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Y. Laberge on *Jazz Icons*.

- 1 (Various artists), *Jazz Icons: Series 4. Reelin' In The Years* Productions and Naxos, 2.108003. Box Set (8 DVDs), 2009, 10 hours. B&W. All regions (no DVD zone).
- 2 1. Coleman Hawkins- Live in '62 & '64- (w/ Sweets Edison and Jo Jones)
- 3 2. Art Blakey- Live in '65- (w/ Freddie Hubbard)
- 4 3. Erroll Garner - Live in '63 & '64
- 5 4. Jimmy Smith- Live in '69
- 6 5. Woody Herman- Live in '64
- 7 6. Anita O'Day- Live In '63 & '70
- 8 7. Art Farmer- Live In '64- (w/ Jim Hall)
- 9 8. Bonus performances, including excerpts from a Coleman Hawkins concert from London in 1966, excerpts from a 1962 concert by Erroll Garner, plus another unreleased performance by Jimmy Smith.

¹⁰ This impressive Box Set (of 8 DVDs) simply titled “*Jazz Icons: Series 4*” is the perfect example of the fruitful collaboration between Europeans and Americans for the preservation of the African American musical heritage; we find newly rediscovered archived performances by seven legendary jazz artists, as recorded during the 1960s by various European TV stations, either in France, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, England, or elsewhere. Earlier in this decade, three similar box sets have already appeared in these ongoing *Jazz Icons* series, with different players on multiple venues. Therefore, everything here will seem brand new for jazz collectors.

¹¹ Each DVD of the “*Jazz Icons: Series 4*” includes rare segments from one or two concerts, or sometimes a full television performance recorded in studio and probably aired only once. These are no clips taken from longer performances or documentary with a voice-over comment (which I always find frustrating); here we get the unedited, full performances of each title without interruption. In other words, nothing has been left behind. Obviously, there is no lip-sync here. All documents are in black and white, but at least, we do not get the obsessive “overediting” with camera changes at every five seconds and the too-many useless camera moves on cranes which characterize most video concerts nowadays. The performers included here need no introduction, as

they represent the golden age of Jazz; we find saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, drummer Art Blakey, Erroll Garner on piano, Jimmy Smith at the organ, Woody Herman on clarinet, singer Anita O'Day, Art Farmer on flugenhorn.

¹² Most of these vintage TV performances were unknown even for most jazz experts from the previous century. For example, the Art Blakey concert was recorded in Paris in 1965; it is different from another Art Blakey DVD recorded in 1958 with the Jazz Messengers (which was also released by Reelin' In The Years Productions and Naxos in 2006). It is wonderful to watch these artists in their youth and at their peak, playing with small combos, and it is a pity that so many great performances were unavailable for decades.

¹³ I think the most electrifying performance of the whole set was made in Paris in 1969 by organist Jimmy Smith, not only because there are actually very few archival videos or movies of his early years, but also because here he plays many essential titles from his repertoire: "The Sermon" (a version of almost half-an-hour here) and his own soulful, funky version of the blues classic "I Got My Mojo Working", in which we can see (and listen to) Jimmy Smith singing lead vocals while playing the organ!

¹⁴ The first seven titles in this "*Jazz Icons: Series 4*" are available as well individually, under each artist's name, also on Naxos. However, the number 8 DVD of this box set is a bonus DVD that cannot be sold separately, and it contains some treasures, as for example the performance of organ wizard Jimmy Smith from 1968 (in Denmark), plus some selections from Coleman Hawkins and Erroll Garner.

¹⁵ It is a real delight to find these performances from so many great artists. The editing and individual presentation made by Reelin' In The Years Productions and Naxos is really above the average: each DVD has an illustrated booklet, instructive liner notes, vintage photographs and details. In my view, it is clear that the "*Jazz Icons: Series 4*" is a must for university libraries, although librarians should first check with the producing company in order to buy separately the special rights for academic use in classes and public presentations.

¹⁶ The "*Jazz Icons: Series 4*" is not just for vintage jazz lovers, but as well for scholars and undergraduates in cultural anthropology, American studies, Cultural studies, Atlantic Studies who would like to see how European audiences often responded with enthusiasm and respect to the African American music during the 1960s. I believe these "*Jazz Icons*" DVDs will even contribute to change the way we consume jazz music in the future: instead of listening to records or CDs, we shall watch the audio-visual performances on TV and then appreciate altogether the music and the images of these jazzmen (and women) at work. The performances included in "*Jazz Icons: Series 4*" are literally a perfect entry door to the world of jazz.