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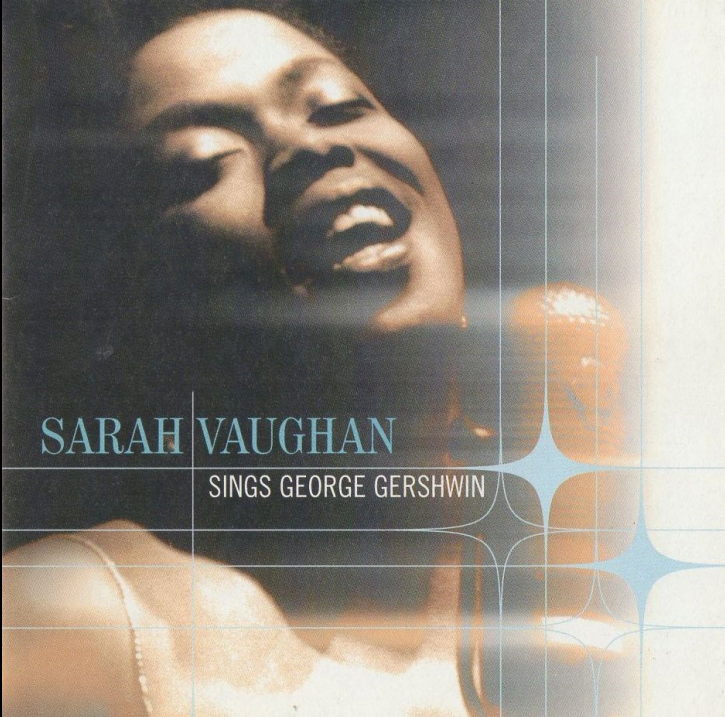
SARAH VAUGHAN

SINGS

GEORGE GERSHWIN



ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY HAL MOONEY



SARAH VAUGHAN

SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

SARAH VAUGHAN SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

disc one

| | Matr. No. & Take | Time |
|---|-----------------------------|------|
| 1. Isn't It a Pity? | PG 156-1 | 3:53 |
| 2. Of Thee I Sing — monaural LP take | PG 1203/PS 216-7 edited | 3:10 |
| 3. I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise (George Gershwin—B. G. DeSylva—Ira Gershwin) | PG 164 | 2:39 |
| 4. Someone to Watch Over Me | PG 149 | 3:58 |
| 5. Bidin' My Time | PG 151 | 3:01 |
| 6. The Man I Love | PG 160 | 3:34 |
| 7. How Long Has This Been Going On? | PG 158-7 | 3:58 |
| 8. My One and Only (What Am I Gonna Do?) | PG 1204/PS 217-9 w/ inserts | 3:13 |
| 9. Lorelei | PG 163 | 2:32 |
| 10. I've Got a Crush on You | PG 155-2 | 4:00 |
| 11. Summertime — master take (George Gershwin—DuBose Heyward—Ira Gershwin—Dorothy Heyward) | PS 213-11 | 2:51 |
| 12. Aren't You Kind of Glad We Did? | PG 159-4 w/ inserts | 3:27 |
| 13. They All Laughed | PG 162-1 | 2:23 |
| 14. Looking for a Boy | PG 154-5 | 3:38 |
| 15. He Loves and She Loves | PG 152-3 | 3:24 |
| 16. My Man's Gone Now (George Gershwin—DuBose Heyward) | PG 1200/PS 231-4 | 4:22 |

| Explanation of terms | [bd] break down | A take aborted by the musicians |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | [fs] false start | A take that breaks down at the outset |

All music composed by George Gershwin, b. Jacob Gershovitz, and all lyrics composed by Ira Gershwin, b. Israel Gershovitz, unless otherwise indicated.

Sarah Vaughan (voc) with Hal Mooney and His Orchestra; Jimmy Jones (p); Mooney (arr, cond); others unknown.

Recorded 1957 in New York City: disc one, tracks 1, 4-7, 10, 12, 14, and 15; and disc two, tracks 2, 5, and 6 recorded March 20; disc one, tracks 3, 9, and 13; and disc two, track 3 recorded March 21 [both sessions possibly at Fine Recording]; disc one, tracks 2, 8, and 11; and disc two, tracks 1, 4, and 7-21 recorded April 24; disc one, track 16 recorded April 25 [both sessions at Capital Recording Studios].

Disc one, tracks 1 and 3-10; and disc two, track 7 original-LP issue: *Sarah Vaughan Sings George Gershwin Volume One* Mercury SR 60043; disc one, tracks 2 and 11 original-LP issue: *Sarah Vaughan Sings George Gershwin* Mercury MGP-2-101; disc one, tracks 12-16 and disc two, tracks 1-6 original-LP issue: *Sarah Vaughan Sings George Gershwin Volume Two* Mercury SR 60048

Disc two, tracks 9-21 previously unissued as such

Original recordings produced by **Bob Shad**

Cover photograph by Wesley Bowman

Disc one, and disc two, tracks 1-6 are in the LP-sequance of Mercury MGP-2-101. Disc two, tracks 9-21 are in session order. Master number show the order in which they were recorded.

disc two

| | Matr. No. & Take | Time |
|---|----------------------------|------|
| 1. I Won't Say I Will (George Gershwin—B. G. DeSylva—Ira Gershwin) | PG 1202/PS 215-7 w/ insert | 3:24 |
| 2. A Foggy Day | PG 150 | 3:47 |
| 3. Let's Call the Whole Thing Off | PG 161-2 | 2:22 |
| 4. Things Are Looking Up | PG 1201/PS 214-6 w/ insert | 3:33 |
| 5. Do It Again (George Gershwin—B. G. DeSylva) | PG 157-3 | 3:13 |
| 6. Love Walked In | PG 153 | 3:06 |
| 7. Of Thee I Sing — stereo LP take | PG 1203/PS 216-37 | 3:23 |
| 8. Summertime — alternative take | PS 213-12 | 2:46 |

Session tape — See "A Note on the Contents" for further explanation

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------|
| 9. Things Are Looking Up index 1: intercut 1 to take 6 — :33 index 2: intercut 2 to take 6; and stereo edit into chorus — 2:45 | PS 314-4 | 3:21 |
| 10. I Won't Say I Will index 0: [fs] Vaughan out index 1: [fs] with Vaughan | PS 315-1 PS 315-2 | :18 |
| 11. I Won't Say I Will — alternative take | PS 315-3 | 3:21 |
| 12. I Won't Say I Will index 1: [fs] with Vaughan — :29 index 2: [fs] Vaughan out — :15 index 3: [bd] — :34 | PS 315-4 PS 315-5 PS 315-6 | 1:21 |
| 13. I Won't Say I Will index 1: [bd] — 1:56 index 2: intercut 1 to take 7 — :57 | PS 315-7 | 2:50 |
| 14. I Won't Say I Will index 1: intercut 2 to take 7 — 2:10 index 2: intercut 3 to take 7 — 2:07 index 3: pickup to last 8 #1 — 1:28 index 4: pickup to last 8 #2 — 1:04 | | 7:49 |
| 15. Of Thee I Sing index 0: [fs] Vaughan out index 1: [bd] | PS 316-1 PS 316-2 | 1:35 |
| 16. Of Thee I Sing index 0: [fs] first note index 1: [bd] | PS 316-4 PS 316-5 | 2:25 |
| 17. Of Thee I Sing index 1: [bd] | PS 316-7 | 2:16 |
| 18. Of Thee I Sing index 1: pickup to chorus — 2:47 index 2: bar 37 forward — 1:22 | | 4:02 |
| 19. My One and Only index 0: [fs] [fs] index 1: [bd] | PS 317-1 PS 317-2 PS 317-3 | 1:47 |
| 20. My One and Only index 1: [bd] | PS 317-5 | 3:11 |
| 21. My One and Only index 0: [fs] index 1: pickup to chorus # 1 — 2:18 index 2: pickup to chorus # 2 — 2:15 | | 4:34 |

