

TRU 15002

THE TRUE SOUND

TRU-SOUND

OF HIGH FIDELITY

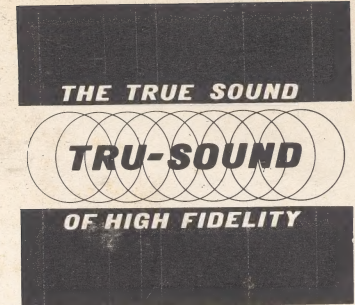


Misirlou

The Jimmy Neeley Trio

MISIRLOU

THE JIMMY NEELEY TRIO



JIMMY NEELEY, piano
MICHEL MULIA, bass
RUDY LAWLESS, drums

SIDE A

1. MISIRLOU
2. GETTIN' A TASTE
3. LAMENT FOR THE LONELY
4. WITCHCRAFT
5. LOVE IS A MANY SPLENDORED THING

SIDE B

1. MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE
2. THE CHASE
3. TIME AFTER TIME
4. GONE WITH THE WIND

The musicians who debut on this album call themselves The Jimmy Neeley Trio, and they mean exactly what they say. Very often, what passes for a trio is actually a series of piano solos with bass and drum accompaniment. But these three men are a co-operative unit, in both business and musical matters. It is that way because Jimmy Neeley wants it that way, and it took him a long time and a good deal of work to get what he wanted.

Neeley is thirty-two, but he has been working professionally for fifteen years. He has never considered being anything other than a musician, and has directed himself toward that goal for as far back as he can remember. His studies include time spent at Juilliard, Deau, the Chicago Conservatory of Music, and the Metropolitan School of Music. But, although, he is a pianist, he studied piano at none of those institutions. What he did study made him a thoroughly well-rounded and well-grounded musician: theory, harmony, composition, arranging, and also instrumental classes in flute and cello. All this time, he was studying piano privately.

His first work was as an accompanist. "No-one ever came and offered me work," he says. "When I was just a kid I'd pack my bag and tell my mother I was leaving town, and I'd go to Chicago, or Boston, or Pittsburgh, and come back six or seven months later. And I got jobs."

It stands to reason that a pianist with experience in composition and arranging would be an excellent choice to back a singer, and much of his work was in that field. But he was also an integral part of many jazz groups. A partial list of people he has worked

with, and it indicates an amazingly wide variety of musical styles, includes Hot Lips Page, Paul Quinnette, Fay Adams, Billy Williams, Red Prysock, and Hal Singer.

And then two years ago, at the age of thirty, Jimmy Neeley decided to retire. At least, retirement is his term for what he was doing. For a long time, he had had an idea for a particular kind of group. He had saved some money, and decided that now was the time to form that group, commit himself to it completely, and stand or fall with its achievements.

Some idea of how long he has had this idea, and how persuasive he is about it, can be gathered from the fact that he first met the trio's bassist, Michel Mulia, eight years ago, when they were both working at a night club in New Jersey. He was highly impressed with Mulia's playing, and told him then that if he ever formed the kind of group he had in mind, he wanted Mulia as the bassist. When he called six years later, Mulia joined without hesitation.

The choice of drummer was more difficult. Rudy Lawless is actually the second drummer the Jimmy Neeley Trio has had. There was another man for awhile, but Neeley felt something was lacking. Then he met Lawless, who achieves some of the unusual effects you will hear by the use of tympani mallets on regular drums. This use of mallets fitted in perfectly with the ideas Neeley had, and the Jimmy Neeley Trio was intact. As far as the three men involved are concerned, it will be, indefinitely.

At this point, the obvious question is, what is the concept involved? Although all three men have enormous experience and technical resources (Mulia, for instance, has studied with one of the great bass virtuosos of all time, Charles Mingus) there is no dazzling display of technical brilliance to be heard on these songs. It is, rather, the mark of excellent musicians that they don't feel the need to flaunt their virtuosity. And, it would not be accurate to call all of the music played here jazz. As a matter of fact, Jimmy Neeley himself insists that the music he plays is not completely jazz. He prefers the term "modern music", feeling among other things, that the jazz audience is too limited for what he hopes to do.

The music on this album is a fair sampling of the trio's current repertoire, but it does, of necessity, exclude one particular facet of the group's work: Jimmy has noticed that most resorts and summer hotels cater to particular national groups, and he has a few songs for each group in his book for the later parts of the evening, when the audience is likely to become more sentimental in their requests.

There is also a large sampling of what he prefers to call "semi-classical" music. Actually, this consists of the very popular "concerto" version of movie themes, and the like — at present, the most requested part of the repertoire is the theme from the motion picture, *The Apartment*.

Part of the reason for the inclusion of such numbers stems from a legitimate desire to please audiences. The rest comes from a feeling, quite natural in someone of Neeley's background, to ignore the arbitrary barriers erected between different kinds of music. If he considers it good, he will play it, no matter what the style or origin.

As you will hear, the trio does not play carelessly slapped-together routines on songs. They are intricate, carefully planned arrangements. These, as might be expected, are the work of Neeley, who does all the writing for the trio. But he is careful to state that the arrangements leave ample room for each member of the group to express himself. As Neeley puts it, "Each of us stands on his own feet, as a man and as a musician."

Neeley has extensive plans for the group. Foremost in his mind is a projected tour of Germany in the fall. He feels, and has ample reason to, that European audiences are more receptive than American ones, and cites the example of the Modern Jazz Quartet. "They listen very carefully to what you do over there," he says. We feel that we could go to Europe, make a name over there, and then come back to the United States and work as we would like to."

What he means by "as we would like to" is the American concert series that is his dream. He plans such a series, when possible, to include the standard concert halls as well as colleges.

On this record, the trio displays the extremely varied quality of its repertoire. In *Gettin' A Taste* and the *Chase* are evidences of their ability to play hard, powerful jazz. *Misirlo* is one example of the way they have worked the music of several cultures into their style. *Witchcraft*, *Time After Time*, *My One and Only Love* and *Gone With The Wind* show the unit's unerring taste in the best standards (it is interesting that three of those are associated with Frank Sinatra, the man who has done so much to raise the taste in popular music). *Love Is A Many Splendored Thing* is a brief taste of their way with the film scores. And finally, *Lament of the Lonely*, a haunting melody recorded here for the first time. If this is any indication, it seems more than likely that the Jimmy Neeley Trio will achieve its goal.

Notes: Sidney Falco
 Supervision: Esmond Edwards
 Recording: Rudy Van Gelder

THE TRUE SOUND OF HIGH FIDELITY



MISIRLOU
THE JIMMY NEELEY TRIO

TRU 15002 A

HIGH FIDELITY

1. MISIRLOU
(Nicholas Roubanis)
2. GETTIN' A TASTE
(James Neeley-Prestige Music-BMI)
3. LAMENT OF THE LONELY
(Esmond Edwards-Prestige Music-BMI)
4. WITCHCRAFT
(Leigh and Coleman)
5. LOVE IS A MANY SPLENDORED THING
(Fain and Webster)

LONG PLAYING
MICROGROOVE

THE TRUE SOUND OF HIGH FIDELITY



MISIRLOU
THE JIMMY NEELEY TRIO

TRU 15002 B

HIGH FIDELITY

1. MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE
(Mellin and Wood)
2. THE CHASE
(Fadd Dameron)
3. TIME AFTER TIME
(Cahn and Styne)
4. GONE WITH THE WIND
(Magidson and Wrubel)

LONG PLAYING
MICROGROOVE