

PANTHEON  BOOKS

A BIOGRAPHICAL
GUIDE TO THE
GREAT JAZZ
AND POP SINGERS



WILL FRIEDWALD



Stardust Melodies

The Warner Bros. Animation Art

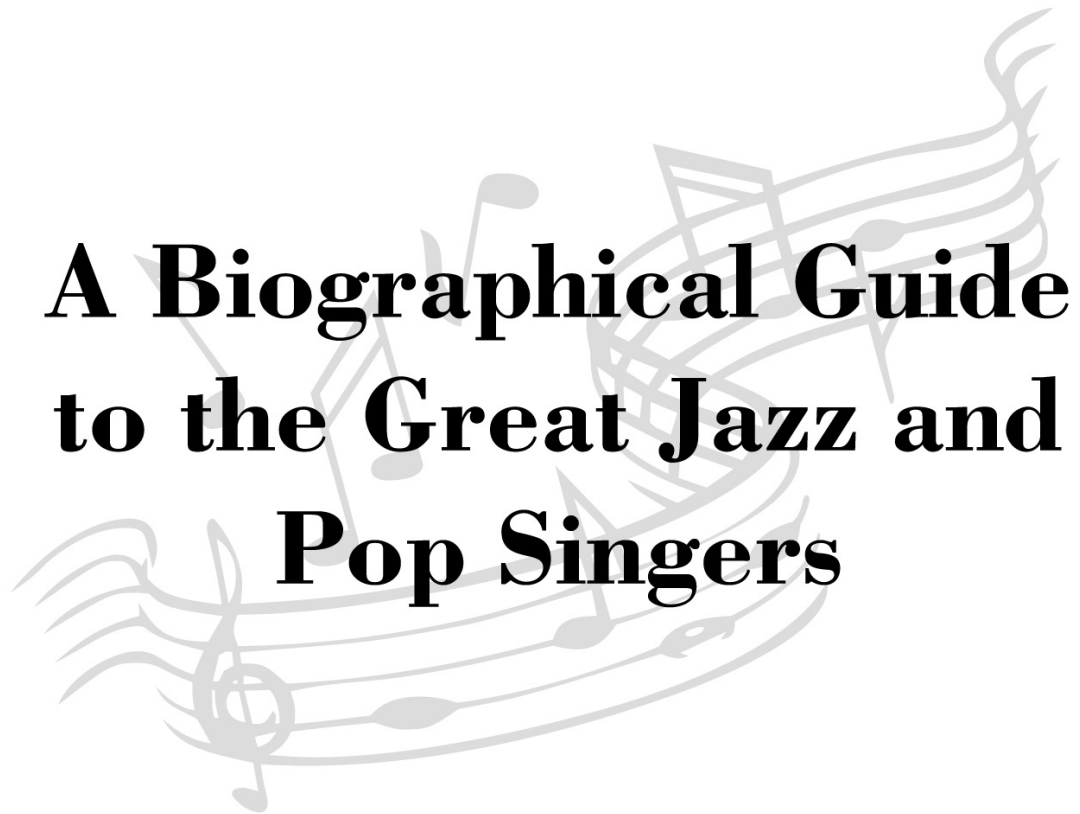
The Good Life
(with Tony Bennett)

Sinatra!
The Song Is You: A Singer's Art

Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices
from Bessie Smith to Bebop and Beyond

Looney Tunes and Merry Melodies

The Warner Bros. Cartoons



**A Biographical Guide
to the Great Jazz and
Pop Singers**

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To Rosemary, who was there at the beginning

And to Pamela, who was there at the end

It doesn't matter what you think about me, but it matters a whole lot what I think about you.

—Louis Jordan, “Beans and Cornbread”

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Bessie Smith

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Introduction

Jazz singing and popular singing are two extremely broad fields that have a great deal of territory in common—there's a considerable amount of pop in a jazz singer like Ella Fitzgerald and a great deal of jazz in a pop singer like Steve Lawrence. Indeed, the two genres are frequently so close that it's difficult, and often pointless, to distinguish between them. Big and large, both kinds of singers collaborate with the same musicians, and, more importantly, they both rely upon what has come to be known as the Great American Songbook as the basic source of material.