A Note on the Contents

SARAH VAUGHAN SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN



The bonus tracks on disc two reveal a more complicated recording process than what Leonard Feather witnessed at the March 21, 1957 date. Having made most of the selections in sessions on the back-to-back days in March, Vaughan recorded the remaining pieces in a cleanup session (April 24) adjacent to days scheduled for her duet recordings with vocalist Billy Eckstine. ("My Man's Gone Now" was, in fact, done on one of those dates when Vaughan and Eckstine were laying down their interpretations of Irving Berlin's songs.)

Like the earlier two sessions, the one on April 24 seems to have begun late at night and ended early in the morning. (Single dates shown on the track list are therefore only partially accurate, as each session was held over two consecutive calendar days.)

In order to use studio time efficiently, all tape-editing techniques were brought to bear. If a tune went down smoothly from end to end, so much the better. If there were small mistakes of diction, or interruptions that didn't harm the flow of the performance, they were ignored; they could be fixed by re-recording the flawed half-chorus, for instance, and inserting it in the master tape.

On the other hand, with sloppy entrances or major disturbances, which interrupted the continuity of the song, the take would be aborted. The next take would begin at the section where the breakdown occurred, again with the intent of replacing it with a successful part. While some tunes were recorded without stopping, it took as many as three cycles of re-recording a section to arrive at a complete version of some tracks. For singers' record dates with a precisely allotted number of measures in the arrangement of each tune and the same text from take to take, these types of "insert" and patchwork editing are far more effective than for instrumental jazz dates where a breakdown take is likely to be started over from the top.

Starting with track 9, the sequence on disc two includes all surviving parts of each take on the session. Some parts are identical to those that were used on the complete track, while others show more or less successful versions that demonstrate Vaughan's gift for improvising. Take numbers for the final, edited versions on the original LP are given where they are known, but they may not indicate all the takes edited into the final versions.

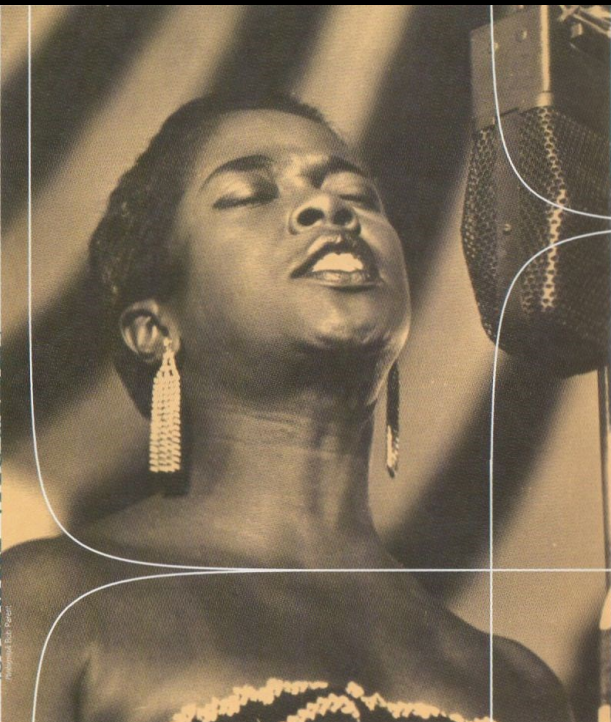
The master numbers given for each tune represent the multiplicity of cataloging methods used at Mercury. "1531x" numbers called at the session are mono master numbers: One was assigned to every Mercury song, usually in sequence throughout a date and from date to date. The PB- and PS- numbers in the track list are parallel designations that discretely refer to each piece recorded in stereo. That is, every selection recorded in mono and stereo simultaneously was given a number for each format, and the stereo prefixes shown here represent two different systems.

Though the tracks of the LP sequence are in stereo, they are sequenced and edited as on the mono two-LP set (the stereo issues were sold separately as volumes one and two and, between them, did not contain all of the music on the mono set). The mono sequence seems to have been conceived with the intent to give a continuous listening experience across the entire program rather than two independent packages.

Ben Young
June 1998

Reissuing
SARAH VAUGHAN SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

Photograph by Bob Peeples



"People call me a jazz singer, but I hate the term," Sarah Vaughan told an interviewer in 1967. "Either one is a singer or one isn't. I like doing all types of material — just as long as it's good."

Vaughan deserved to be called a jazz singer if anyone did, and the aptness of that description has less to do with *what* she sang than with *how* she sang virtually everything — with melodic daring, harmonic acuity, and that hard-to-define but easy-to-recognize sense of rhythmic propulsion known as swing. Still, it's not surprising that a performer as prodigiously gifted as she was would have resented and resisted being pigeonholed, for pragmatic as well as Sarah Vaughanian reasons.

To identify oneself as a jazz singer in 1967, when the biggest story in the record business was *Sgt. Pepper*, by the Beatles, was to acknowledge being outside the commercial mainstream. And no matter how transcendent a Sarah Vaughan she may have been, Vaughan never forgot that she was in show business (and so, in 1977 she recorded a Beatles tribute on Atlantic records).

The situation was different ten years earlier, when Vaughan recorded the songs heard in this collection. Rock & roll had begun its inexorable takeover of the singles charts, but albums were still largely the domain of grown-up singers such as Vaughan and time-tested songwriters such as George and Ira Gershwin. And while the chasm between jazz and what the industry viewed as commercial music, even in the album realm, was wide and getting wider, Vaughan was more successful than most at bridging it.

This was partly because of an unusual marketing strategy by Mercury Records, which in effect allowed Vaughan to lead a Sarah Vaughanian double life. Under the auspices of the company's EmArcy jazz imprint, she made records with her working trio, occasionally augmented by guest stars such as the great trumpeter Clifford Brown, which afforded both her and her accompanists plenty of room to stretch out. For Mercury proper, she recorded lavishly orchestrated recitals geared to a larger market, such as the double-LP *Sarah Vaughan Sings George Gershwin*, which left no room for instrumental improvisation and didn't put much obvious emphasis on the vocal kind, either.

But a close listen to these sides will reveal that she was as much the jazz singer when her voice was swathed in strings as when it was supported only by piano, bass, and drums.

The key word is *obvious*. There is no scat singing here, and little of Vaughan's signature vocal pyrotechnics; she never strays so far from George Gershwin's melodies as to scare away the more cautious listener. But a close listen to these sides will reveal that she was as much the jazz singer when her voice was swathed in strings as when it was supported only by piano, bass, and drums.

Call it her nature. Vaughan was capable of singing a tune the way it was written, but she never seemed very interested in such a thing. And while many singers might view the notion of tampering with Gershwin's exquisite melodies as sacrilege, for Vaughan it was more like a challenge — and the results, more often than not, were a textbook example of how the right interpretation can make a good piece of music even better.

