

Girl Talk **ERNIE ANDREWS**



Teddy Edwards Houston Person Aaron Graves Dom Minasi John Webber Alvin Atkinson

HIGHNOTE
RECORDS
HCD 7073

forever being rediscovered. To this day, his live performances are marked with honesty and an intensity that comes through even on record.

Still true today are the words written by Anthony Corbett for the liner notes of Ernie's album with Cannonball Adderley on Capitol Records: "Very few singers epitomize this basic, bare-feet-in-the-mud, utterly human quality, in the great tradition of Mamie and Bessie Smith, Jimmy Rushing, and Billie Holiday. Ernie Andrews does...He is singing today with a maturity and depth developed out of decades of professional experience that render this newest re-discovery of him both an inevitability and a joy." And that was more than thirty-five years ago!

Ernie was born in Philadelphia on Christmas Day, 1927. The gospel music of the Baptist Church provided Ernie's musical roots and foundation. "My family were all church singers,

When Ernie enters a room, people smile. "Hey, pally." He greets everyone as if they were his best friends, and if they aren't yet, they soon will be. Ernie is a lady's man, a man's man, and everyone's friend. Ernie Andrews, the balladeer, the hard-swinging singer, the blues shouter, is

Baptist singers," says Ernie. "When they baptized me, and they brought me up out of the water, I could hear my grandmother on the other side of the bayou, singing at this high pitch, 'I know the Lord, He's heard my cry.'"

Singing his way through childhood, Ernie was officially "discovered" by songwriter Joe Greene at a talent show at Los Angeles' Lincoln Theater. Greene got Ernie into the recording studio and by the age of 17, Ernie's renditions of "Make Me a Present of You," "Soothe Me" (which sold over 300,000 copies), and "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Cryin'" put him on the map as a singer to be reckoned with. He's been recording ever since.

This album is comfortable and mellow. In selecting these ten songs, culled from the vast repertoire of songs that he has sung over the years, it is clear that Ernie knows big timber from little brush. He is truly a man of his age and time, true to his way of being; no holds barred, no apologies, just down to earth. His smiles still melts glaciers and his ballads still break hearts. He's been there and done that, and still he continues to do it again and again and again.

From the opening track, **Girl Talk**, a perennial favorite among Ernie's fans, it is clear that Ernie knows what he is talking about. Houston Person on tenor saxophone fronts the rhythm section of pianist Aaron Graves, bassist John Webber, and drummer Al Atkinson. The quartet quietly lays it down while Ernie pulls off the covers and spells it all out as only Ernie can.

Ernie's longtime friend and cohort, tenor saxophonist Teddy Edwards, penned the next selection, a blues ballad titled "**Don't Touch Me.**" Who would think that songs of misery

and strife could make you feel so good? Ernie and Teddy, supported by the rhythm section, prove it.

“**Ol’ Man River**” keeps on rolling along, and so does Ernie, backed again by the first quartet plus Dom Minasi on guitar. “I’m connected with my time and how many people I have seen come and go at my age; some younger that came after me are already gone,” muses Ernie. “Like the song says, I’m not tired of living and I’m not scared of dying.”

The guitar gently sets the stage for “**I Want to Be Loved**,” one of Ernie’s favorite ballads. “It’s genuine, it’s universal, everyone wants to be loved,” says Ernie. It takes real mastery to sing this song at such a slow tempo, and Ernie does not disappoint.

Teddy joins Ernie again for a light-swinging, easy-going rendition of “**I Only Have Eyes For You**.” Ernie says that he hasn’t sung this one in years, but he hasn’t lost his touch and every woman within earshot will believe that he’s singing to her, and her alone.

When Ernie was a young man, “**Everybody Is Somebody’s Fool**” was a big record for Little Jimmy Scott with Lionel Hampton. Now Ernie can sing the song from his own experience. Houston paves the way for Ernie to share the wisdom of his years.

Ernie struts his stuff on “**Once In A Lifetime**,” a jaunty up-tempo blues featuring Houston again on tenor. “This is my moment,” Ernie sings, “my destiny calls me,” and together they do great things with the blues

The mood changes again with “**Cottage For Sale**” sung at a very slow ballad tempo. Ernie describes it as “a lonesome song,” and the mournful tenor solo by Teddy tugs on the heartstrings and memories of days gone by.

The roller coaster of emotions called life hits full tilt when tearful memories give way to chuckles over the lyrics of “**That’s What I Thought You Said**.” With a dash of the blues, and an instrumental break featuring guitar and bass solos, Ernie tells it like it is, explaining to his pseudo-sophisticated lady “I’ve got to be meek on 30 dollars a week.”

Backed only by the rhythm section, Ernie ends this recording with a wistful ballad titled “**Spring Fever**.” No saxophone, no guitar, no funny lines, just a gorgeous song supported by tasteful piano chords, big fat bass notes and gentle brushes. Here, unadorned and fully exposed, Ernie is at his very best

With each release the accolades pour in, the critics praise and the fans applaud. But Ernie takes it all in stride and shares his street-wise philosophy: “When the wolf gets off your back the lion will still be on your trail,” he says. But just like Old Man River, Ernie Andrews keeps on rolling along.
– Devra Hall

