

SARAH VAUGHAN
AFTER HOURS

1. My Favorite Things
2. Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye
3. Wonder Why
4. Easy To Love
5. Sophisticated Lady
6. Great Day
7. Ill Wind
8. If Love Is Good To Me
9. In A Sentimental Mood
10. Vanity
11. Through The Years

Produced by
TEDDY REIG

Produced for
reissue by
MICHAEL CUSCUNA



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**SARAH
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AfterHours



That well-known jazz writer, Leonard Feather, once compared those three great singers, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday and Sarah Vaughan, to "the goddesses known in Greece as the three Charities, and to the Romans as the Graces... Euphrosyne (Mirth), Aglaia (Brilliance) and Thalia (Luxury)," Feather's comparison (and he elaborated it further, of course) seems a fair one. There is, after all, something decidedly luxurious about Sarah Vaughan's singing, not only in the mixture of hauteur and elegance that one senses, but also in the sensual way she will embellish and decorate the songs she performs.

Like Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan got her first chance by winning an amateur song contest at Harlem's Apollo Theatre. She sang "Body And Soul" and received twenty-five dollars. Already, though, she possessed quite a fair technical knowledge of music; indeed a surprising amount compared with the average jazz singer. "While I was playing piano in the school band," she explained in later years, "I learned to take music apart, to analyze the notes and to put it back together again. By doing this, I learned to sing differently from all the other singers."

She sang so differently—and so well—that Billy Eckstine, who was in the audience at the Apollo on that eventful night, recommended her to Earl Hines, at that time the leader of a band which included Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and several incipient modernists. Sarah sang, and played second piano, with the Earl Hines orchestra for about a year, when she joined a new band which Eckstine formed. But after leaving Eckstine in 1945—apart, that is, for a few months the following winter with John Kirby at the Copacabana—Sarah has worked exclusively as a solo act, at first sporadically, but later with ever-expanding success.

Sarah Vaughan, it is fair to say, is the only major singer to have come out of

modern jazz. Her feeling for harmony, her choice of intervals, these are part of the new movement which began in the early 1940s, part also of a technique that she inaugurated, a counterpart to the kind of things her contemporaries—musicians like Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and Bud Powell—were doing in the instrumental field. Since those early days, though, Sarah has broadened her style, making her work more acceptable to audiences who would certainly have been startled had they heard her singing in 1945. She has, however, retained her devastating virtuosity, her instinct for the improbable interval, the surprising phrase, the unusual twist to a melody.

And yet, despite the range and length of her singing career, this must be the most unusual LP Sarah has ever made. In the past she has worked with almost every kind of ensemble, from string orchestras and big bands down to the conventional rhythm section of piano, bass and drums. But never before has she recorded accompanied only on bass and guitar. Indeed, it's hard to think of any jazz singers (apart from the old-time blues artists) who have done so. That the experiment turned out so successfully is partly due to sensitive playing by Mundell Lowe and George Duvivier, the guitarist and bassist respectively, and partly (or maybe largely) to Sarah's own virtuosity, her ability to sustain and develop a performance in a remarkably complete, self-contained manner.

This high degree of autonomy tends, perhaps, to encourage the rococo side of Sarah Vaughan's art, the side that entices her to spread one syllable over half a dozen separate notes, to make sudden and startling changes in timbre and phrasing. On the other hand, tracks like "Easy To Love," "Great Day" and "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" exhibit most splendidly the sheer lissomeness and flexibility of her singing. "Easy To Love" begins with Sarah singing unaccompanied, just snapping her fingers to emphasize the beat; then Duvivier adds a "walking" bass pattern and, by the time

the second chorus gets underway, Mundell Lowe has joined in too. And while discussing this track, let me also point out how Sarah will occasionally pitch a note deliberately off-key as a kind of shock effect. You can hear this for yourself during the second chorus, when she reaches the last word in "it does seem a shame."

"Great Day" (a good song but not heard all that often nowadays) provides another example of the singer and the bassist working on their own for the first two choruses. Perhaps one of the oddest features of the LP, though, is the fact that there is only a single guitar solo (on "Vanity"), although of course Mundell Lowe can be heard at considerable length in various obbligato passages. Another point of interest is Sarah's inclusion of "My Favorite Things," a Rodgers and Hammerstein song from *The Sound Of Music*, with a chord structure that the tenor saxophonist, John Coltrane, has elsewhere used as the basis for some of his most adventurous, and controversial, experiments.

When Sarah Vaughan made her very first recordings, back in 1946, a vice-president of the record company was in the studio. Halfway through the session he lifted his head and turned to the recording director. "Good God," he said, "she can't do that. Tell her to sing it straight. That stuff will never get anywhere. We'll lose our shirt." The company, as it happened, did lose its shirt—but not because of Sarah. She, on the other hand, continued to follow her own path and now, you might say, she is reaping the rewards of her independence. "Make it new" had always been Ezra Pound's incessant advice to stripling (and not so stripling) writers. And although Sarah Vaughan has probably never read a line of that American poet's work, one could say, without exaggeration, that she has stuck most faithfully to his admonition.

—Charles Fox
(1989)

DISCOGRAPHY

Sarah Vaughan (vcl), probably Mundell Lowe (g), George Duvivier (b).
NYC, early July, 1961

Just Squeeze Me	rejected
Body And Soul	rejected
Through The Years	previously unissued

note: This seems to have been an exploratory session. The only complete takes of the first two tunes have major flaws and they never continued to try for a usable take. Despite Sarah's extreme use of vibrato, she gives a beautiful reading on "Through The Years" issued here for the first time.

Sarah Vaughan (vcl), Mundell Lowe (g), George Duvivier (b).
RKO Pathe Studios, NYC, July 18, 1961

16157-4	Wonder Why	Roulette SR-52070
16158-8	My Favorite Things	—
16159-6	Great Day	—
16160-3	Sophisticated Lady	—
16161-3	Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye	—
16162-2	Ill Wind	—
16163-5	In A Sentimental Mood	—
16164-5	If Love Is Good To Me	—
16165-3	Easy To Love	—
16166-3	Vanity	—

AFTER HOURS SARAH VAUGHAN

PERSONNEL:

SARAH VAUGHAN, vocal; MUNDELL LOWE, guitar; GEORGE DUVIVIER, bass

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. My Favorite Things (2:43)
(R. Rodgers-O. Hammerstein) | 7. Ill Wind (3:10)
(T. Koehler-H. Arlen) |
| 2. Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye (2:23)
(Cole Porter) | 8. If Love Is Good To Me (2:09)
(Spellman-R. Evans) |
| 3. Wonder Why (4:17)
(Cahn-Brodzsky) | 9. In A Sentimental Mood (4:03)
(Ellington-Mills-Kurtz) |
| 4. Easy To Love (2:09)
(Cole Porter) | 10. Vanity (4:16)
(Manus-Bierman-Wood) |
| 5. Sophisticated Lady (3:49)
(Ellington-Mills-Parish) | 11. Through The Years (3:09) * |
| 6. Great Day (2:15)
(Rose-Youmans-Eliscu) | * previously unissued bonus track |

Produced by Teddy Reig

Produced for reissue by Michael Cuscuna

Recorded at RKO Pathe Studios, New York City on July 18, 1961 (#1-10)

Digitally remixed from the original 3-track tape and mastered by Malcolm Addey



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