Traditionally, those of us who write about jazz vocalists devote a lot of verbiage to discussing what does and what doesn't constitute jazz singing, and who is and who isn't. Although there is a degree of consensus, in the main it's a highly subjective call, and one that, after years of literature debating the subject, seems tired. Perhaps too much time has been spent arguing who is and who isn't a jazz singer; better to spend time worrying about who is and who isn't a good singer.

This book is about singers—make no mistake. However, like my previous work (*Stardust Melodies*, which was also suggested and edited by Robert Gottlieb), this current work is driven, to a degree, by songs. Songs were the essential criteria by which artists were or were not included. Of the thousands of artists of the last hundred years or so who could be described as either jazz or pop singers, my first consideration was to focus on those who primarily sang the American songbook, and, even more so, to concentrate on those artists who made a vital contribution to the way the songbook is sung. All kinds of people have sung the songbook, particularly in recent decades, from opera divas (like Renée Fleming) to rock stars (like Rod Stewart, who is, in fact, covered in a special section). But, for this book, the idea was to focus on those artists for whom the songbook was bread-and-butter, or, as Elizabeth Doolittle would put it, mother's milk.

Obviously, there's a lot of gray area: Joe Williams and Jimmy Rushing can comfortably be described as blues singers, yet the majority of their output is based in the songbook. Other singers are more problematic: In the case of Ray Charles, Bobby Darin, and Nina Simone, it seemed that they had all made a substantial contribution to the art of singing this music, and therefore my essays on these artists focus on this one aspect of their careers, and are not intended as comprehensive coverage of their entire canon.

To a degree, this book still has a jazz bias; I have tried to include all the major jazz singers and as many pop singers as there was room for. Most of the singers I've picked, even from the pop side—Vic Damone, Steve and Eydie, Jack Jones—have some sort of jazz credentials, and they almost all swing (whenever they need to, at least), even if they don't necessarily scat up a storm.

Obviously, the great singers of Broadway are part of this picture. I have given due attention, I hope, to four of the major leading ladies of musical comedy (Ethel Merman, Mary Martin, Julie Andrews, Barbara Cook) as well as to half a dozen or so of the most important name-above-the-title baritones and leading men. My criterion was to look for those Broadway leads who also had substantial careers as recording artists (beyond original cast albums)—and there were surprisingly few. I have also included an essay on four major leading ladies from

the great movie musicals of the thirties and forties (“Hollywood Divas”), whose recording careers were generally scattershot, but were very interesting, to say the least.

So who isn’t here? Obviously not blues singers who sing the blues exclusively, as well as Brazilian singers who include jazz elements in their music or occasionally sing “Skylark.” We have also left out concert singers and opera singers, such as the imposing figure of Patti Robeson; they sang standards occasionally but weren’t focused on them. More recently, there’s been a trend for rock and pop stars—mainly, by some unexplained coincidence, those who were popular in the seventies—to do whole albums of standards, and these are discussed in an essay of their own.

There also is something of a generational bias, in that I focus on the middle of the twentieth century. There are many earlier artists and some more recent ones, but on the whole, it seems the golden years for singing the American songbook came a generation or so after the songs themselves were written, in the immediate postwar era. More major singers seem to have been actively working and recording in the fifties than in any other decade. In this high-growth period, the new medium of the long-playing disc led to a commercial boom in record sales; virtually everyone who had the least bit of celebrity or could remotely carry a tune (sometimes not even that) was given the chance to make records, and the major stars of the medium, your Fitzgeralds, Vaughans, and Sinatras, were constantly in the studio, their productivity not limited by the market but by their own stamina. (Nat King Cole recorded seven full albums in 1958 alone, although not all of them were issued in that year.)

The main perspective of this book is historical; it should not be taken as a survey of the current scene (as of 2010). You will find only a handful of contemporary and younger artists who sing the songbook, all of whom already have a proven track record. There is just a smattering here of artists born after 1950 (Cassandra Wilson, Dianne Reeves, Dee Dee Bridgewater) and even fewer born after 1970. When I began this undertaking, there were only three artists I planned to include who were under forty (that description then applied to myself as well): Diana Krall, Kurt Elling, and Audra McDonald. By the time you read this, all four of us have traveled past the forty-year mark. At the very last minute, I decided to add an essay on Harry Connick Jr.—I figured that after doing twenty-four albums over a twenty-year period he deserved a little attention—and I also added a few briefer comments about other boy crooners of a similar disposition.

