



Jazz at the Concertgebouw

SARAH  
VAUGHAN

If This Isn't Love

And Her Trio  
Live in Amsterdam 1958

DUTCH JAZZ ARCHIVE SERIES  
Muziek Centrum The Netherlands  
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DUTCH JAZZ ARCHIVE SERIES

Jazz at the Concertgebouw

SARAH  
VAUGHAN

If This Isn't Love

Sarah Vaughan and Her Trio  
Live in Amsterdam 1958

Featuring: Ronnell Bright, Richard Davis and Art Morgan  
Special guests: Dor Byas and Arvell Shaw

**LOU VAN REES**  
INTERNATIONAL BANDEXCHANGE OFFICE

PRESENTEERT

## Sarah Vaughan

EN HAAR TRIO

BESTAANDE UIT

**RONNEL BRIGHT - piano**

**RICHARD DAVIS - bass**

**DAVID MORGAN - drums**

EEN KEUZE WORDT GEMAAKT UIT DE VOLGENDE NUMMERS:

If This Isn't Love  
How High the Moon  
Tenderly  
Outside, Lookin' In  
Poor Butterfly  
It's Wonderful  
Lover Man

I'll Never Smile Again  
Summertime  
Perdido  
Gene Again  
Stairway to Paradise  
Body and Soul  
Sometimes I'm Happy

VOOR DE PAUZE

## ARVELL SHAW GROUP

met **DON BYAS, WALLY BISHOP** en **FRANS ELSEN**

EEN KEUZE WORDT GEMAAKT UIT DE VOLGENDE NUMMERS:

TEA FOR TWO  
THESE FOOLISH THINGS  
SYMPHONY SID  
ONE OF THOSE THINGS

YUST YOU YUST ME  
LAURA  
ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE  
INDIANA

## If This Isn't Love

1. **If This Isn't Love** (Yip Harburg, Burton Lane) 2:55
2. **Passing Strangers** (Mel Mitchell, Rita Mann) 2:52
3. **Mean To Me** (Fred Ahlert, Roy Turk) 2:07
4. **Lover Man** (Jimmy Davis, Ram Ramirez, James Sherman) 5:19
5. **Cherokee** (Ray Noble) 2:40
6. **Body And Soul** (Johnny Green, Edward Heyman, Robert Sour, Frank Eyton) 3:56
7. **Sometimes I'm Happy** (Irving Caesar, Vincent Youmans) 1:56
8. **Autumn In New York** (Vernon Duke) 3:39
9. **I Cried For You** (Gus Arnheim, Arthur Freed, Abe Lyman) 1:59
10. **Tenderly** (Walter Gross, Jack Lawrence) 3:10
11. **That Old Devil Moon** (Yip Harburg, Burton Lane) 2:11
12. **How High The Moon** (Nancy Hamilton, Morgan Lewis) 10:02

Bonus tracks

13. **If This Isn't Love** (Yip Harburg, Burton Lane) 2:48
14. **Passing Strangers** (Mel Mitchell, Rita Mann) 4:06

Total Time: 51:01

1-12: Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, June 7, 1958  
13-14: TV studio, Bussum, June 7, 1958

**Sarah Vaughan** | vocals  
**Ronnell Bright** | piano  
**Richard Davis** | bass  
**Art Morgan** | drums

Added on track 12:  
**Don Byas** | tenor saxophone  
**Arvell Shaw** | bass  
**Wally Bishop** | drums

Left: reproduction of the 1958 concert programme

## PROGRAMMA



**Sarah Vaughan**

en haar TRIO

op de  
**ARVELL SHAW**

GROUP

7 JUNI 1958 - CONCERTGEBOUW - AMSTERDAM

### Sarah Vaughan in Amsterdam

Sarah Vaughan's performance at the Concertgebouw in June 1958 marked the second time she came to Holland. Her first Amsterdam concert, on Saturday, October 9, 1954, lives on in Dutch jazz history as a legendary event, if only through the column *Sarah and Illinois* that author Simon Carmiggelt wrote about it in the daily *Het Parool*. More than half a century later, many jazz fans in The Netherlands still know his sketch in Art Buchwald style almost by heart:

'Sarah Vaughan, whom I heard caress her songs in Amsterdam's packed Concertgebouw, turned out to be a pretty little negro girl with a light-brown crust to her voice. On gramophone record I have her *Time To Go*, a turbulent gift from a friend who, on handing it over, told me: "You know, this record helped me through my hernia." When I put it on, a hot wind fills the room, for in this wily vocal performance the muse of music entertains a sinful relationship with little Eros. That's why you can hardly play a record like this in the living room without staring at your shoes.

"Do you mind that I live here *too*?" my wife will ask me peevishly at such moments, and sometimes she gives a hateful imitation of the voice.

Fathers need a room of their own, for their hobbies, though I sometimes doubt whether this falls under that category.

"You'll have to go to that jazz concert *alone*," my wife said, as if it was a kind of bowling.'