Take what she does with **A Foggy Day** which, like many of Gershwin's better-known melodies, was written for dancer and singer Fred Astaire, but which might just as well have been written for Vaughan. Hal Mooney's arrangement emphasizes the song's drama by taking it at a slower tempo than it usually receives, and Vaughan enhances the drama by lagging just a hair behind the beat. She deploys her awe-inspiring vibrato selectively, saving it for the most appropriate moments in the song (it gives particular impact to the

climactic lyric, "The sun was shining everywhere") and not using it, the way a lesser singer might, as a weapon. And she makes particularly skillful use of melisma.

Turning *with* and *saw* into five- and six-syllable words, respectively, is not by itself that impressive an accomplishment. But two things distinguish Vaughan's approach: her choice of notes, which relate to the underlying harmony in an apt but often surprising way, and the relaxed, expertly paced way she glides from one note to the next.

"A Foggy Day" is a glorious example of what can happen when singer, songwriters, and arranger are on the same wavelength. Throughout this album, Mooney's orchestrations surround Vaughan's rich voice with an equally rich cushion of strings, reeds, and brass, and although the idea may have been to smooth out the edges of Vaughan's style for broad appeal, the charts often work well as both accompaniment and interpretation (**How Long Has This Been Going On?** and **Bitin' My Time** are other good examples). There are moments, though, when the string section threatens to overpower everything else (as on the almost painfully slow **Of Thee I Sing** or the inappropriately grandiose **He Loves and She Loves**) and Vaughan's orchestral support seems more like an obstacle course. Vaughan herself is never less than adventurous, but at times she seems to be fighting her accompaniment rather than luxuriating in it.

"A Foggy Day" is a glorious example of what can happen when singer, songwriters, and arranger are on the same wavelength.

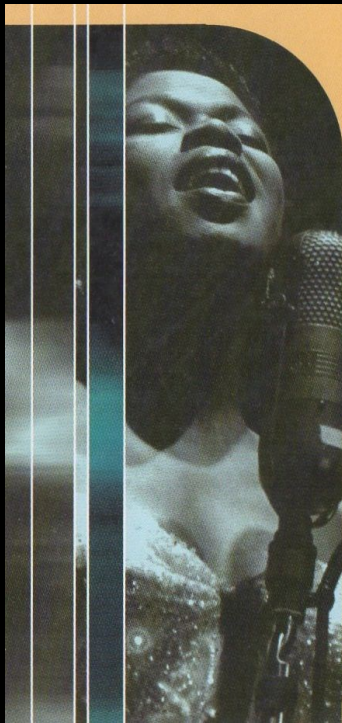


Photo © Billie J. Mitchell

And, it must be added, at times she seems stymied by the words she is singing. Given such straightforward lyrics as "A Foggy Day" or "The Man I Love" or **Love Walked In**, Vaughan sings them as if she had lived them. But the words of a song and what they mean might have been less important to her than the music and how she could twist and turn it — she herself said many times that she derived more inspiration from horn players than from other singers — and there are a few moments here when she simply doesn't seem to know what she's singing about.

According to critic Leonard Feather's liner note from the original release, *Sarah Vaughan Sings Gershwin* contains some songs (Feather doesn't specify which) that Vaughan had neither seen nor heard before recording them, so it's not surprising that she occasionally mangles a lyric. But it's a shame that the lyrics she mangles are those of such a master wordsmith as Ira Gershwin — and that she was allowed to get away with it.

For example, Vaughan's rendition of **Aren't You Kind of Glad We Did?** is lilting and graceful, but what is one to make of her tender, seemingly heartfelt reading of the words, "On my good name there will be doubt cast/With never a thought of any Chapter One"? She can't possibly have known what that second line meant, since it doesn't mean anything; couldn't the producer have asked for a retake and told her that what Gershwin wrote was, "With never a thought of any *chaperone*"?

Perhaps the blown lyric is a small price to pay for such musical brilliance.

Or take the charmingly racy **Lorelei**, which benefits from a spirited vocal and a hard-swinging arrangement but that suffers from her serious gaffe. (This is one of only four arrangements that don't include strings; the accompaniment recalls Vaughan's work with the big bands, which gave her her start in the mid-Forties.) Gershwin wrote:

I'm treacherous — *ja, ja!*

Oh, I just can't hold myself in check.

I'm lecherous — *ja, ja!*

I want to bite my initials in a sailor's neck.

The *treacherous-lecherous* rhyme may not be brilliant, but it works within the context of the song, whose first-person protagonist wishes she could be like the legendary German sea nymph of the song title. Vaughan misses the rhyme, singing "I'm treacherous" both times, thus robbing the lyric of much of its bite and at least a little of its logic: There is nothing particularly *treacherous* about biting a man on the neck unless your intention is to draw blood. On the other hand, the swoops and glides with which she attacks those little *jas* are positively magical; perhaps the blown lyric is a small price to pay for such musical brilliance.



Ira Gershwin, who died in 1983, never publicly expressed an opinion of how Sarah Vaughan handled his lyrics. And brother George died in '37, six years before Vaughan's professional career began, so what he would have thought of her approach to his music can only be guessed at. But it can be an educated guess.

George Gershwin was more attuned to what was happening in the jazz world than were most of his Tin Pan Alley colleagues. (I use *jazz* more as it's currently used than as it was used in the Twenties, when it was applied to all music that wasn't classical.) He even fancied himself a pretty fair jazz pianist. His sister, Frances Gershwin Godowsky, claimed, "He had different harmonies, he did different rhythms; it always fascinated me that it was never the same." It's clear that Gershwin believed in the power of improvisation, and it seems likely that he would have approved of the way his music was treated by a vocalist as creative as Vaughan, who it was often said, never sang a song the same way twice.

At the very least Gershwin, the only major American composer who successfully kept one foot on Broadway and the other in the concert hall, would have been impressed by the sheer beauty of Vaughan's instrument. She had a range of approximately three octaves, and she exerted tremendous control over every note. (Unlike many jazz vocalists, she almost never sang out of tune.) Although she never had a voice lesson,

It may be the purely technical aspects of Vaughan's style that grab one's attention, but it is the way she uses those tools that makes her a Sarah Vaughan worth paying attention to.

more than one critic has suggested that she could have made it as an opera singer. And it's worth noting that the two most musically challenging pieces here, **My Man's Gone Now** and **Summertime**, are both from Gershwin's only opera, *Porgy and Bess* — and that they receive two of the most emotionally powerful performances in this collection.

But while Vaughan herself was pleased by the suggestion that she had the potential to be a diva in the old-fashioned sense (she once said that she wanted Leonard Bernstein to write an opera for her, although she apparently never discussed this with him) a remarkable imagination would have gone to waste if she had pursued opera as a full-time career. Although her highly dramatic treatment of the two *Porgy and Bess* selections can be described as operatic, the liberties she takes with both melodies would not pass muster at La Scala or the Met.

It may be the purely technical aspects of Vaughan's style that grab one's attention, but it is the way she uses those tools that makes her a Sarah Vaughan worth paying attention to. No less an authority than the composer, conductor, historian, and critic Gunther Schuller once said as much: "Regardless of the beauty of your voice, you have to have creative imagination to be a great jazz or improvising singer. Sarah's creative imagination is exuberant."