The focus is on the middle, not so much the contemporary, and equally less so the beginning. The process known as acoustic recording was the only game in town for the first thirty-five or so years of the life of the new industry and entertainment medium called the record business—which is a long time. (By comparison, the age of the long-playing vinyl record lasted only thirty years, from 1955 to 1985.) I haven’t devoted any essays to artists who spent the entirety of their careers in this prehistoric period, which ended in 1925 with the introduction of the electrical microphone. However, I do give space to many singers who started in the teens and early twenties and then just kept going, hitting their stride in the electrical era: Al Jolson, Sophie Tucker, Eddie Cantor, Cliff Edwards, Nick Lucas, Gene Austin, and Marion Harris. (Harris may be the exception: She kept recording until 1934, but did the bulk of her best work before 1925.)

Within the parameters of those considerations, the artists included in this book were not

chosen by consensus or committee, but entirely by myself and Bob Gottlieb. By necessity, I'm sure that I've left out some significant artists; as it was, the book kept growing and growing—every time we turned around, either Bob or myself had thought of someone else who deserved some kind of coverage. After I had finished a first draft of the essential 150 or so “core” essays, Bob suggested that I write five essays about the iconic American vocal stylists who worked in areas outside of the songbook: Bessie Smith (blues), Mahalia Jackson (gospel), Hank Williams (country and western), Elvis Presley (rock 'n' roll), and Bob Dylan (and I admit that it isn't quite so easy to identify Dylan by a strict musical genre and put it between a pair of parentheses). Since the emphasis is on songbook-centric artists, these artists are primarily meant to be representative of their fields.

But even once decisions were made about the artists to be profiled here, space still remained an issue: There simply wasn't room to write everything that needed to be said about every performer worth talking about. When we started this project in early 2001, we were using David Thomson's *A Biographical Dictionary of Film* as a model and originally intended our entries to be as short and to-the-point as Mr. Thomson's. However, as I started writing it became clear to me that brevity was not going to serve our purposes well—thus the pieces kept getting longer and longer, eventually taking the form of full essays rather than condensed encyclopedia entries. Even given the overall length of the present work, it was impossible to write as much as I wanted, particularly on bigger figures like Sarah Vaughan and Carmen McRae. On the other hand, I'm very happy that some artists with smaller but important careers—Joe Mooney and Jeri Southern, for instance—were given more attention than I believe they're ever received before in any previous book. (I am also delighted to report that my opinions and appreciation of such neglected figures as Nellie Lutcher and Johnny Desmond have gone way up since covering them for this book.)

As with my previous books, so many individuals have contributed to both the form and content of this one that their names could easily be on the front cover. Being too selfish to allow that, I will restrict myself to thanking them here. I am especially grateful to the “specialists,” those individuals who have spent copious amounts of time researching one artist or group of artists and who have shared their information, opinions, recordings, and other materials with me—people like Tony Sachs (Buddy Greco), Jonathan Cohen (Jon Hendricks and Lambert, Hendricks & Ross), David Torreson and Ivan Santiago (Peggy Lee), Bob Conrad and Tom Bumbera (Buddy Clark), Chris Bamberger (Fred Astaire), Barbara Rosene (Ruth Etting, Annette Hanshaw), James Coffrey (Sheila Jordan), Dr. Ruth Prigozy (Dick Haymes), Ken Crossland (Perry Como), Tim Brooks (the entire acoustic era), Rob Waldman, James Kaplan, and Michael Kraus (Frank Sinatra). The gentlemen (and lady) of the Toast of New York collective—John Leifert, Peter Doyle, Steve Ashley, Steven Abrams, Henry Schmid, Paul Lindemeyer, Dan Levinson, Merle Sprinzen, David Garrick, David Lennick, Dave Dawe, and Dave Dixon—deserve special credit for helping provide sound files and factoids regarding virtually every vocalist of the twenties and thirties. Special thanks also to Gordon Anderson of Collectors' Choice Music (www.ccmusic.com) for providing me with a box of CDs to listen to.

Thanks also to Shannon McCarty and Rob Vrabel for editorial help. Rob and Chr

Bamberger, Randy Skretved, and David J. Weiner deserve special credit for going through stacks of manuscript (thank you, Google Docs) and helping me eliminate mistakes. At the last minute, Dan Langan and Bob Porter—experts, respectively, on Broadway and the blues—volunteered to go through sections pertaining to those genres and sent me much-appreciated reams of feedback. Ken Bloom and Larry Maslon were also a big help on theatrically oriented artists.