The Dutch critics were unanimously enthusiastic about Sarah Vaughan in 1954. As part of the package that was presented as 'The Coloured Show' (at 8.00 p.m. in The Hague, at midnight in Amsterdam), she got only positive reviews, while her co-stars Illinois Jacquet and Coleman Hawkins raised mixed feelings. Michiel de Ruyter wrote in *Het Parool* that Sarah Vaughan's singing 'exceeded all high expectations'. He concluded: 'It's a worn-out phrase, but here all words fail me! On the other hand, 'there was simply nothing right' about the efforts of Illinois Jacquet's small group. Ber Hulsing's review, in the communist daily *De Waarheid*, was headlined: 'Sarah Vaughan impressed

in noisy jazz show / Jacquet and Hawkins just comedians'. Even classical music critic Piet Pijnenborg noted in *de Volkskrant*: 'An exceptionally beautiful, supple and youthful voice, moving in its power of expression, and with a mezza-voce that managed to bring a hall that was overflowing with weedy youngsters to dead silence.'

During the 1950s, European audiences received Sarah Vaughan (1924-1990) as a concert artist, worthy of serious listening. At the same time in the United States, her position was two-fold. On the one hand, she was considered the next great singer in jazz history, following Billie Holiday (1915-1959) and Ella Fitzgerald (1917-1996). Two months after her 1954 Amsterdam concert she had recorded, for the EmArcy label, what may be her very best album, with trumpet player Clifford Brown and the same excellent rhythm section that had accompanied her at the Concertgebouw: pianist Jimmy Jones, bassist Joe Benjamin and drummer Roy Haynes.

On the other hand, Sarah Vaughan, her manager and her record company were always looking for the pop hit that might make a fortune. 'There's nothing necessarily wrong with being commercial', she told Nat Hentoff in a 1952 interview for *Down Beat*, 'but there is a point beyond which you can't go without being ridiculous.'

When she came to Holland for the second time in 1958, she had recently taken two shots at the hit parade. The first one was a duet with singer Billy Eckstine, recorded in April 1957. The ballad *Passing Strangers* became a minor hit in the United States (where it reached # 82 on the *Billboard Charts*), and an even greater success in England. Sarah Vaughan was proud of this collaboration with the man she had started her career with in the 1940s, and she performed the song almost every time she went on stage.

The second one was a recording she had made in January 1958 with the Ray Ellis Orchestra. For many of her jazz listeners *Broken-Hearted Melody* did go beyond the point where it became ridiculous. However, after it broke through in July 1959, it stayed on the American pop charts for nineteen weeks (with a top listing of # 17), and also made the rhythm-and-blues charts for eleven weeks (topping at # 5). In Europe, too, *Broken-Hearted Melody* was one of the inescapable summer hits of 1959. But on June 7, 1958 at the Concertgebouw, Sarah Vaughan's first million-copy seller had not taken

off yet, so the audience was spared the experience.

The Amsterdam concert was part of a European tour of no less than four months, on the initiative of the American State Department which had invited Sarah Vaughan to represent the United States at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels. (Benny Goodman and his band also played there.) The members of her 1954 trio had all left by then. Since 1957 the bassist was a 27-year-old talent called Richard Davis. In the beginning of 1958 Jimmy Jones had been replaced by pianist Ronnell Bright. And shortly before they were to fly to Europe, in the beginning of April, Roy Haynes gave his two-weeks' notice after five years. The tour started in England, so British drummer Art Morgan was hired to fill out the trio.

On Saturday, June 7, 1958 the Amsterdam Concertgebouw was far from sold out. One of the reviewers attributed this to the abundance of American jazz concerts during the past months (since January: Erroll Garner; Dave Brubeck; Bud Shank, Bob Cooper & June Christy; Ella Fitzgerald & Oscar Peterson; Benny Goodman; and Jazz At The Philharmonic), and to the inflated prices (even though in those days a ticket to a jazz concert was three to four times cheaper than a jazz LP - it is exactly the other way around now).

Nevertheless, the concert got praise from all the critics. 'Sarah Vaughan presented excellent show', was the headline of Ton van der Horst's review in *de Volkskrant*. He seemed a little surprised by the quality of her ballad interpretations, 'all of which left an unforgettable impression'. 'Her style is very special and won't please everyone', he wrote. 'But those who understand her vocal expressions have been enthusiastic. And rightly so!'

In *Het Vrije Volk* Kees H. Diemer almost went overboard: 'Sarah does magic with her voice, and in doing so she astonishes more than many a magician with his tricks. Through her magic she demonstrates a musicality, a refinement of taste and a humanity which many of her classical colleagues can envy her. For a full hour, almost without interruption, this miraculous voice sparkled like a diamond in the nocturnal darkness of the Concertgebouw.'

In his review for *Het Parool* Michiel de Ruyter called the concert 'a rare experience'. For

him, Ella Fitzgerald was still the greatest jazz singer, but during Sarah Vaughan's performance he had been 'in a state of total amazement'. 'What one hears is a completely new musical instrument in the shape of a female figure. One must constantly remain aware that in fact one doesn't hear an instrument but a voice. Its range exceeds that of all other singers. Vaughan can colour her sound more than anyone. Her phrasing, the rhythmic aspect of her singing, everything makes a purely instrumental impression, and the only sensible comparison possible would have to be drawn with the greatest of the instrumental soloists in modern jazz, a Charlie Parker or a Miles Davis.'