That was evident when she was turning heads as the 19-year-old "girl singer" alongside alto saxophonist Charlie Parker and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie in pianist Earl Hines's dance band, and it was equally evident three decades later when she performed with symphony orchestras at the world's most prestigious concert halls. It was evident whether she was jamming fiercely with Clifford Brown or crossing over smoothly into easy-listening with Hal Mooney. And it is particularly evident in a marriage of interpreter and material as felicitous as *Sarah Vaughan Sings George Gershwin*.

Peter Keepnews
New York City
April 1958



Reissue

Supervised, researched, and restored by **Ben Young**
Mixed and mastered by **Kevin Reeves** at PolyGram Studios

Notes edited by **Peter Pullman**

Production coordinated by **Carlos Kase** and **Bryan Koniarz**

Production assistance by **Tom Greenwood**

Series art directed by **Patricia Lie** and **Hat Nguyen**

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Booklet cover photograph by **Paul J. Hoefler**

Print production managed by **Suzanne White**

Photograph research by **Cynthia Sesso**

Special thanks to Deborah Hay, Leon Leavitt, Phil Schaap,
the Institute of Jazz Studies, and the staff at PolyGram Studios

Executive producer: **Richard Seidel**



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A Brief History of Verve and Mercury

The jazz record labels Verve and Mercury have run along distinct yet parallel paths reaching back the last half-century.

Although Norman Granz founded Verve in 1956 (incorporating his early Fifties labels, Clef and Norgran), he had been producing and recording jazz concerts since 1944. A few years later, he licensed some performances to Mercury Records, which had been started in 1945 by Irving Green, a former booking agent, and Berle Adams, the son of a plastics manufacturer.

Since it had its own pressing plant, Mercury quickly became a major label, diversifying in the Fifties with first the new rock & roll and then country music. Its EmArcy division, primarily under the leadership of Bob Shad, boasted an impressive roster of jazz and r&b greats — supervised by African-American a&r talents Clyde Otis and Quincy Jones.

Both labels were sold in 1961, Verve to MGM and Mercury to Dutch-owned Philips. The companies continued to produce great jazz in the Sixties. Mercury then maintained its rank among the top labels in pop, country, and r&b in the Seventies and early Eighties, before the CD and the reemergence of jazz catalog as commercially viable. PolyGram has been the beneficiary ever since of this largesse — the recorded legacies of two great jazz labels, Verve and Mercury.

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Verve Master Edition

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SARAH VAUGHAN SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

The Original Liner Notes

SARAH VAUGHAN

There may be no such thing as a foolproof song, but it is conceivable that there might be a songproof singer, and that this singer might be Sarah Vaughan, who in the past has had to grapple with material that might have starved the throat of a lesser contender. (I refer, of course, to her distant, pre-Mercury past.) With the present album, of course, the question of rendering any lyric or melody in a songproof style does not arise, since the Gershwin cornucopia provided Miss Vaughan with an ideal and almost endless list of selections, all of which, having already survived their composer by twenty years, still give no indication that they will ever begin to wither.

Sarah Vaughan is a musician. This, to the less initiated, may appear to be a trivial, even an irrelevant detail; but to those who have had the joy of working with her it makes the borderline difference between bare competence and complete confidence, between banality and tonality, between failure and success.

On one of the sessions for this album that I had the pleasure of seeing and hearing in progress, the date was scheduled to start at 11 pm and run until 2 am, in a mid-town New York studio. The musicians were there punctually — distinguished men all, some of them men who had starred in their own albums, but flexible enough to assume the role of a faceless sideman to render flawlessly the arrangements Hal Mooney had written and was now ready to conduct.

Sarah walked in at 11:15, casual, the perennial faint smile playing around her lips. Leaning over the piano, she checked the first tune with pianist Jimmy Jones.

The band ran down the tune — "They All Laughed". It was perfect on the first take.

On many of the tracks you will hear in these sides, Sarah's incredibly swift mastery of music is illustrated; for in many instances she had never seen or heard the tunes before, had never even discussed a choice of key.

The next tune was "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off". Again she read her part without a hitch, until the tricky line, "let's call the calling-off off", instead of which she inadvertently repeated the song's title. On the second take both band and singer had it down perfectly, and another master was in the bag.

So it went for the whole three hours. Never hurrying, never less than deeply concerned with a superbly apt interpretation of each lyric, every melody, Sarah sailed through the session like a gondola through Venice. By 2:15 am the date was wrapped up and there was still time for her to drop in at Birdland for kicks to meet her old partner and ex-boss, Billy Eckstine, in whose band she had sung in 1945.

Somehow the session hadn't seemed like a tour de force at the time, because so little force, such a minimum of apparent effort, was attached to it. But the miracle of the Vaughan voice will be evident as you observe the vibrant, vital personality with which she had brought these unforgotten Gershwin standards back to records. Perhaps if she didn't read music so well and understand harmony, if she had taken a dozen takes on every tune instead of one or two, the results conceivably could have been as impressive — but I doubt it. There is little in modern music to match the value of a great singer blended with made-to-measure arrangements in spontaneous reactions to songs such as these.

Sarah Vaughan is an entertainer, an artist, a musician — and most important of these three, serving the other two in faultless complement, is the musician.

Leonard Feather

GEORGE GERSHWIN

When George Gershwin died suddenly at the age of 38 in 1937, he was, without question, one of the most successful composers the United States has ever produced. He made a fortune from his music, he was respected by many serious musicians and music critics in Europe and America, and he was sung, whistled, and played by millions. Yet not even his staunchest supporters then could have guessed how his artistic stature and his popularity were to grow in the years that followed.

He was born September 26, 1898 in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Sometime in 1913 he wrote his first song, "Since I Found You", which was never published. One idea then became fixed in his mind: to get a job in Tin Pan Alley. Through a friend of the family, George was introduced to Mose Gumble, who held a managerial post in a song-publishing house, Remick's. Gumble liked the way George played the piano. He offered him a job as a song pluggier and staff pianist at a salary of \$15 a week and George became the youngest song pluggier in Tin Pan Alley (15 years old). From eight to ten hours a day, Gershwin was a prisoner to the keyboard, pounding out the current Remick song releases for visiting performers in search of new numbers.

In 1916 the name of George Gershwin finally appeared on a copy of sheet music — "When You Want 'Em You Can't Get 'Em", with lyrics by Murray Roth. Roth sold his lyrics outright for \$15. George preferred gambling on royalties and his total earnings were the \$5 he received as an advance. His first published song was shortly followed by the first of Gershwin's song to reach the musical-comedy stage — "The Making of a Girl", used in *The Passing Show of 1916*.

In 1919, George White, who had been appearing as a dancer in leading musical comedies and revues for over a decade, decided to turn to producing, planning a revue that would out-Ziegfeld the *Follies*. Unlike Ziegfeld, who preferred buying stars and top-flight collaborators rather than developing them, White gambled on lesser-known personalities when he had faith in their ability. For his second edition of the *Scandals* in 1920, he asked George Gershwin to write all the music, even though up to this time Gershwin had produced only one song hit and had written only one complete Broadway score.

Many of the forty-four songs Gershwin contributed to five *Scandals* are forgotten, and deservedly so. But two songs are truly Gershwinian in their freshness and originality: "I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise", a production number in the 1922 edition which Carl van Vechten at the time said represented "the most perfect piece of jazz yet written", and "Somebody Loves Me".