About those mistakes: The history of jazz and popular music remains rife with conventional wisdoms, received myths, and tales that have taken on the guise of credibility—as well as half-truths that have often taken the place of the real thing. I’ve made every effort not to perpetuate canards and assorted herrings (red or otherwise), but have probably added plenty of mistakes of my own. (A note on song titles: as Bob learned when he compiled his highly recommended anthology *Reading Lyrics*, it’s often impossible to get a definitive version of a song title—particularly if question marks, commas, or exclamation points are involved. Often the same song will be spelled or punctuated differently from one performance to the next, and the sheet music cover will differ from the recording, and just as often the title of the same performance will be spelled differently on the 78 rpm, LP, and CD release. Yes, I do have a CD somewhere in which Richard Tauber does a song from an operetta identified as “Whores Inn.”)

The person Bob and I most need to thank is his assistant, Sarah Rothbard; her impressive organizational skills—and angelic patience—were exactly what were needed to get the manuscript to the finish line. I repeatedly make a point of telling her that we couldn’t have finished the book without her. Sarah always answers back that any reasonably well organized person could have done as well. But, just this once, she is wrong.

Around the time I started work on this project, I had lunch with one of my oldest friends, the jazz trumpeter and critic Richard Sudhalter. His now classic history *Lost Chords* had only recently been published, and I remember chiding him about how it couldn’t possibly have taken ten years to write a book—even a magnum opus like *Lost Chords*. God has obviously punished me for this offhand remark; karmic balance has been restored, because it has taken me a full ten years to see this book through from start to finish. I began work on this project in 2001, after *Stardust Melodies* went into editing. In 2002, shortly after work on this book began, I started writing for *The New York Sun*, and, over the seven years of that newspaper’s existence, I did roughly seven hundred columns on jazz and cabaret. This book was written for the most part, while I was doing two columns a week for the paper. At the end of 2008, the *Sun* set (as pundits punned at the time), and I was lucky enough to find a new home at *The Wall Street Journal*, which has been keeping me off the streets ever since. (God bless Rupert Murdoch.) Throughout 2009 and through the summer of 2010, Bob and I spent many many long days editing and revising, trimming and expanding the manuscript and, in particular, updating the essays on living artists. At one point, we considered restricting the book to “historical” artists, which generally meant those no longer living (or, if still alive, were no longer active) or born before a certain year (say, 1950). That, however, would give the false impression that this is a dead art form, rather than a living, breathing, vital music actively performed by thousands of contemporary artists. Accordingly, we have included

smaller number of younger and currently active artists, even though the downside was that their essays had to be constantly updated—some of the sections on younger performers have been revised four or five times.

I hope that the book in your hands is only the first of many editions. It's a dream of mine to revisit and update it every six or seven years—whatever the traffic will allow—and that like the wonderful Thomson work, it can be something of a perennial. I hope to keep revising it, to update the sections on those artists who are still alive and active and to rediscover vintage performers who may have fallen through the cracks the first time around. As big as this book is, at a certain point we just ran out of room. Sometime after the last minute, I was planning to do an essay on the brilliant and chronically neglected Marilyn Maye when Althea Karper (the equally brilliant and much-appreciated managing editor of Pantheon) firmly put her foot down and told us we had neither the time nor the space to add anyone else. (So don't complain to me—talk to Altie!) Apologies to the fans of David Allyn, Ernie Andrews, Shirley Bassey, Eva Cassidy, Alan Dale, Francis Faye, Earl Grant, Gogi Grant (no, they weren't related), Rebecca Kilgore, Nancy Lamott, Julius LaRosa, Maude Maggart, Tom Martin, John Pizzarelli, Sue Raney, Catherine Russell, K. T. Sullivan (and Mark Nadler), Kay Thompson, Paulo West, and possibly even others.

I also hope that new reissues of recordings and the discovery of previously undocumented ones will allow me to reevaluate many historical performers (about two years after I had written the Dick Haymes essay, a member of the Haymes Society sent me the singer's entire singles output on a homemade series of CDRs). I look forward to the day when the important works of every artist in this book are all available on compact disc, at least somewhere in the world, or as digital downloads.

