

directly with Ellington on the former album.

A truly collaborative soul, Fitzgerald produced great recordings with such artists as Louis Armstrong and Count Basie. She also performed several times with Frank Sinatra over the years as well. In 1960, Fitzgerald actually broke into the pop charts with her rendition of "Mack the Knife." She was still going strong well into the '70s, playing concerts across the globe. One especially memorable concert series from this time was a two-week engagement in New York City in 1974 with Frank Sinatra and Count Basie.

By the 1980s, Fitzgerald had begun to experience serious health problems. She had heart surgery in 1986, and then discovered she had diabetes. The disease left her blind, and she had both legs amputated in 1994. She made her last recording in 1989 and her last public performance in 1991 at New York's Carnegie Hall. Ella Fitzgerald died on June 15, 1996, at her home in Beverly Hills. In all, Fitzgerald recorded more than 200 albums and some 2,000 songs in her lifetime. Her total record sales exceeded 40 million. Her many accolades included 13 Grammy Awards, the NAACP Image Award for Lifetime Achievement and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

While some critics complained that her style and voice lacked the depth of some her more bluesy counterparts, her success and the respect she garnered from the biggest names in the music industry showed that Fitzgerald was in a class all her own.



ELLA

Songs in a mellow mood

ELLA
FITZGERALD

with Ellis Larkins on piano



Ella Fitzgerald's *Songs in a Mellow Mood* finds the singer in the ideal and intimate company of pianist Ellis Larkins. A precursor to her equally stunning Gershwin set with the pianist, this 12-track set includes such first-tier standards as "Imagination," "You Leave Me Breathless," and "Until the Real Thing Comes Along." Presaging her masterful series of songbook recordings, Fitzgerald is equally at home with Gershwin, Porter, and Rodgers & Hammerstein, never faltering while she balances vocal power and interpretive nuances. Larkins only adds to the rarefied atmosphere with supple voicings of his own. A perfect way to soak up one of jazz's most glorious singers.

Born on April 25, 1917, in Newport News, Virginia, singer Ella Fitzgerald was the product of a common-law marriage between William Fitzgerald and Temperance "Tempie" Williams Fitzgerald. Ella experienced a troubled childhood that began with her parents separating just a month after her birth. With her mother, Fitzgerald moved to Yonkers, New York. They lived there with her mother's boyfriend, Joseph De Sailva. The family grew in 1923 with the arrival of Fitzgerald's half-sister Frances. Struggling financially, she helped her family out by working as a messenger "running numbers" and acting as a lookout for a brothel. Her first career aspiration was to become a dancer.

After her mother's death in 1932, Fitzgerald ended up moving in with an aunt. She started skipping school. Fitzgerald was then sent to a special reform school, but she didn't stay there long. By 1934, Ella was trying to make it on her own and living on the streets. Still harboring dreams of becoming an entertainer, she entered an amateur contest at Harlem's Apollo Theater. She sang the Hoagy Carmichael tune "Judy" and wowed the audience. Fitzgerald performed a second song and went on to win the contest's \$25 first place prize.

The 1950s and '60s proved to be a time of critical and commercial success for Fitzgerald. She even earned the moniker "First Lady of Song" for her mainstream popularity and unparalleled vocal talents. Her unique ability to mimicking instrumental sounds helped popularize the vocal improvisation of "scatting" which became her signature technique.

In 1955, Fitzgerald began recording for Granz's newly created Verve Records. She made some of her most popular albums for Verve, starting out with 1956's *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Cole Porter Song Book*. At the very first Grammy Awards in 1958, Fitzgerald picked up her first two Grammys—and made history as the first African-American woman to win a Grammy—for best individual jazz performance and best female vocal performance, respectively, for the two songbook projects *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Duke Ellington Song Book* and *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Irving Berlin Song Book*; she worked

ELLA

Songs in a mellow mood

- 1 I'm Glad There Is You (In This World Of Ordinary People) 3:10
- 2 What Is There To Say? 3:18
- 3 People Will Say We're In Love 3:12
- 4 Please Be Kind 3:32
- 5 Until The Real Thing Comes Along 2:55
- 6 Makin' Whoopee! 3:05
- 7 Imagination 2:23
- 8 Star Dust 4:00
- 9 My Heart Belongs To Daddy 2:35
- 10 You Leave Me Breathless 3:05
- 11 Baby, What Else Can I Do? 3:42
- 12 Nice Work If You Can Get It 2:30
- Total Time: 37:27

Vocals – Ella Fitzgerald Piano – Ellis Larkins
Recorded by Decca



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