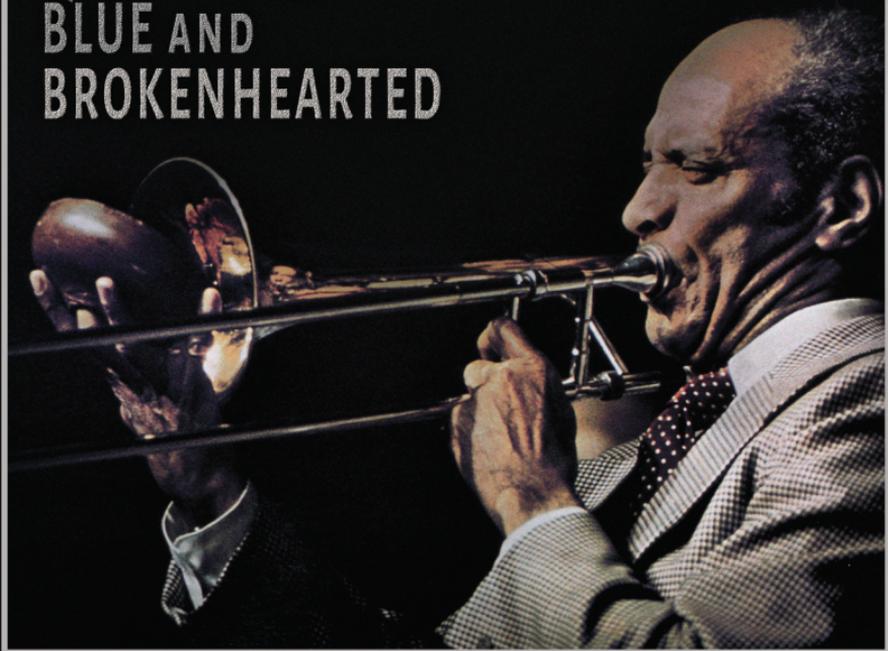


FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER

2<sup>x</sup>HD  
FUSION

VIC DICKENSON'S  
QUINTET  
BLUE AND  
BROKENHEARTED



STORYVILLE

Back in the 1960's, a short-lived record company called Gala produced a welcome album. The record – now long deleted – celebrated the *Golden Era of Dixieland Jazz* and king-pin in the session was an out-of-fashion trombonist new to me: Vic Dickenson, whose heavy-feather solos somehow conjured up Puck dancing through mud. The blasé yawning humor of his sixteen bars in *Basin Street Blues* kept one listener awake for three nights.

A year or two later Vic Dickenson's solo on the same tune received a standing ovation from a youthful audience at the Monterey Jazz Festival. The reception caused a flurry of surprised reappraisal in jazz circles nationwide; at the time not one Dickenson-led LP was available nor was he appearing at major jazz venues. But few musicians would have shared the astonishment. 'I think Vic is the best all-around trombonist in the world-of all time!' Bobby Hackett (who first worked regularly with Dickenson in 1951) told Brian Priestly some years after, 'For musical skills he's the absolute champ – and any good trombone player will tell you the same! And he's such a pleasant guy to have around; cheerful – and he keeps you laughing!' For a man with a sense of humor Vic Dickenson plays the right instrument; the trombone – as players from Dickie Wells to George Chisholm can attest – lends itself happily to musical humor. But the humorous side of Dickenson's musical personality is rooted, like any great comedian, in hard-won knowledge of what the art – in his case trombone playing – is all about. It's sometimes forgotten that by 1926, at the age of twenty, he was among the guard of musical liberators, like Jimmy Harrison and Jack Teagarden, who revolutionized the trombone's roll in jazz and music in general. 'The trombone's part was too limited then,' Dickenson explained to Stanley Dance in 1964, 'the old way sounded like a dying cow in a thunderstorm'. I used to copy records at first and I loved Mamie Smith's *Jazz Hounds*, but then I got tired of hearing the trombone and learned what everybody played on the records, the saxes and clarinets, too!' He heard and liked Claude Jones, and 'Jimmy and Jack influenced me because they were playing the way I had wanted to play before I heard them!' In the ensuing ten years Dickenson's revolutionized approach was to earn

him work with well-known bands, from Chick Webb to Benny Carter, and then before 1940 when he joined the band with which most people associate his emergence: Count Basie. 'All the musicians knew me,' he recalled to Dance, 'but it wasn't until I was with Basie that the writers and people became aware of me. Dickie Wells and I played the jazz solos and had many a nice drink together.' And of course the music was immortal.

