



CHET BAKER

My Funny Valentine

PACIFIC JAZZ 7243 8 28262 4 • 1953–56, 45:43

Performance ★ ★ ★ ★

Sound Quality ★ ★ ★ ★

Chet Baker fanatics live in their own private hell. Baker has a sprawling discography, he's repackaged constantly, and every new release seems to contain at least one new song—or at least one new version of a familiar song. While many of us have the same performances several times over, few of us have them all.

My Funny Valentine, a well-programmed mix of vocals and instrumentals from Baker's peak creative period in the mid '50s, is no exception.

The uninitiated would do well to start here. The sound, for the most part, is warm and clear, and Baker's trumpet is a marvel of relaxed improvisation. And his singing—rhythmically incisive, emotionally direct—is breathtaking.

But be forewarned. That voice—that fragile, feminine voice—can be just as addictive as the drugs that plagued Baker throughout his life.

—Michael Giltz