

CS 8048

STEREO



FIDELITY

COLUMBIA
GUARANTEED HIGH-FIDELITY



Lp

Lady in Satin

Billie Holiday

Ray Ellis
and his orchestra



LADY IN SATIN

BILLIE HOLIDAY

RAY ELLIS and his orchestra

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I'm a Fool to Want You
For Heaven's Sake
You Don't Know What Love Is
I Get Along Without You Very Well
For All We Know
Violets for Your Furs

You've Changed
It's Easy to Remember
But Beautiful
Glad to Be Unhappy
I'll Be Around

"I've got to sing with Ray Ellis," Lady said. "I want this album more than anything else, and I want it to be good."

She'd heard Ray's work often, particularly his first album *Ellis in Wonderland* and she knew better than anyone else that he would be good for her. For there is grace and inspiration unfolding throughout Ray's arrangements which can make a singer look her best, and Lady knew it. The use of strings and voices, punctuated with jazz-inspired solos here and there, is a new setting for this great jazz singer. These two sounds have never met before.

These striking performances tell a great deal about Billie Holiday's special talent. For one thing, they are the records of an artist who was making records twenty years ago (*Lady Day*) and who has sung with every great jazz player. The maturity this implies is there to hear, making words and phrases more meaningful, melodies of familiar songs suddenly new again.

And because Lady Day chose to write her autobiography, a current best seller she calls *Lady Sings the Blues*, most of us know the life behind her voice. Few singers have suffered so much, paid such penalties for a career, had so few pleasant memories of fame as she. Because we know her so well, we find a more personal meaning in her songs. It's so easy to believe what she sings.

One important question some listeners new to Lady's records will ask is: Is this jazz? And the answer must be: Yes. It is jazz because Billie Holiday sings jazz, no matter what the accompaniment is, no matter what the song is. It would be difficult to name more than a half a dozen jazz singers in the history of the art, but she is one, and you can know it simply by listening to these eleven performances. The phrasing, the ingenious escapes from the written melody, the sound of her voice, all are true to jazz. Dressing her in strings does not alter her style: it enhances it.

Our familiarity with Lady's poignant story and the fact that she likes the songs that suit sadness so well must be offset by a look into her future. She is ready now for an extended European tour. She is in demand wherever jazz is played, and everything about her present points to a happier and more successful future. And if you see her, slender and pretty in her glamorous new wardrobe, you'll find it hard to believe trouble has tagged her for so long.

The songs she has chosen for this important album are all new for her. She wanted it that way, because the new setting called for a change. But they're the kind of songs you've wanted to hear her sing and the kind she likes to sing. And Ray Ellis has included in most of them a touch of instrumental jazz to compliment the vocals. On *I'm a Fool to Want You* and *It's Easy to Remember* the trombone soloist is Urbie Green. On *You Don't Know What Love Is*, and *But Beautiful*

trumpet star Mel Davis solos. And on *I Get Along Without You Very Well*, *Violets for Your Furs*, *You've Changed*, and *Glad to Be Unhappy* J.J. Johnson, whom Billie has known most of his life, plays the trombone solos.

Finally a word about Ray Ellis. It is, of course, rare flattery to be chosen, in fact demanded, by Lady Day for this album, for Ray is a young arranger whose work is just beginning to be known. His second Columbia album has recently been released (*Let's Get Away from It All* CS 8051), and he's on his way in a variety of facets of music. To have made this album with Lady Day indicates the opinion many musicians already have of his talent.

So a challenging idea in recording was undertaken because Lady wanted it so much. It is all the more satisfying because she believes, now that it is accomplished, that the album is the best she has ever made.

IRVING TOWNSEND

THIS COLUMBIA STEREO



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