Better yet, I hope that subsequent editions of this book will require me to write new essays discussing new singers who have yet to make their first record, and that you will be here to read it.

Individual Artists

Ernestine Anderson (1928–)

“I’d like to have a little boy someday,” Miles Davis once said, “with red hair, green eyes and a black face, who plays piano like Ahmad Jamal.” If Miles had a daughter, she’d sing like Ernestine Anderson. Like the trumpeter, Anderson heads straight for the melodic core of a song, in a way that makes Tin Pan Alley an extension of the blues and vice versa. She playfully reshuffles each tune into a series of phrases: some smooth, some jagged, some staccato, others legato, all swinging. She seductively lags behind the beat on a ballad and races in front of it on an up-tempo and isn’t afraid to tap into her reserve of gospel melismas when the spirit moves her.

Quincy Jones, who figures in her career at several intersections, once described her sound as “honey at dusk.” While that metaphor may be a little on the obscure side, we still know what he means: Honey is sweeter than gin or coffee, and dusk is a more relaxed, ruminative time of the day than noon. Anderson mines a vein of genuine emotion that shows no sign of running out.

Ernestine Anderson is one of the greatest spiritual descendants of Ethel Waters and Dinah Washington. Waters (1896–1977) and Washington (1924–63) were the foremothers of a whole new strain of (almost always) African American and (generally) female artist who combined blues, jazz, and mainstream pop into a seamless whole. Like many major developments in mid-twentieth-century pop, the outstanding blues-jazz divas were generally found attached to big bands—usually that of vibraphonist Lionel Hampton. Just as Hampton launched Dinah Washington, Joe Williams, Little Jimmy Scott, and Ernestine Anderson—which all crossed the line between blues and jazz—so, too, did the R&B-oriented big bands of Bud Johnson and Johnny Otis.

Anderson, however, does not strictly fit the career patterns of some of these other individuals. Washington, Williams, and Scott were all well known within the world of “race” (read “black”) music long before they became popular in the larger world of mainstream (read “white”) show business. Anderson, in contrast, was known to no one but a few jazz fans before her late fifties breakthrough, and was also famous in Europe long before she was able to play the top rooms in the United States.

The most significant difference between her and most of these other vocalists is that they generally tended to come out of the blues and into the popular song mainstream. Anderson had been born and raised in the heart of the Southwest blues country, in Houston, Texas, yet her breakthrough albums (particularly *Hot Cargo*, 1956–58, and *Ernestine Anderson: The Touch of the Nation’s Critics*, 1958) present her as more of a jazz–supper club chanteuse. Indeed, her 1958 “Star Dust” has more in common with Sarah Vaughan or Jo Stafford than Ma Rainey. It was only later in her career, in the seventies and eighties (particularly in the fine series of albums that she cut for the Concord Jazz label), that she let her blues-and-roots influences become dominant.

In both phases, though, Anderson could be described as a perfect balance between the two poles of jazz and the blues. She doesn’t soar as fancifully into the stratosphere as Vaughan nor does she sear as intensely as Washington, but rather finds the sweet spot somewhere

between them: more flexible in a traditionally jazzy way than Washington, more intense in a traditionally bluesy way than Vaughan.

Ernestine Anderson was born on November 11, 1928. Her family was musical and she grew up immersed in gospel and the blues. When she was twelve, her grandmother entered her in a talent contest at the El Dorado Ballroom. She started to sing “On the Sunny Side of the Street,” which was one of only two songs that she knew “all the way through,” as she later told Calvin Ahlgren of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. “Well, the piano player asked me what key I sang in, and I didn’t know, so I said ‘C’ and was wrong. But my grandma had told me, ‘To be a professional, when you start singing, don’t stop. Nine times out of ten, people won’t know the difference,’ so I was shaking in my boots, but I kept singing. The key was wrong, so I went around the melody. And when I finished, one of the musicians told me I was a jazz singer.”