Gershwin invaded the social world in 1921 when Dorothy Clark, pianist at the Ziegfeld Roof, brought him to Jules Glanzer's home. Glanzer, vice president of Cartier's on Fifth Avenue, gave fabulous parties where the great of the world of entertainment met and befriended the social elite. It was at Glanzer's, in 1922, that he played a new song, "Do It Again", and had Irene Bordoni come to him with the request that she be allowed to introduce it in her next show. ("I must haff dat dam song", was how she phrased her request!)

Like Gershwin, the orchestra leader Paul Whiteman had faith in the significance and artistic future of popular music. To convince Americans of that significance, he planned an ambitious jazz concert in which he would present a panorama of America's best popular music. His thought was for Gershwin to write a new piece in a jazz idiom for his concert. At first Gershwin was not receptive to Whiteman's suggestion. He was busy and did not feel that as yet he had the necessary technique to write a major work for orchestra. But one day he read a brief announcement that he was working on a "symphony" for the Whiteman concert. That announcement galvanized him into action. He chose the form of the rhapsody because its elastic form allowed him freedom in working out his materials. It was his brother, Ira, who christened the work *Rhapsody in Blue*, and it was the *Rhapsody in Blue* that gave the concert its significance.

Gershwin's first major musical-comedy success, *Lady Be Good*, featured Adele Astaire singing "The Man I Love". In that setting the song missed aim completely; it was too static. Vinton Freedley, the producer, insisted that it be dropped from the show, and Gershwin consented. In 1927 Gershwin removed the song from his shelf and incorporated it into the score he was then writing for *Strike Up the Band* (first version). Once again it was tried out of town, was found wanting and was deleted.

But the song had admirers. One was Lady Louis Mountbatten, who arranged for the Berkeley Square Orchestra to introduce the song in London. It became such a success that it crossed the Channel to Paris where it also caught on. American visitors to London and Paris heard the song and, returning home, asked for it. Then singers and orchestras took it up until his acceptance in this country became complete. Gershwin has explained that the reason it took the song so long to be appreciated is that the melody of the chorus, with its chromatic pitfalls, was not easy to catch.

In 1926 the Gershwins, George and Ira, wrote the songs for *Oh, Kay!*, the first American musical comedy starring Gertrude Lawrence. When producers Aarons and Freedley discussed with her the possibility of coming to New York in a musical, she was considering a similar offer from Ziegfeld. The information that George Gershwin would write the music was the deciding factor in her acceptance of the Aarons and Freedley contract. To no other musical production up to this time had Gershwin been so lavish with his gifts and there was "Someone to Watch Over Me" in his most soaring and beguiling vein.

With *Strike Up the Band*, on January 14, 1930, a new kind of musical came to Times Square. This was no longer just a spectacle for the eye and an opiate for the senses, but a bitter satire on war, unflinching all the resources of good theatre. A number of individual songs stand out prominently among them the caressing charm of "I've Got a Crush on You", which Gershwin originally wrote for *Treasure Girl* but which was used there only out of town.

In 1930 and 1931 he wrote the music for two successive musicals, each in its own way making stage history. For each he wrote the most important and brilliant stage music of his career; each with a smash hit, and each was radically different in approach and methodology. One was *Girl Crazy*, from which we have "Bidin' My Time", in the techniques and traditions of formal music comedy. The other — *Of Thee I Sing* — was in the new satirical manner of *Strike Up the Band*.

One of the things that made *Girl Crazy* as good as it was was the casting. Ginger Rogers made her bow on the Broadway stage. Willie Howard brought his Yiddish accent, uninhibited

comedy, and flair for mimicry. But the limelight belonged to a young and still unknown lady whose personality swept through the theater like a tropical cyclone and whose large brassy voice struck on the consciousness of the listeners like a sledge hammer. When Ethel Merman stepped on stage in a tight black satin skirt slit to the knee and a low-cut red blouse and sang, she was a sensation.

"Of Thee I Sing" shows Gershwin emerging as an outstanding musical satirist and as a composer who consciously and adroitly adapted sound to sight, tone to words, and musical means to stage action. In none of his musicals before this had score, book, and lyrics been so inextricably combined in a single unit. George reported: "Ira and I have never been connected with a show of which we were prouder."

Since 1926 the idea of writing an opera had haunted Gershwin. He had long since decided that his text would be DuBose Heyward's *Porgy*. He probably would have delayed the opera indefinitely if his hand had not suddenly been forced. The Theatre Guild was pressing Heyward for permission to allow Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II to adapt *Porgy* as a musical for Al Jolson. Heyward wanted *Porgy* to become a folk opera, not a musical comedy.

"I want you to tell me if you are really going to write that opera — and soon," Heyward told Gershwin. "If you are, I'm going to turn the Guild down definitely". Gershwin said he would begin working without any more delays. And he kept his word.

The opera occupied Gershwin about twenty months. Once it was written, he never quite ceased to wonder at the miracle that he had been its composer. He knew it was his greatest work.

The half-hearted response of New York's music critics did not shake Gershwin's own enthusiasm and complete faith. Nor did he experience serious disappointment that *Porgy and Bess* had the comparatively unimpressive run of 124 performances. Neither Gershwin nor Heyward lived to see vindicated their faith in *Porgy and Bess* nor did they reap their rewards for the sacrifice they made in writing it. Gershwin died two years after the premiere. Heyward succumbed to a heart attack three years after Gershwin's death. In this album we hear "My Man's Gone Now" and "Summertime".

With the opera out of the way, Gershwin signed to write the music for a new Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musical for RKO. His score for *Shall We Dance?* was a gold mine: "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off", "They All Laughed", and the title song.

As he stayed on in Hollywood through 1936 and 1937, George grew increasingly restive. Despite the many attractions of California, it did not appeal to him strongly. He preferred the frenetic whirlwind activity of New York. He found working for the motion pictures distasteful. He was continually upset by the producers' efforts to give his songs gargantuan settings and elaborate orchestrations when he was now seeking simplicity and economy. He said he wanted to get away from everybody for a while. The only hitch was that he also could not stand being by himself for any length of time. Before long there were portents that something was seriously wrong.

Some mornings he would wake up in a befuddled state, slightly dazed. During the day there were moments when he found himself swaying. On July 9, he awakened so weak that he had to call his nurse to help him. Suddenly he slumped, collapsed, and fell into a coma as if he suffered a fit. His physical symptoms revealed to the nurse that George was the victim of a brain tumor. He was rushed to Cedars of Lebanon Hospital for surgery. As soon as the operation was over, it was learned that there was not much hope for recovery. He died without regaining consciousness.

The last piece of music Gershwin wrote was the song "Our Love Is Here to Stay" for the *Goldwyn Politess*. He was able to complete only five numbers for this production. Since two are among his most beautiful — "Love Walked In" and "Our Love Is Here to Stay" — it is apparent that even in his last troublesome months there was no creative disintegration.

