### Notes about Elizabeth Pajaude who for 50

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#### LIZZY MILES

(with a few excerpts from her letters)

"Katy King had a diamond ring . . . Who would be the lucky one to get it, All the fellows wanted to know. She said

> Take your finger off it. Don't you dare to touch it, 'Cause it don't belong to you. Tain't no use to crave it. Mama's goin' to save it For the man whose love is true ".

Lizzy's combs and dresses are the same she used in Paris a little after the turn of the century. "My costumes when I was the toast of Paris-the Creole Songbird they called me . . ." They come from the same trunks that store the yellowed pages of the songs she used to sing. The sheet music has aged, and times have changed, but the Miles voice goes onpowerful and expressive.

"I sing on the average of 40 songs a nite 5 to 6 songs on a 20 minute set. Sat nite at 5 AM I was leaving the stand to come home felt like I was goin to fall apart they asked was I tired-don't leave. I said no I'm not tired I got a little mule in me I'm just goin home to take a 24 hour rest."

Lizzy Miles is hard to write about. Of course when you hear her sing, no words are necessary at all, because in that moment something happens. After Lizzy spells out a song, other performances of it seem anemic,-shallow by comparison. She has that rare blend of spirit and experience which distinguishes the very few we call great. But Lizzy does not care about all this; she is too busy living, making music.

"A lady gave me a mess of Pointsetter that red mexican Xmas flower I love em. Well got home put a beautiful bunch in every room had enough left to take to Nursery to decorate it. Sisters told me they did not have any egg nog. So I returned home made them a big pot of egg nog .-- had a very fine Xmas. I was alone writing eating drinking and singing reading. I like to be that way. I like people I like fun but I get plenty when I'm working so when I'm

A Cottage For Sale works its way inside us and becomes the embodiment of all that has been lost and

"To me I sing love songs-sad songs-torchy songs better. Guess it's because I had such a hard, sad life from as far back as I can remember is why.

Someone once came pretty close to the touchstone of Thurber's humor when he pointed out that it was still just as spontaneous and funny on every repeated re-reading; Lizzy's Mama Don' Allow It has the same touch of genius. Every replaying brings with it fresh exhilaration.

"He gets paid for standin up lookin mean and patting the strings not exerting himself at all. You never hear him. Get a louder stronger man."

She had to have a banjo for some of the older songs, they just didn't seem right to her without it. On her own hook she called up a banjo-playing friend. He appeared promptly enough, but with his guitar. Seemed his banjo was in hock, so we promptly forgot the whole affair. Next day, however, a new round smiling face appeared in the Parisian Room loft and after warm greetings were exchanged, a banjo appeared . . . and we re-did 4 numbers so they sounded "just right": Robert E. Lee, Chingtown, Light of the Silvery Moon, World Is Waiting for

"Hope we can do some fine work together and let the world see that Sophie Tucker is not the only old lady of song that can carry on."

Dyin' Rag was another ancient song not from her old sheet music,—but from way back in her memory, a song her mother used to sing to her. She acted it out all the time-the death-bed request to play something sweet and "call it for me the 'Dyin' Rag'-" her moans and feeble requests punctuating Camp's solo chorus. The word picture may sound corny to us today but Lizzy's uninhibited performance gives a clue to the legendary power and integrity of old-style acting.

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#### REPERTOIRE

A Side Waitin' For The Robert E. Lee\*† Who's Sorry Now? Mama Don' Allow It\* Take Yo' Finger Off It Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone Chinatown

B Side A Cottage For Sale Ballin The Jack Dyin' Rag Georgia On My Mind By The Light Of The Silvery Moon! The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise†

cover photo. V. Rennick





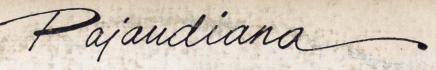
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BINAURAL edition of

songs my mother taught me

with Tony Almerico's Band

Red Camp, piano



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