

a bass drum pedal come to life, and the advantage of some first-class material created specifically for her by contributors such as singer and writer Irene Higginbotham, most notably the meaty "Fat Mama Blues." As good as these records were, the singer must have supported herself from her gigs or had an additional job, since the payment from the label was almost non-existent; for example, her advance for one session was only \$50. Up through the '70s, she kept busy performing in radio, films, and television, as well as keeping up a tireless schedule of personal appearances. She also maintained an exhaustive touring schedule.

Teddy Wilson was the definitive swing pianist, a solid and impeccable soloist whose smooth and steady style was more accessible to the general public than Earl Hines or Art Tatum. He picked up early experience playing with Speed Webb in 1929 and appearing on some Louis Armstrong recordings in 1933. Discovered by John Hammond, Willie joined Benny Carter's band and recorded with the Chocolate Dandies later that year. In 1935, he began leading a series of classic small-group recordings with swing all-stars which on many occasions featured Billie Holiday. That was also the year that an informal jam session with Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa resulted in the formation of the Benny Goodman Trio (Lionel Hampton made the group a quartet the following year). Although he was a special added attraction rather than a regular member of the orchestra, Wilson's public appearances with Goodman broke important ground in the long struggle against segregation.

Between his own dates, many recordings with Benny Goodman's small groups and a series of piano solos, Teddy Wilson recorded a large number of gems during the second half of the 1930s. He left B.G. in 1939 to form his own big band but, despite some fine records, it folded in 1940. Wilson led a sextet at Cafe Society during 1940-1944, taught music at Juilliard during the summers of 1945-1952, appeared on radio shows, and recorded regularly with a trio, as a soloist and with pick-up groups in addition to having occasional reunions with Goodman. Teddy Wilson's style never changed, and he played very similar in 1985 to how he sounded in 1935; no matter, the enthusiasm and solid sense of swing were present up until the end.



A jazz pioneer, Louis Armstrong was the first important soloist to emerge in jazz, and he became the most influential musician in the music's history. As a trumpet virtuoso, his playing, beginning with the 1920s studio recordings he made with his Hot Five and Hot Seven ensembles, charted a future for jazz in highly imaginative, emotionally charged improvisation. For this, he is revered by jazz fans. But Armstrong also became an enduring figure in popular music due to his distinctively phrased baritone singing and engaging personality, which were on display in a series of vocal recordings and film roles. He weathered the bebop period of the '40s, growing ever more beloved worldwide. By the '50s, Armstrong was widely recognized, even traveling the globe for the US State Department and earning the nickname "Ambassador Satch." His resurgence in the '60s with hit recordings like 1965's Grammy-winning "Hello Dolly" and 1968's classic "What a Wonderful World" solidified his legacy as a musical and cultural icon. In 1972, a year after his death, he received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. Similarly, many of his most influential recordings, like 1928's "West End Blues" and 1955's "Mack the Knife," have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

Her mountainous stature matching the sheer soulful power of her massive vocal talent, Big Maybelle was one of the premier R&B chanteuses of the 1950s. Her deep, gravelly voice was as singular as her recorded output for Okeh and Savoy, which ranged from down-in-the-alley blues to pop-slanted ballads. In 1967, she even covered ? & the Mysterians' "96 Tears" (it was her final chart appearance). Alleged drug addiction leveled the mighty belter at the premature age of 47, but Maybelle packed a lot of living into her shortened lifespan.

Born Mabel Louise Smith, the singer strolled off with top honors at a Memphis amateur contest at the precocious age of eight. Gospel music was an important element in Maybelle's intense vocal style, but the church wasn't big enough to hold her talent. In 1936, she hooked up with Memphis bandleader Dave Clark; a few years later, Maybelle toured with the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. She debuted on wax with pianist Christine Chatman's combo on Decca in 1944, before signing with Cincinnati's King Records in 1947 for three singles of her own backed by trumpeter Hot Lips Page's band.

Producer Fred Mendelsohn discovered Smith in the Queen City, re-christened her Big

Maybelle, and signed her to Columbia's Okeh R&B subsidiary in 1952. Her first Okeh platter, the unusual "Gabbin' Blues" (written by tunesmith Rose Marie McCoy and arranger Leroy Kirkland) swiftly hit, climbing to the upper reaches of the R&B charts. "Way Back Home" and "My Country Man" made it a 1953 hat trick for Maybelle and Okeh. In 1955, she cut a rendition of "Whole Lot of Shakin' Goin' On" a full two years before Louisiana piano pumper Jerry Lee Lewis got his hands and feet on it. Mendelsohn soon brought her over to Herman Lubinsky's Savoy diskery, where her tender rendition of the pop chestnut "Candy" proved another solid R&B hit in 1956. Maybelle rocked harder than ever at Savoy, her "Ring Dang Dilly," "That's a Pretty Good Love," and "Tell Me Who" benefiting from blistering backing by New York's top sessioneers. Her last Savoy date in 1959 reflected the changing trends in R&B; Howard Biggs' stately arrangements encompassed four violins. Director Bert Stern immortalized her vivid blues-belting image in his documentary *Jazz on a Summer's Day*, filmed in color at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival.

Maybelle persevered throughout the '60s, recording for Brunswick, Scepter (her "Yesterday's Kisses" found her coping admirably with the uptown soul sound), Chess, Rojac (source of "96 Tears"), and other labels. But the good years were long gone when she slipped into a diabetic coma and passed away in a Cleveland hospital in 1972.

Claimed by the proud state of Alabama as one of their homegrown talents, Beulah Bryant was born Blooma Bryant and sang in local church groups. She left the state as a teenager, though, relocating to California in 1936 and more or less officially launching her professional career about a decade later by winning an amateur contest held by a network radio show. This victory inspired her to start up her own trio, which worked regularly in California. In the mid-'40s she moved to New York and by 1950 was part of a group of signings pulled off by Joe Davis wearing his hat as an MGM A&R man. The June, Billboard of that year announced that the label had "inked West Coast blues thrush Beulah Bryant." She made some excellent recordings with a group of musicians that had also backed up singers such as Irene Redfield and Millie Bosman, including the fine trombonist Will Bradley and trumpeter Taft Jordan.

Bryant's style was tailored from the same type of musical suits worn by the so-called "blues shouters." She had a strong, authoritative delivery, a sense of rhythm that was like

NEWPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL 1958

- 1 Louis Armstrong Newport International Jazz Band - On The Sunny Side Of The Street 6:51
- 2 Teddy Wilson Trio - Stompin' At The Savoy 4:19
- 3 Teddy Wilson Trio - Sweet Georgia Brown 4:20
- 4 Teddy Wilson Trio - Undetermined 3:46
- 5 Newport All Stars - Jump The Blues 7:18
- 6 Big Maybelle with The Blues Band - Baby, Please Don't Go 5:01
- 7 Big Maybelle with The Blues Band - Cherry 2:28
- 8 Big Maybelle with The Blues Band - Let it Roll 3:29
- 9 Big Maybelle with The Blues Band - I ain't Mad at You 1:59
- 10 Beulah Bryant with The Blues Band - John Henry 4:00
- 11 Beulah Bryant with The Blues Band - Motherless Child 2:33
- 12 Beulah Bryant with The Blues Band - Shake, Rattle & Roll 3:01

Recorded by Columbia Records July 1958

Recorded By - George Avakian, Teo Macero