John Wilson

Other albums by sarah vaughan



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SARAH VAUGHAN SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

- ISN'T IT A PITY
Pardon My English — 1932
- OF THEE I SING
Of Thee I Sing — 1931
- I'LL BUILD A STAIRWAY TO PARADISE
George White's Scandals Of 1932
- SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME
Oh Kay — 1926
- BIDIN' MY TIME
Girl Crazy — 1930
- THE MAN I LOVE
Lady Be Good — 1924
- HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON
Rosalie — 1927
- MY ONE AND ONLY
Funny Face — 1927
- LORELEI
Pardon My English — 1932
- I'VE GOT A CRUSH ON YOU
Strike Up The Band — 1930
- SUMMERTIME
Porgy And Bess — 1935
- AREN'T YOU KINDA GLAD
The Shocking Miss Pilgrim (movie) — 1946
- THEY ALL LAUGHED
Skull We Dance (movie) — 1937
- LOOKING FOR A BOY
Tip Toes — 1925
- HE LOVES AND SHE LOVES
Funny Face — 1927
- MY MAN'S GONE NOW
Porgy & Bess — 1935
- I WON'T SAY I WILL
Little Miss Bluebeard — 1923
- FOGGY DAY
Damsel In Distress (movie) — 1937
- LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF
Skull We Dance (movie) — 1937
- THINGS ARE LOOKING UP
Damsel In Distress (movie) — 1937
- DO IT AGAIN
The French Doll — 1922
- LOVE WALKED IN
Goldenwyn Folies (movie) — 1936
- MGP 2-101

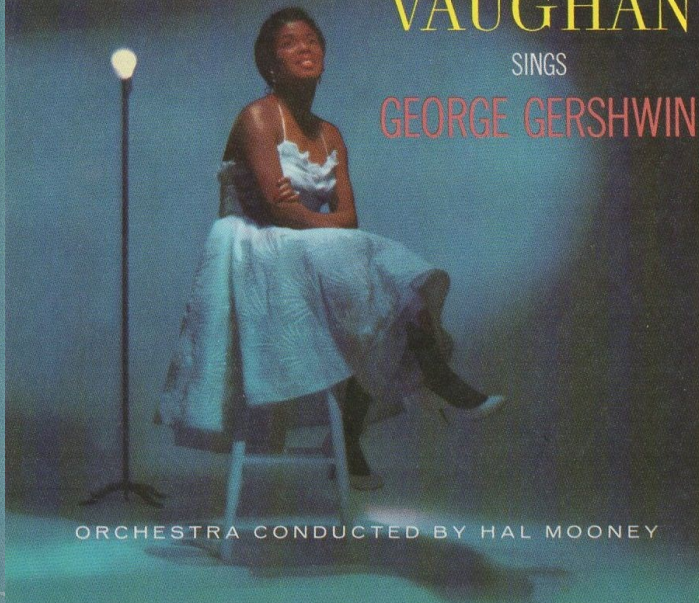
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SARAH VAUGHAN

SINGS
GEORGE GERSHWIN



ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY HAL MOONEY

SARAH VAUGHAN



There may be no such thing as a foolproof song, but it is conceivable that there might be a songproof singer, and that this singer might be Sarah Vaughan, who in the past has had to grapple with material that might have started the throat of a lesser comedian. (I refer, of course, to her distant, pre-Mercury past.) With the great ability, of course, the question of rendering any lyric or melody in a songproof style does not arise, since the Gertrude corrections provided Miss Vaughan with an ideal and almost infallible list of selections, all of which, having already survived their composer by twenty years, still give no indication that they ever begin to wince.

Sarah Vaughan is a musician. This, to the least inhibited, may appear to be a trivial, even an irrelevant detail, but to those who have had the joy of working with her it makes the banalistic difference between mere competence and complete confidence, between banality and humility, between failure and success.

On one of the sessions for this album that had the pleasure of seeing in and hearing in progress, the date was scheduled to start at 11 p.m., and ran until 2 a.m., in a mid-town New York studio. The musicians were there punctually—distinguished men, some of them men who had starred in their own albums, but flexible enough to assume the role of a faithful sideman to render faithfully the arrangements. Hal Moore had written and was now ready to conduct.

Sarah walked in at 11:15, casual, the personal faint smile playing around her lips. Leaving over the piano, she checked the first tune with pianist Jimmy Jones.

The band ran down the tune—“Hey, All Laughed!” It was perfect on the first take. On any of the takes you will hear in these sides, Sarah’s incredibly subtle mastery of music is illustrated, for in many instances she had never seen or heard the notes before, had never even discussed a choice of key.

The next tune was Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off. Again she read her part without a hitch, and the tricky line, “It’s all this calling off!” instead of which she inadvertently repeated the song’s title. On the second take both band and singer had it down perfectly, and another master was in the bag.

So it went for the whole three hours. Never hurrying, never less than deeply convinced with a superior yet unpretentious grasp of each lyric, every melody, Sarah called through the session like a goddess through Valois. By 2:15 a.m. the date was wrapped up and there was still time for her to drop in an additional few takes to meet her old partner and so on. Bill Eskdale, in whose band she had sung in 1942.

Somewhat the session hadn’t seemed like a tour de force of the time, because to Miss Vaughan, such a minimum of apparent effort, was attached to it. But the miracle of the Vaughan voice will be evident as you discover the vivid, personal versatility which she had brought these untroubled Gertrude standards back to records. Perhaps if the dichotomy of music so well understood harmony, if she had taken a dozen takes on every tune instead of one or two, the results conceivably could have been as impressive—but I doubt it. There is little in modern music to match the reaction of a great singer blessed with modest-to-moderate ornaments in spontaneous reactions to songs such as these.

Sarah Vaughan is an entertainer, an artist, a musician—and the most important of these three, serving the other two in flawless complement, is the musician.

...LEONARD FATHER

GEORGE GERSHWIN

When George Gershwin died suddenly at the age of 38 in 1937, he was, without question, one of the most successful composers the United States has ever produced. He made its fortune from his music, he was respected by many serious critics and music critics in Europe and America, and he was sung, whistled and played by millions. Yet not even his staunchest supporters then, or now, could have foreseen his critical success and his popularity were to grow in the years that followed.

He was born September 13, 1898, in a section of Brooklyn, some time in 1913 he wrote his first song, Since I Found You, which was never published. One day he met Fred in his father's store in Manhattan. They, though at first only acquaintances, became friends. George was introduced to Max Gorkin, who held a menial post in a song-publishing house. Remick's Gables held the very George played the piano. He offered her a job as a song plugger and staff pianist of a salary of \$15 a week and George became the youngest song plugger in the New Army 115 years old). From night to ten hours a day, Gershwin was a pianist at the keyboard, pounding out the current Remick song releases for visiting publishers in search of new material.

In 1916 the name of George Gershwin finally appeared on a copy of sheet music—When You Want You Can't Get It, with lyrics by Morry Ball. Both sold his lyrics outright for \$15. George preferred gambling on royalties and his total earnings were the \$3 he received as an advance. His first published song was shortly followed by the first of Gershwin's songs to reach the music-composer stage—The Making of a Girl, used in the Peeping Show of 1916.

In 1919, George White, who had been appearing as a dancer in leading musical comedies and revues for a dozen seasons, decided to turn to producing, planning a revue that would out-Engel the Follies. Unlike Engel, who preferred buying stars and top-flight collaborators rather than developing them, White gambled on lesser-known personalities whom he had faith in his ability. For his second edition of the Showboat in 1920, he hired George Gershwin to write all the music, even though in the time Gershwin had produced only one song hit and had written only one complete Broadway score.

