

*"Fascinating
Rhythm"*

FRED
ASTAIRE

Complete
Recordings
Volume 1
1923-1930
with

ADELE
ASTAIRE



Nostalgia
NAXOS

FRED ASTAIRE

Complete Recordings Volume 1, 1923-1930 with Adele Astaire

No performer ever made dancing look easier, or worked harder at it. Suave, elegant, sophisticated, dapper... to generations, Fred Astaire was "Mr Smooth". He was also a fine dramatic actor, and the songs he introduced unfailingly became standards.

Frederick Austerlitz was born on 10th May, 1899 in Omaha, Nebraska. When he was barely a toddler, he and his older sister Adele were enrolled in dancing school; before he turned seven, Mrs Austerlitz had moved the children to New York, where they would soon become professional dancers in vaudeville, revues and Broadway shows.

Their first Broadway success was *Over The Top*, in 1917, followed by *The Passing Show of 1918*, in which Fred was called "an agile youth, and apparently boneless". More musicals led to stardom in *For Goodness' Sake* in 1922; the Astaires stole the show and at the same time began their life-long friendship with the Gershwin Brothers. Among the many musicals to feature Fred and Adele were two more Gershwin productions, *Lady Be Good* and *Funny Face*. The Astaires' last Broadway appearance together was *The Bandwagon*, in 1931.

By this time, Fred and Adele had been the toast of Broadway and London for a decade. Though it was Fred who had been the perfectionist, pushing the team towards triumph after triumph, it was Adele who was generally considered to be the more talented one; and by 1931, on stage for twenty-five years, she wanted out. Adele accepted the hand of Lord Cavendish, and retired from performing. She died in 1981.

But Fred had never worked as a solo act, and had misgivings about his future. He wasn't the "romantic" type being sought for movies. The results of his screen tests included such comments as "enormous ears", "bad chin line", "balding", "can't sing", "can dance a little"... but what did come across, to the surprise of the movie moguls, was his undeniable charm.

Through the next three decades, Fred Astaire would be featured in such successes as *Flying Down to Rio*, *Top Hat*, *Roberta*, *Swing Time*, *Damsel in Distress*, *You Were Never Lovelier*, *Easter Parade*, *Silk Stockings*, *The Band Wagon* and *Funny Face*. His partners would include Ginger Rogers, Joan Fontaine, Rita Hayworth, Judy Garland, Cyd Charisse and Audrey Hepburn. Beginning in the fifties, Fred would receive critical acclaim for his television specials, as well as for his dramatic acting in *On the Beach* and *The Towering Inferno*. Fred was still synonymous with grace and charm when he died 22nd June, 1987.

This first volume of the Astaire legacy consists of recordings made in London between 1923 and 1930. The songs from the stage production *Stop Flirting* (the English version of *For Goodness' Sake*) were acoustically recorded for HMV, a single disc by Fred and Adele with a theatre-style orchestra, a common practice on English original cast recordings. The remaining discs are for Columbia, electrically recorded; six songs from *Lady Be Good*, with George Gershwin at the piano on four of the sides (and providing vocal commentary during Fred's first recorded tap-dancing solo); six songs from *Funny Face*; and four classic Astaire solos from 1929 and 1930. To maintain the integrity of the original cast recordings, Adele's solos have been included, but those sides which features neither of the Astaires have not.

David Lennick

1. THE WHICHNESS OF THE WHATNESS (Daly-Lanin, from *Stop Flirting*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with orchestra conducted by George W. Byng
(HMV B 1719, mx Bb 3618-3) 18th October, 1923 2:53
2. OH GEE! OH GOSH! (Daly-Lanin, from *Stop Flirting*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with orchestra conducted by George W. Byng
(HMV B 1719, mx Bb 3619-2) 18th October, 1923 3:06
3. HANG ON TO ME (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Lady Be Good*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with George Gershwin, piano
(Columbia 3970, mx WA 3183-1) 19th April, 1926 2:45
4. FASCINATING RHYTHM (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Lady Be Good*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with George Gershwin, piano
(Columbia 3969, mx WA 3184-1) 19th April, 1926 2:23
5. THE HALF OF IT DEARIE BLUES (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Lady Be Good*)
Fred Astaire with George Gershwin, piano
(Columbia 3969, mx WA 3185-4) 20th April, 1926 2:45
(This recording contains actual dancing by Fred Astaire)
6. I'D RATHER CHARLESTON (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Lady Be Good*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with George Gershwin, piano
(Columbia 3970, mx WA 3186-2) 20th April, 1926 2:49
7. SWISS MAID (YODEL SONG) (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Lady Be Good*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with Empire Theatre Orchestra conducted by Jacques Heuvel
(Columbia 3979, mx WA 3213-3) 27th April, 1926 2:47

