

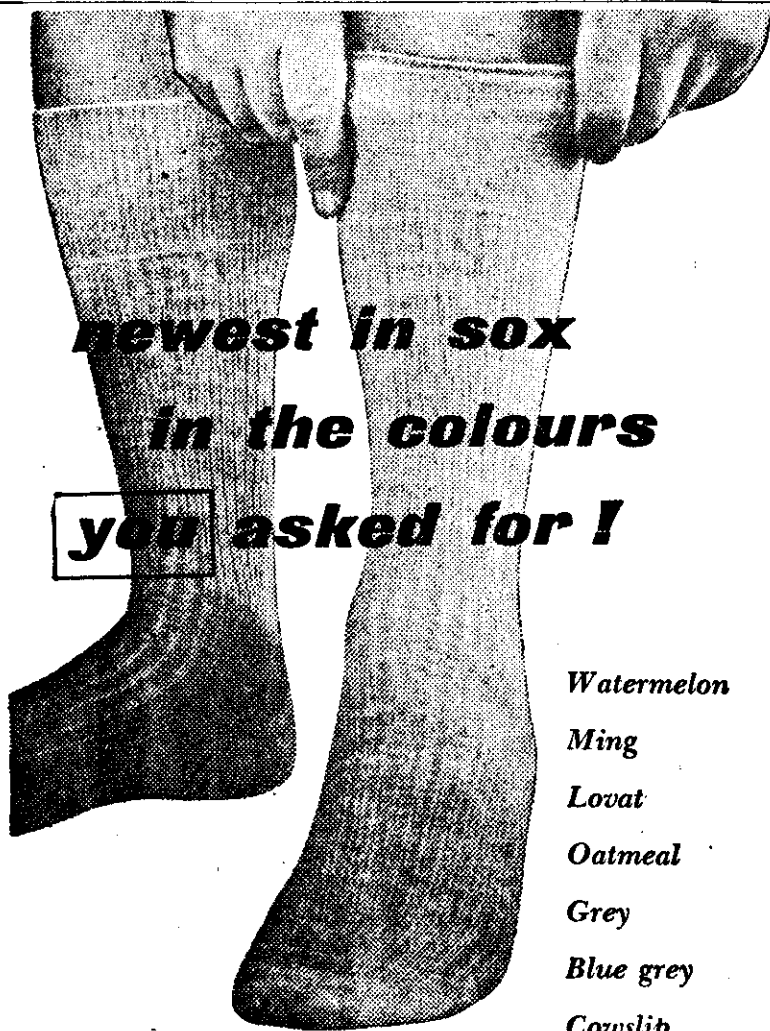
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SL16

FIRST HEARINGS IN JAZZ

Sarah at Mister Kelly's

THIS session was recorded at Mister Kelly's, a popular little supper club at the top of Rush Street in Chicago. Complete with audience response, asides from Sarah Vaughan herself, and a warm feeling not often obtained in the customary studio setting, this is good listening material.

Accompanied by Jimmy Jones (piano), Richard Davis (bass) and Roy Haynes (drums), Sarah swings through nine items: "September in the Rain," "Willow Weep for Me," "Just One of Those Things," "Be Anything But Be Mine," "Thou Swell," "Stairway to the Stars," "Honeysuckle Rose," "Just a Gigolo," "How High the Moon."

I am not a Sarah Vaughan fan. Her unpleasant nasal pronunciations and her sometimes awkward striving for effect mar her offerings but although these deficiencies are present on this LP, her warmth and personality overcome them to some extent. "Willow" contains several tastefully improvised lyrics which get a laugh from the crowd and "Moon" is presented as a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald. "Be Anything" is sung simply and sincerely without a single gimmick and "Thou Swell" sounds just as Rodgers and Hart meant it to sound.

I can well understand why Sarah Vaughan has not achieved the fame and fortune of a Fitzgerald or a Bailey; but even so, I found myself enjoying large portions of the programme. What did strike me though was the remarkable similarity between Sarah's voice and that of Carmen McRae.

First Playing: Station 2YD, August 7, 9.0 p.m.

Norman Granz Jam Session

Personnel: Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie (trumpets), Bill Harris (trombone), Flip Phillips (tenor), Buddy de Franco (clarinet), Oscar Peterson (piano), Herb Ellis (guitar), Ray Brown (bass), Louis Bellson (drums).

Granz has a successful recipe for making money. He takes nine top musicians, locks them in a recording studio for 24 minutes, turns on the tape recorder and hey presto! another jam session. "Lullaby in Rhythm" is the ninth in an almost never-ending series of such LPs; but this one is, fortunately, better than most of its predecessors.



"Miss, you forgot to put the sputnik on the top"

(C) Punch

We all know that the participating musicians are technically agile, competent and able to produce exciting jazz on occasions but this is not one of the occasions. There is lack of organisation (e.g. Eldridge begins his solo late and de Franco comes in too soon) and a monotonous rhythm section pounding out the same beat *ad nauseam* hardly inspires the unpredictable soloists.

Why is this session better than other such jam sessions then? For one reason only—none of the musicians honk, scream, pound or fall off their stools. Obviously they were too bored even for that.

First Playing: Station 2YD, August 7, 9.34 p.m.

Jazz at Newport (5)

George Lewis Band with Lewis (clarinet), Robichaux (piano), Willis (trumpet), Thomas (trombone), Pavageau (bass), Watkins (drums), play "Basin Street Blues," "Bourbon Street Parade," "Tin Roof Blues," "Royal Garden Blues" and "That's a Plenty."

Lewis was given the task of opening the Newport Festival on July 4, 1957, but what resulted was dull, uninspired, ragged Dixie and judging by the mild applause the crowd were not particularly enthralled either.

The group moves into "Basin Street" before they are aware of it but then they sound tired enough to be playing in their sleep. Eddie Condon could wake them up!

The non-swinging rhythm section plods along regardless throughout this 25-minute set. The liner notes to the LP state that Lewis kept the beat with a sort of easy wobbling of his knees, and the whole thing rocked and swung right off the ground with a minimum effort. Despite Bill Simon's assertion, I have seldom heard a group swing less.

Lewis's low register clarinet in "Tin Roof Blues" is the only bright spot in this show, although "That's a Plenty" is outstanding for the number of "clinkers" and its complete lack of cohesion among the instrumentalists.

Pianist Bobby Henderson plays "Jitterbug Waltz," "Keeping Out of Mischief Now," "Blues for 'Fats'," "Honeysuckle Rose."

Henderson's music stems from the stride-piano styling of Waller and Johnson but his presentation lacks their warmth, power and swing. He has tempo trouble on "Mischief," the piano sounds thin and empty and the less said about the final bars the better. "Blues for 'Fats'" reminiscent of "St Louis Blues" is better, but if I wanted to hear Waller's music played by a Waller stylist, I'd choose Johnny Guarneri every time.

Don Elliott Quartet with Elliott (mellophone, vibes, bongos), Evans (piano), Furtado (bass), Beldini (drums), play "Dancing in the Dark," "I Love You," "S Wonderful."

Elliott is probably the most versatile musician in jazz today for he plays mellophone, trumpet, vibes and bongos—and he sings. In addition he is a great mimic on both vibes and voice. At Newport he put on quite a show with his impersonations of Sarah Vaughan, Liberace and Mr Magoo as well as parodying Red Norvo, Milt Jackson, Mack Brokensha, Lionel Hampton and Terry Gibbs. Unfortunately Norman Granz did not see fit to release any of this material, but rather to subject us to three very ordinary performances of jazz standards.

(continued on next page)

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 25, 1958.