Today Vic Dickenson is a senior member of the jazz aristocracy and belongs to the select company of music people (like Ruby Braff, Dave McKenna and Bobby Hackett) dedicated to seeking out all that's best in American popular song. 'You know,' Hackett observed in 1974, 'Vic knows the verse, words and chorus of every popular song ever written! Not all the bad ones – he discards those, but the good ones he manages to get inside better than the composer. 'And, talking to Dance, Dickenson gave an insight into how he does it. 'I like to play the melody,' he explained, 'and I want it still to be heard but I like to rephrase it and bring out something fresh in it as if I were talking or singing to someone. I don't want to play it as written because there's usually something square in it!' A version of *Blue and Brokenhearted* turns up on this album which illustrates his skills to perfection and practically defines jazz in the process.

Throughout this album Dickenson is heard in his favorite and perhaps most successful milieu: a relaxed small group. 'Trying to make music in a small group, a man really has to know what he's doing at all times,' says Bobby Hackett, 'and Vic is just the greatest ever; he makes you enjoy playing, you know that he's with you.' His colleagues for this date included old friends; Buddy Tate, a friend from the Basie era, and Red Richards, who was Dickenson's neighbor in Harlem around 1930. Accordingly the music is warm, relaxed and enhanced by spacious recording quality. *Rosetta*, a standard warmer, opens side 1 with a pawky Tate tenor and a two-chorus definition of Dickenson's art: windy-roofed burry trombone sprung

with slurs, glissandi, and baby-leopard growls. More top-drawer Dickenson turns up on *Blue and Brokenhearted*, a trombone ballad as solemn as a bishop with a pint of gin under his cassock, and *Isle of Golden Dreams* – an unlikely vehicle falling somewhere between *Tumbling Tumbleweeds* and *Chattanooga Choo Choo* – which bounces happily to a final note from Tate that's ninety-nine percent air, one percent pitch.

*Dear Old Southland* has a romping stride-inflected piano solo from Richards (a beautiful pianist who sometimes recalls Claude Hopkins) and *Ding Dong* is an easy-walker blues featuring bluff Dickerson (a quote from *Bali Hai* winks from the start of his second chorus) and a flawless, rich-toned solo from Duvivier, one of the rare breed of bassists whose time. Pitch and taste are uniformly faultless. *Penthouse Serenade*, a good neglected ballad, showcases Tate on baritone and sly Dickerson, before everyone has fun with *Black Bottom*, an unexpectedly rewarding tune which encourages good solos all around, underpinned by Jackson's featherlight drums before a reprise to the theme and a conclusive, put-your-foot-down coda. And finally: *Five O'Clock Whistle*, first recorded by Dickenson and Tate for Count Basie thirty-six years earlier. The music sounds younger than ever and of course it always will.

**Dig Fairweather**, June 22, 1977

# Vic Dickenson's Quintet

- 1 **ROSETTA** 5:27  
(Hines)
- 2 **BLUE AND BROKENHEARTED** 3:37  
(Hardman - Clarke - Leslie)
- 3 **ISLE OF GOLDEN DREAMS** 4:46  
(Walther Blaufuss)
- 4 **DEAR OLD SOUTHLAND** 5:14  
(Layton - Creamer)
- 5 **DING DONG** 6:20  
(Dickenson)
- 6 **PENTHOUSE SERENADE** 5:24  
(Jason - burke)
- 7 **BLACK BOTTOM** 5:42  
(De Sylva - Brown - Henderson)
- 8 **FIVE O'CLOCK WHISTLE** 3:08  
(Myrow - Gannon - Irwin)

## BLUE AND BROKENHEARTED

Vic Dickenson (trombone)  
Buddy Tate (tenor sax, Baritone sax)  
Red Richards (piano)  
George Duvivier (bass)  
Oliver Jackson (drums)

Recorded 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1976, New York

2xHD mastering: René Laflamme  
2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry  
Album cover & insert artwork: André Perry  
Liner notes: Dig Fairweather  
Graphics: Sylvie Labelle



## THE 2xHD FUSION MASTERING SYSTEM



In the constant evolution of its proprietary mastering process, 2xHD has progressed to a new phase called 2xHD FUSION, integrating the finest analog, with state-of-the-art digital technology.

The mastering chain consists of a selection of high-end vacuum tube equipment. For the recordings on this album, the original ¼" 15 ips NAB master tapes were played on a Nagra-T tape recorder, modified with high-end tube playback electronics, wired with OCC silver cable from the playback head direct to a Nick Doshi tube head preamplifier. The Nagra T, with its four direct drive motors, two pinch rollers and a tape tension head, has one of the best transports ever made. A custom-built carbon fiber head block and a head damping electronic system permit 2xHD FUSION to obtain a better resolution and 3D imaging.

The resulting signal is then transferred into high resolution formats by recording it in DSD 11.2 MHz using a Merging Technologies' Horus A to D converter. All analog and digital cables that are used are state of the art. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by a super capacitor power supply, using a new technology that lowers the digital noise found in the lowest level of the spectrum. A vacuum tube NAGRA HDdac (DSD) is used as a reference digital playback converter in order to A and B with the original analog master tape, permitting the fusion of the warmth of analog with the refinement of digital.

2xHD was created by producer/studio owner André Perry and audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme.

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