8. SO AM I (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Lady Be Good*)
Adele Astaire & George Volaire with Empire Theatre orchestra conducted by Jacques Heuvel
(Columbia 3979, mx WA 3214-1) 27th April, 1926 2:43
9. FUNNY FACE (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Funny Face*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with orchestra conducted by Julian Jones
(Columbia 5174, mx WA 8145-1) 26th November, 1928 3:05
10. THE BABBITT AND THE BROMIDE (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Funny Face*)
Fred & Adele Astaire with orchestra conducted by Julian Jones
(Columbia 5174, mx WA 8146-1) 26th November, 1928 3:06
11. 'S WONDERFUL (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Funny Face*)
Adele Astaire & Bernard Clifton with orchestra conducted by Julian Jones
(Columbia 5175, mx WA 8169-1) 29th November, 1928 3:00
12. HIGH HAT (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Funny Face*)
Fred Astaire with unknown piano duet, orchestra and chorus conducted by Julian Jones
(Columbia 5173, mx WA 8170-1) 29th November, 1928 2:31
13. HE LOVES AND SHE LOVES (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Funny Face*)
Adele Astaire & Bernard Clifton with orchestra conducted by Julian Jones
(Columbia 5175, mx WA 8171-1) 29th November, 1928 2:52
14. MY ONE AND ONLY (Gershwin-Gershwin, from *Funny Face*)
Fred Astaire with unknown piano duet (vocal and tap dancing)
(Columbia 5173, mx WA 8185-3) 4th December, 1928 3:01

15. NOT MY GIRL (Astaire-Starita)
Fred Astaire with Al Starita & His Boy Friends
(Columbia 5355, mx WA 8808-2) 5th April, 1929 2:27
16. LOUISIANA (Johnson-Razaf-Schafer)
Fred Astaire with Al Starita & His Boy Friends
(Columbia 5355, mx WA 8809-2) 5th April, 1929 2:53
17. PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ (Berlin)
Fred Astaire with orchestra conducted by Van Phillips (actual "step dancing"
by Fred Astaire)
(Columbia DB 96, mx WA 10227-1) 26th March, 1930 2:35
18. CRAZY FEET (Conrad-Mitchell-Gottler)
Fred Astaire with orchestra conducted by Van Phillips (actual "step dancing"
by Fred Astaire)
(Columbia DB 96, mx WA 10228-2) 26th March, 1930 2:55

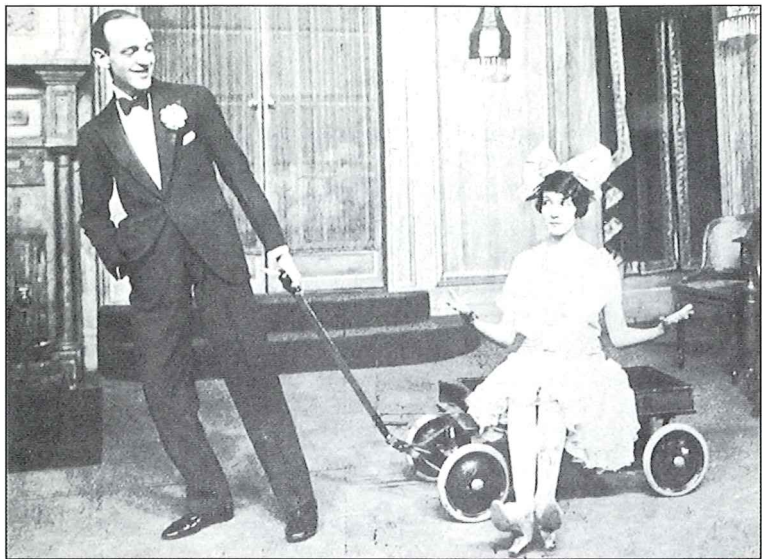
All selections recorded in London 1923 to 1930

Transfers: David Lennick

Digital Noise Reduction: Graham Newton

Designations re 'tap dancing' & 'step dancing' are as noted on original 78-RPM labels.

Design: Ron Hoares



Fred and Adele Astaire in *Funny Face*, 1927

The Naxos Historical labels aim to make available the greatest recordings of the history of recorded music, in the best and truest sound that contemporary technology can provide. To achieve this aim, Naxos has engaged a number of respected restorers who have the dedication, skill and experience to produce restorations that have set new standards in the field of historical recordings.

David Lennick

As a producer of CD reissues, David Lennick's work in this field grew directly from his own needs as a broadcaster specializing in vintage material and the need to make it listenable while being transmitted through equalizers, compressors and the inherent limitations of A.M. radio. Equally at home in classical, pop, jazz and nostalgia, Lennick describes himself as exercising as much control as possible on the final product, in conjunction with CEDAR noise reduction applied by Graham Newton in Toronto. As both broadcaster and re-issue producer, he relies on his own extensive collection as well as those made available to him by private collectors, the University of Toronto, the International Piano Archives at Maryland, Syracuse University and others.



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FRANK CRUMIT: "A Gay Caballero" 8.120502

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"Fascinating Rhythm"

FRED ASTAIRE

Complete Recordings

Volume 1, 1923-1930 with Adele Astaire

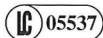
1. The Whichness Of The Whatness 2:53
2. Oh Gee! Oh Gosh! 3:06
3. Hang On To Me 2:45
4. Fascinating Rhythm 2:23
5. The Half Of It Dearie Blues 2:45
6. I'd Rather Charleston 2:49
7. Swiss Maid (Yodel Song) 2:47
8. So Am I 2:43
9. Funny Face 3:05
10. The Babbitt And The Bromide 3:06
11. 'S Wonderful 3:00
12. High Hat 2:31
13. He Loves And She Loves 2:52
14. My One And Only 3:01
15. Not My Girl 2:27
16. Louisiana 2:53
17. Puttin' On The Ritz 2:35
18. Crazy Feet 2:55

Total Time 51:20

Transfers and Production by David Lennick

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