Anderson would sing lots of jazz and blues over the next fifteen or so years. In Houston she worked with a local but major band led by trumpeter Russell Jacquet; even at age fourteen or fifteen, Anderson was already in the big leagues. In 1944 Russell Jacquet left Houston to join his more famous younger brother, Illinois Jacquet, and Anderson moved with her family to Seattle. At eighteen, she left home to tour with one of the early editions of the Johnny Otis Orchestra; although the band was one of the mainstays of the R&B circuit, Otis, like Lionel Hampton, always played a great deal of jazz. In 1947—still only eighteen—she recorded for the first time, for the Black & White label of Los Angeles: “K.C. Lover” and “Good Lovin’ Man,” a coupling that historian Jim Gavin describes as being in a distinctly Dina Washington-style vein. (Washington was only four years older than Anderson and had herself only recorded for the first time a few seasons earlier.)

She also toured with pianist Eddie “Begin the Beguine” Heywood, and in 1953 she recorded again, this time for the Network label in New York, with vibraphone star Milt Jackson on piano and two ringers in the trumpet section: old friend from Houston Russell Jacquet and a new friend from Seattle Quincy Jones. By this time, both she and Jones were regular members of Lionel Hampton’s orchestra. Unfortunately, Hampton was without a recording contract over most of the two years she stayed with the band. “This was the band with Jimmy Cleveland, Gigi Gryce and all the young players,” Anderson told *Melody Maker* in 1960. “I should have made the trip to Europe but I got left behind.” For whatever reason, Anderson didn’t get to come along on Hampton’s well-known overseas tour of fall 1953 (Annie Ross signed on as Hamp’s female vocalist), but Europe would come calling soon enough.

The Hampton association paid off in another way: In 1955, fellow ex-Hamptonite Gryce assembled a big band session for Signal Records, and recruited Anderson to sing on two titles. She had the good fortune to introduce the altoist-composer’s most famous song, “Social Call” (lyric by Jon Hendricks), and to be marvelously showcased in an allstar band that also included Art Farmer (yet another Hamptonian), Eddie Bert, Julius Watkins, Cecil Payne, Horace Silver, Oscar Pettiford, and Art Blakey. There’s a bit of the blues in her singing here, but not much more than a hint: She’s a distinctly jazz singer with a light and airy, swinging sound.

At least someone was paying attention: The two Signal sides, which were eventually absorbed into the enormous Savoy catalogue, attracted the notice of Swedish trumpet star

Rolf Ericson. This time she made it to Europe: Ericson was putting together an all-star band, mostly of Americans, to tour Scandinavia in the summer of 1956, and Anderson got the call to come along as vocalist. She was so well liked by the Swedes (who called her “Stene,” a nickname that she had earlier used on her 1953 session) that she went on working in Scandinavia for three months after the tour was over.

Anderson began work on her first full-length album in Stockholm in the fall of 1956. “I went out and bought all these artists’ albums that I admired, and brought ’em back to my hotel room,” she recalled in 1982. “I listened to ’em for about a week; I didn’t want to sound like ’em, but I never made [an album] before and I wanted to see what they did. I noticed that Ella, no matter what, was always on target. Sarah’s complete control came across and [her] phrasing. I think she’s incredible. I started listening to Carmen McRae later. I listened to Ella for intonation, Sarah for control, and Anita [O’Day] for speed. She can sing faster than any jazz singer I know and will still make sense.” (She also told critic Ralph Gleason that “I listen to all singers and I like a lot of them: Mary Ann McAll gasses me no end, Billie Holiday, Ella, Earl Coleman—remember ‘Dark Shadows’?—Frank Sinatra and this will surprise you, Babs Gonsales.”)

Anderson claimed she forged her mature sound during this week of intense study. However, as “Social Call” proved, she already was well on the way to sounding like Ernestine Anderson months before the Swedish episode. The album, produced by Metronome Records, one of the world’s important jazz labels, was impressive enough for Bob Shad of Mercury Records to license and release it in the United States as *Hot Cargo*, the title referring to the import status of the recordings.

Anderson began to be known back in the States in 1957 and 1958, especially after a high-profile appearance in San Francisco that drew rave notices from Gleason. She finally reached the payoff in Los Angeles in August 1958, when *Time* printed what amounted to a lengthy love letter (the magazine could actually make careers back then). According to Gleason, she was living on credit the week the story appeared, but as soon as it did, she was sought after by bookers, agents, and producers from all over the place. Over the next three years, she taped four albums for Bobby Shad and Mercury, including *Ernestine Anderson: The Toast of the Nation’s Critics* (1958), *Fascinating Ernestine* (1959), and *Moanin’! Moanin’! Moanin’!* (1960). The company also had her record a few singles, including the doo-woppy “A Lover’s Question,” which has the earmarks of those popmeisters Clyde Otis and Belford Hendricks and over it.