Many of the 44 songs Gershwin contributed to five Showboats are forgotten, and destroyed. But two songs are truly Gershwin in their freshness and originality: If I Had a Sixpence to Spend, a production number in the 1922 edition which Carl von Veckhoff at the time said represented “the most perfect piece of jazz yet written” and Somebody Loves Me.

Gershwin introduced the social world in 1921 when Dorothy Clark, pianist at the Ziegfeld Road, brought him to Alex Gleason's home. Gleason, vice-president of Carter's on Fifth Avenue, gave fabulous parties where the great of the world of entertainment met and befriended the social elite. It was at Gleason's, in 1922, that he played a new song, Do It Again, and had Irene Bordino come to him with the request that she be allowed to introduce it in her next show. (“I must have had some sense” was how she phrased her request!)

Like Gershwin, the orchestra leader Paul Whiteman had faith in the significance and artistic future of popular music. To convince Americans of that significance, he planned an ambitious jazz concert in which he would present a panorama of America's best popular music. He thought that for Gershwin to write a new piece in a jazz idiom for his concert. At first Gershwin was not receptive to Whiteman's suggestion. He was busy and did not feel that he yet had the necessary technique to write a major work for orchestra. But one day he read a brief announcement that he was working on a “symphony” for the Whiteman concert. That announcement galvanized him into action. He chose the form of the symphony because its elastic form allowed him freedom in working out his materials. It was his brother, Ira, who christened the work Rhapsody in Blue, and it was the Rhapsody in Blue that gave the concert its significance.

Gershwin's first major musical-comedy success, Lady Be Good, featured Adlai Adams singing The Atonement, in that setting the song mixed up completely. It was two weeks. Vitton Freedley, the producer, insisted that it be dropped from the show, and Gershwin was told that in 1927 Gershwin received the song from his staff and incorporated it into the score he was then writing for Strike Up the Band (first version). Once again it was dropped from the show. It was only Louis Kaufman, who arranged for the Bellevue Sappers Orchestra to play the song in London. It became such a success that it crossed the Channel to Paris where it also caught an American visitor to London and Paris based on the song. The song was so successful that the producer then took it up and his acceptance in his country became known. Gershwin has explained that the reason it took that long to get to the stage was that the melody of the chorus, with its chromatic pizzicato, was not easy to catch.

In 1924 Gershwin, with his brother Ira, wrote the song Let's Call the Whole Thing Off, the first American musical comedy starring Gertrude Lawrence. When producers Adams and Freedley discussed with her the possibility of producing the show, she was so impressed by the music, was the director of the show, and Freedley was the producer. It was the first American musical comedy to go to the stage. The information that George Gershwin wrote the music, was the director of the show, and Freedley was the producer, was so important to him that no other musical production up to this time had Gershwin been so linked with his gifts

and there was someone to Watch Over Me in his most soaring and beguiling vein. “With Strike Up the Band, on January 14, 1926, a new kind of musical came to Times Square. This was no longer just a spectacle for the eyes but a spectacle for the ears, but a little more on the way, melting all the resources of good theatre. A number of individual songs found out prominently, among them Let's Call the Whole Thing Off and Let's Call the Whole Thing Off. You Gershwin originally wrote for Theatre Guild but it was used in these only

in 1926 and 1931 he wrote the music for two successive musicals, each in his own way making stage history. For each was most important in its approach and methodology. One was Glee Crazy, from which we have Lady Mary. The technique and tradition of farmed music comedy. The other—Of This I Sing—was in the new serious manner of Strike Up the Band.

One of the things that made Glee Crazy so good as it was the casting. George Rogers made her the Broadway singer, Willie Howard brought the Yiddish accent, unshakable comedy and fast for mimicry. But the lightning belated to a young and still unknown lady whose personality would through the theatre like a tropical cyclone and whose large voice would reach the conclusions of the listener like a sledge hammer. What that sledge hammer stepped on stage in a tight black suit skirt to the knee and a low-cut red blouse and sang, the was a sensation.

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Since 1926 the idea of writing an opera had haunted Gershwin. He had long since decided that his next would be Gideon Heyward's “Porgy.” He probably would have delayed the opera indefinitely if his hand had not been forced. The Theatre Guild was pressing Heyward for permission to allow Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II to adapt Porgy as a musical for Al Jolson. Heyward wanted Porgy to become a folk opera, not a musical comedy.

“I want you to tell me if you are really going to write opera—and soon?” Heyward had Gershwin. “If you are, I'm going to turn the Guild down definitely.” Gershwin said he would begin working without any more delay. And he kept his word.

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The full-hearted response of New York's music critics did not shake Gershwin's own enthusiasm and complete faith. Nor did he experience serious disappointment that Porgy and Bess had the comparatively unimpressive run of 124 performances. Neither Gershwin nor Heyward lived to see vindicated their faith in Porgy and Bess nor did they reap their rewards for the sacrifice they made in writing it. Gershwin died two years after the premiere. Heyward succumbed to a heart attack three years after Gershwin's death.

In this album we hear My Man's Gone Now and Summertime.

With the opera still in the eye, Gershwin signed the music for a new Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musical for BKO, The Song of Stuart We Dance was a solid new Let's Call the Whole Thing Off. They All Laughed and the title song.

As he stepped on in Hollywood through 1926 and 1927, George grew increasingly restless. Despite the many attractions of California, it did not appeal to him strongly. He performed the famous, white-hot acidity of New York. His formal working for the motion picture distasteful. He was continually upset by the producers' efforts to give his songs Gershwin's settings and elaborate orchestrations when he was using simplicity and economy. He said he wanted to get away from everybody for a while. The only luck was that he also could not stand being by himself for any length of time. Before long there were parties that something was seriously wrong.

Some mornings he would wake up in a bedchamber still asleep. During the day there were moments when he found himself weeping. On July 9, he awakened to find that he had to call his nurse to help him. Gerdely he attempted to walk, and fell into a coma as if he suffered a fit. His physical symptoms revealed to the nurse that Gershwin had a brain tumor. He was taken to the New York Presbyterian Hospital for surgery. As soon as the operation was over, it was learned that there was not much hope for recovery. He died without regaining consciousness.

The last piece of music Gershwin wrote was the song Love Is Here to Stay for the Gertrude Follies. He was able to complete only five numbers for production. These two are among his most beautiful—Love Is Here to Stay and Of This I Sing—

appeared that even in his last months there was no creative diminution.

...JOHN WILSON

Presented from the book JOURNALS OF GEORGE and MAUD W. GEORGE GERSHWIN by David Bovee by permission of Music and Company, Inc., New York, New York.



