louis, MO 63131.