The best and most generally heard of these is the first, despite its unwieldy and rather immodest title. The mood throughout is light and swinging, a condition guaranteed by the presence of arranger Pete Rugolo, who keeps the proceedings in a more traditional, rhythmic vein than his somewhat more offbeat orchestrations for June Christy. Anderson and Rugolo romp throughout, a mood instilled by the presence of several players associated with the West Coast cool school (including altoist Bud Shank and drummer Shelly Manne), especially on such apostrophe-oriented arias as the opener, “Runnin’ Wild,” and “Sleepin’ Bee.”

The big dramatic numbers are “Star Dust,” done very straight-as-written with lots of string accompaniment (sounding similar to Sarah Vaughan’s and Carmen McRae’s “pop” projects from this period).

and “Interlude,” a haunting original by Rugolo with a Bob Russell lyric (also recorded by Christy). What’s remarkable in the light of her earlier and later work is the utter absence of any blues-oriented material: The closest she comes is Wild Bill Davis’s “Azure Te (Part 1 Blues)” and “Welcome to the Club,” a torch song by Mel Tormé that she recorded two years before its composer got around to it.

After a promising start, the sixties was not the greatest of decades for Anderson. She seems to have cut only two albums in the whole period: *The New Sound of Ernestine Anderson*, for the independent Sue label in 1963, in which the material ranged from Bobby Blue Bland’s “Pity the Fool” to Frank Loesser’s “I Believe in You”; many tracks, like “You’re Not the Guy for Me,” were exceedingly poppy. The rarest album of her career, *Miss Ernestine Anderson*, was taped in London circa 1966, and so far has been released only on a long-out-of-print English Columbia LP.

The end of the decade was an even leaner period. She said later, “In about 1969, I was very depressed because my work situation was bad. I had been living in London for two years and moved back to Los Angeles, where, as a singer, I had to start over. I just felt like one more singer down there, so I just decided to stop singing altogether. I just walked off, left my music, my wardrobe, everything. I knew that if I took the stuff with me, it wouldn’t be a clean break.” She wound up working in a Hollywood hotel as a telephone-switchboard operator, and found herself fielding calls from celebrities and old friends such as Johnnie Mercer, Cannonball Adderley, and Lorne (*Bonanza*) Greene. The good news was that, during this period, she discovered Buddhism, which she felt helped to center her spiritually.

Around 1975, Anderson was rescued by two old friends, Benny Carter and Ray Brown. The alto saxophonist-trumpeter-composer-arranger giant recruited her to sing on an album he was making, and even though it was never released, it helped get her into a music-making frame of mind again. The virtuoso bassist also encouraged her to start singing again and, apparently, helped bring her to the attention of Carl Jefferson of Concord Jazz Records. Between 1976 and 1990, she would appear on roughly twenty Concord releases, most of which were her own projects, although she also made guest appearances on several all-star concert albums. Along with Rosemary Clooney, Mel Tormé, and Carol Sloane, Anderson became one of those major artists who enjoyed a very fruitful second career thanks to Jefferson and Concord. By far the major portion of her recorded output is on the Northern California–based imprint.

Not surprisingly, Anderson’s voice is ten years darker and deeper than it had been in the sixties. She still has that honey-at-dusk sound that Quincy Jones described, only now it’s honeyer and duskier. The most striking aspect of her work in the seventies and eighties is her renewed interest in the blues. If this element is overlooked in the earlier albums, it more than comes to the fore in her sessions from 1976 onward. In 1984, she recorded *When the Sun Goes Down*, a whole album of blues (such as the titular “In the Evening” and “Down Home Blues”) and blues-inspired (such as Ellington’s “Just a Lucky So and So” and Peggy Lee’s “Love Being Here with You,” which she infuses with blue energy) material. She also varied between such traditional blues as “Goin’ to Chicago,” from the repertory of Basie and Jimmy Rushing, and the more contemporary, somewhat funkish “Steppin’ In,” which could have been sung by Clarence Carter. There’s a distinctly blue growl inherent in her voice, not just here on the blues album but throughout the post-1976 recordings.

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