Sarah Vaughan's 1958 Amsterdam concert was recorded privately by Dutch promoter Lou van Rees, and thus saved for posterity. Her four months in Europe form somewhat of a gap in her discography. In July she made studio recordings in Paris with Quincy Jones (for the Mercury album *Vaughan and Violins*). But the only other performances that have survived, as far as we know, are the TV recordings released in 2007 on the Jazz Icons DVD *Sarah Vaughan Live in '58 & '64*.

So we are proud to present this concert for the first time to the jazz listeners of the world, as a valuable addition to Sarah Vaughan's musical heritage. We also feel fortunate that we can add, as bonus tracks, two songs she recorded for Dutch AVRO Television earlier on the day of the Amsterdam concert.

Five songs she performed before a live audience in a Bussum TV studio are included on the Jazz Icons DVD (*Over The Rainbow, They All Laughed, Lover Man, Cherokee and Sometimes I'm Happy*). However, our source material, a private audio recording from the estate of Michiel de Ruyter, contains a total of seven songs. The new titles, which we release here for the first time, are *If This Isn't Love* and *Passing Strangers*.

Looking at the repertoire Sarah Vaughan sang on these two occasions, it becomes clear that she liked to stick to a trusted format. Both times she began with the relatively unknown song *If This Isn't Love* (from the 1947 Broadway musical *Finian's Rainbow*). *Lover Man, Cherokee, Passing Strangers* and *Sometimes I'm Happy* are also part of both shows. Within this framework, however, she constantly seeks new adventures in the way she interprets the songs. No jazz singer before her took so many risks in her melodic, rhythmic

and particularly harmonic paraphrasing. Sarah Vaughan's bassist Richard Davis recalls that pianist Jimmy Jones used to say: 'I can go anywhere, and Sarah will follow me, or Sarah can go anywhere, and I follow her.'

Richard Davis agreed: 'That's what made it so beautiful playing with her. She had all that range! She was a monster. I mean that in a positive way. Sarah was like any horn, like a saxophone player. What she did with a lyric, what she did with the sound of her voice, she would bend those notes into five different shapes. One note. Five different shapes! And you say, "God, what's she gonna do next?" And she could scat her butt off, too.'

Her most spontaneous singing can be heard in the final song of the Amsterdam concert, *How High The Moon*. The opening act, before the intermission, had been a quartet nominally led by bassist Arvell Shaw (a former member of Louis Armstrong's All Stars), with Dutch pianist Frans Elsen and two American musicians living in Europe, drummer Wally Bishop and tenor saxophonist Don Byas.

For the finale the three Americans returned to the stage, and during the next ten minutes everybody really had a ball. Sarah Vaughan starts out with a good-humored tribute to Ella Fitzgerald's classic interpretation of *How High The Moon*, followed by two choruses of Don Byas' forceful tenor playing. Then they go into uncharted territory together, perhaps recalling the early bebop days when their paths used to cross on 52nd Street in New York. They joyfully challenge each other for two exciting chase choruses, in which Sarah Vaughan proves herself once again a full-fledged jazz improviser. Next there are solos by Arvell Shaw (immediately recognizable by his heavy breathing), pianist Ronnell Bright, and Richard Davis.

Naturally, Sarah Vaughan finishes the song herself, and her last words to the audience sound heartfelt: 'Thank you so much. You know what the word crazy means? We think you are crazy! Bye, God bless you.'

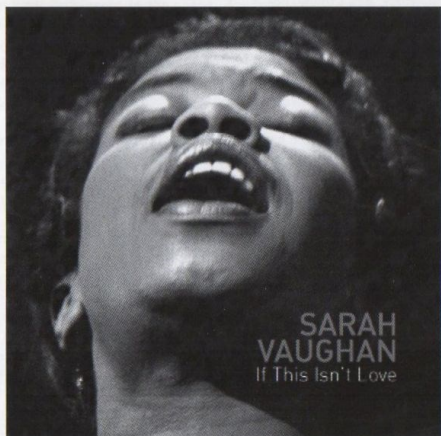
#### BERT VUJISJE

Jazz journalist and author of *Rita Reys: Lady Jazz* (Thomas Rap, Amsterdam, 2004).

#### Literature:

Leslie Gourse: *Sassy – The Life of Sarah Vaughan*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1993.

Patricia Willard: *Sarah Vaughan Live in '58 & '64* (booklet with the DVD *Jazz Icons 2.119004*, 2007).



All photographs were made by Eddy Posthuma de Boer during the Amsterdam concert on June 7, 1958



Richard Davis, Art Morgan and Sarah Vaughan. Photo: Eddy Posthuma de Boer

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Artwork: Egbert Luys (studioEGT)  
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Backside: Don Byas. Photo: Eddy Posthuma de Boer











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## If This Isn't Love

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