moans & blues

by Lizzie Miles

LOST MUSIC

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No doubt her beauty, voice and personality were responsible for encountering a full share of "man-trouble"— the essential blues ingredient — and perhaps it was this trouble that sent her back home to New Orleans. Or it may have been something deeper. At any rate, in her travels she finally found the answer; the cradle of jazz, the fluid cosmopolitan creative culture of her own New Orleans was really home. She returned to stay.

Lizzie Miles is one of the very few jazz performers left in our time who lived and sang popularly right through the era of the birth of jazz. Today in the Mardi Gras Lounge on Bourbon St., she is still packing them in. For our ears, her style of singing the original oldtime verse-and-chorus songs is significant. It shows that the blues feeling and spirit did not suddenly come to be applied to the modern music of post World War I; her style now is the same style she remembers having heard in her native New Orleans when these songs were new 40 years ago and more.

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Lizzie Miles writes: ... been tryin' to get them to let me sing soft since I started recording ... but no, they wanted me bellowin' like a fog born a mile away. You can't put in sweetness and your soul bollerin' ...

When she sings, Lizzie is a woman possessed. The trance is for herself as well as for listeners; singing, moaning with half-closed eyes, the spirit is upon her and it is impossible to stop her before the end of the song. The secret of this intensity, the mark of the artist, may lie between modest lines of a letter she wrote: . . I sing love songs, sad songs — torchy songs better. Guest it's because I had such a hard sad life from as far back as I can remember is tuby. Most these songs bring memories.

In this business after all those years of knockabour and trouble, either you turn bitter and disappear, or you ripen into a remarkable personality. There is no middle ground. Lizzie's oldtime songs (side B) will caress the memory of those of us who are old enough to recall them, irresistibly spark the imagination of us all.

*cf. spontaneous words in "Plain Ole Blues" unrehearsed and ad. lib. from all



"... think I'm not happy being as I am? I just wouldn't be thin or skinny for all the money in town."

Side A
Memphis Blues*
Can't Help Lovin That Man Of Mine
Jelly Roll*
There'll Be Some Changes Made
Louisiana*
Sugar Blues*
Lary River

*With Tony Almerico's Parisian Room Band †Included in binaural edition

Side B
Going Awy To Wear You Off My Mind†
Momar's Lonesome For You
I Never Knew What The Blues Were
Pape Won't You Tell Me What You Done To Me
Basin Street
Animal Bell
Plain Ole Blues*
When You're A Long Long Way From Home†
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Recorded in New Orleans on Royal Street Piano Accompaniments: Red Camp Band Accompaniments: Tony Almerico's All Stars

When You're a Long Long Way From Home (1914) gives the unaccompanied verse, Liz teaching Red. In this whole collection of songs Red Camp was flying blind. No music, just intuition, a poignant sympathetic contrast between old and new. In that old piano Camp instinctively found the wooden bass notes to give the blues punctuation, a real and tangible nostalgia.

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Lizzie could hear the band, but the band could not hear ber; she was in a lower tone, close to the microphone; yet a certain surrealism in music stems from her deliberate singing whole tones removed from the band pattern. This from an old timer, self-avowedly slightly square in terms of modern jazz. Among many other unique features of this episode are the involuntary words in her singing.

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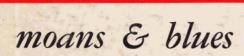
Way down — here in Dixieland — gonna leave my man . . . I'll make my stand down here in Dixieland.

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Jelly Roll Jelly Roll Morton made his treatment of this traditional outcry famous in the early 1900's. Lizzie uses several versions in her own special blend — with a dash of Creole French lyrics at the end.

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BINAURAL EDITION



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zv River . Can't Heln Invin That Man

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Animal Ball

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Never Knew What The Blues Wer

(Pre-Jazz Blues)

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Side B

Going Away To Wear You Off My Mindt Mama's Lonesome For You I Never Knew What The Blues Were Papa Won't You Tell Me What You Done To Me Basin Street† Animal Ball Plain Ole Blues*† When You're A Long Long Way From Home

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another SOUNDS OF OUR TIMES recording by COOK LABORATORIES STAMFORD, CONN.

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