



THE LAST WHOOP-DEE-DOO!

Freshen Up Records Street Date May 1, 2014

Richie Kaye's Music & Mirth

Richie Kaye – guitar, voice

Tony LaVorgna – clarinet, saxophone

Sam Kuslan – piano (tracks 12 & 20)

The Duo That Sounds Like an Orchestra (almost)!

Down in the dumps? Need a pick-me-up? You've got a smile-maker in your hands! 25 tracks of classic American jazz for your entertainment and delight. No heavy lifting needed with this album. It's all melody, all the time. Lyrical and fulfilling, with the occasional comic air that will make you say, I'm glad I listened!

Go ahead, put this album on your player! You'll hear two (and sometimes three) happy-go-lucky music-makers who play acoustic instruments without modern gimmicks. Guitar and saxophone aren't often recorded together so simply and plainly -- not since the swing era -- just these two make a really full sound. Almost like an entire (*gulp*) orchestra!

"We know that people are aching to hear familiar, upbeat American song," says Richie Kaye. "We know because they tell us so, wherever we play, even in the subway," where the duo performs with the Music Under New York program. "The biggest tips are given whenever we play something upbeat and positive, something that reminds people that life is pretty darn great." Whether that tune is "The Days of Wine and Roses," the opening number of this album, done in a spirited Latin style, or "Put on a Happy Face," from the 1957 musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*, with its jaunty, peppy hook and abundant good feeling -- listeners relax their tense shoulders and smile, oh, so broadly. Hey, I'm happy!

And the musicality of this duo (and sometime trio) is spectacular, as you can hear in the virtuosic saxophone playing of Tony LaVorgna on "I Can't Get Started," amply complemented by Richie Kaye's nuanced rhythmic support on archtop guitar. Sam Kuslan adds a delightful touch of youthful and spirited piano excellence in "On Green Dolphin Street," moving it forward with a pulse which will make you want to get up and dance. Once in a while, the duo ventures into the bittersweet of life with moving renditions of "Black Orpheus," from the Brazilian movie of the same name, one of the few recordings on which clarinet plays the melody, and "Over the Rainbow," from the 1939 film everybody loves, "The Wizard of Oz." Tony's haunting tone echoes a humanity that is entirely captivating. The duo love to play what used to be called "novelty numbers" in variety performance -- a genre that has all but disappeared. Going down south for an old time revue number, "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans," you might imagine yourself in a club in the French Quarter. And how many jazz musicians have ever recorded "I Love Lucy?" Richie does a mighty fine Ricky!

Listeners will love the variety: ballads, swing, stage numbers, novelty, Latin, comedy. This album has something for everyone. If you listen to it, you'll be smiling. And then you'll listen again and again!

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RICHIE KAYE (guitar, voice) was seen on vaudeville stages in a past life. He finds inspiration in the comic stage performers of the first half of the 20th century as much as he does in the jazz guitar players of the latter half. Richie has performed in clubs, on theatrical stages, in audiobooks and on TV in the US and Asia, including Tokyo TV, East China TV, the Syracuse Jazz Festival, the International Festival of Arts & Ideas and other venues.

TONY LAVORGNA (saxophone, clarinet) was on the road by age 19 with the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra and more recently the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra as featured soloist. His own CD, *The Atlanta All-Star Quartet Plays Bill Evans* won the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences award for best jazz recording. Tony recently recorded with Benny Goodman band bass player, Bill Crow.

SAM KUSLAN (piano, tracks 12 & 20) lives in New Orleans, where he plays piano and sings. He was 17 at the time of this recording. Sam has performed at the New Orleans Jazz Festival, New York City's Steinway Hall, the New Orleans Mint and clubs in the French Quarter.

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