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SARAH VAUGHAN



SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

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SARAH VAUGHAN
SINGS
GEORGE GERSHWIN

ISN'T IT A PITY
From My English — 1932

OF THEE I SING
Of Thee I Sing — 1931

I'LL BUILD A STAIRWAY TO PARADISE
George White's Scandals Of 1922

SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME
Oh Kay — 1926

BIDIN' MY TIME
Oh! Geezy — 1936

THE MAN I LOVE
Lady Be Good — 1924

HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON
Bandini — 1927

MY ONE AND ONLY
Funny Face — 1927

LORELEI
From My English — 1932

I'VE GOT A CRUSH ON YOU
Strike Up The Band — 1930

SUMMERTIME
Porgy And Bess — 1935

AREN'T YOU KINDA GLAD
The Shocking Miss Pilgrim (movie) — 1946

THEY ALL LAUGHED
Shall We Dance (movie) — 1937

LOOKING FOR A BOY
Top Toes — 1925

HE LOVES AND SHE LOVES
Funny Face — 1927

MY MAN'S COME NOW
Porgy & Bess — 1935

I WON'T SAY I WILL
Little Miss Bluebeard — 1923

FOGGY DAY
Dumel (in English) (movie) — 1937

LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF
Shall We Dance (movie) — 1937

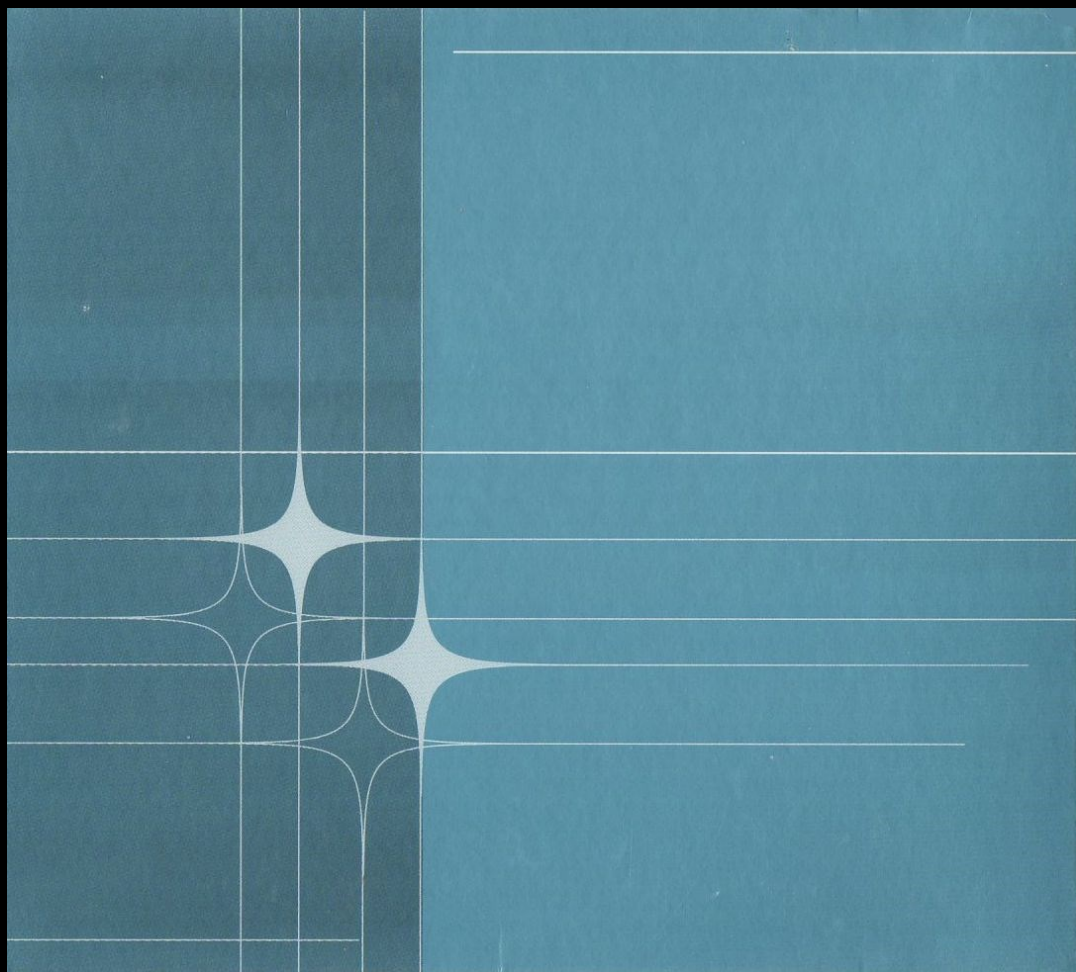
THINGS ARE LOOKING UP
Dumel in English (movie) — 1937

DO IT AGAIN
The French Doll — 1922

LOVE WALKED IN
Goldwyn Follies (movie) — 1938

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SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

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File under: *Jazz Vocals and Gershwin*



disc one

| | |
|---|------|
| 1. Isn't It a Pity? | 3:53 |
| 2. Of Thee I Sing — monaural LP take | 3:10 |
| 3. I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise | 2:39 |
| 4. Someone to Watch Over Me | 3:58 |
| 5. Bidin' My Time | 3:01 |
| 6. The Man I Love | 3:34 |
| 7. How Long Has This Been Going On? | 3:58 |
| 8. My One and Only (What Am I Gonna Do?) | 3:13 |
| 9. Lorelei | 2:32 |
| 10. I've Got a Crush on You | 4:00 |
| 11. Summertime — master take | 2:51 |
| 12. Aren't You Kind of Glad We Did? | 3:27 |
| 13. They All Laughed | 2:23 |
| 14. Looking for a Boy | 3:38 |
| 15. He Loves and She Loves | 3:24 |
| 16. My Man's Gone Now | 4:22 |

disc two

| | |
|---|------|
| 1. I Won't Say I Will | 3:24 |
| 2. A Foggy Day | 3:47 |
| 3. Let's Call the Whole Thing Off | 2:22 |
| 4. Things Are Looking Up | 3:33 |
| 5. Do It Again | 3:13 |
| 6. Love Walked In | 3:05 |
| 7. Of Thee I Sing — stereo LP take | 3:23 |
| 8. Summertime — alternative take | 2:46 |

Session tape

| | |
|---|------|
| 9. Things Are Looking Up — incomplete take | 3:21 |
| 10. I Won't Say I Will — incomplete take | 3:18 |
| 11. I Won't Say I Will — alternative take | 3:21 |
| 12. I Won't Say I Will — incomplete take | 1:21 |
| 13. I Won't Say I Will — incomplete take | 2:50 |
| 14. I Won't Say I Will — incomplete take | 7:49 |
| 15. Of Thee I Sing — incomplete take | 1:35 |
| 16. Of Thee I Sing — incomplete take | 2:25 |
| 17. Of Thee I Sing — incomplete take | 2:16 |
| 18. Of Thee I Sing — incomplete take | 4:02 |
| 19. My One and Only — incomplete take | 1:47 |
| 20. My One and Only — incomplete take | 3:11 |
| 21. My One and Only — incomplete take | 4:34 |

As historic as it is this summit meeting, Sarah Vaughan resisted being called a Gershwin interpreter — she loathed being restricted to “straight” interpretation. Essayist Peter Keepnews says in the liner notes that Vaughan’s refusal to sing just what was written yielded “textbook examples” of how the right interpretation can make a good piece of music even better*.

The entirety of the original two *Vaughan Sings Gershwin* volumes are presented first, followed by, on disc two, a portion of one recording session as it went down — all the takes, from the original tapes, which demonstrate Vaughan’s uncanny variations in improvisation. With two previously unissued complete takes and more than forty minutes of bonus material in all.

Sarah Vaughan (voc) with Hal Mooney and His Orchestra; Jimmy Jones (p); Mooney (arr. cond).
Recorded March and April 1957
Disc two, tracks 8–21 previously unissued as such

Original recordings produced by **Bob Shad**
Cover photograph by Wesley Bowman

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