

Compiled and Annotated by DAVID A. JASEN

FOLKWAYS RECORDS RBF 50

# The Piano Roll Artistry of Edythe Baker & Other Women



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



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## The Piano Roll Artistry of Edythe Baker & Other Women

**SIDE ONE — Edythe Baker** Total Time - 22:26

1. When You're Good You're Lonesome (Doro)
2. Jean (Brooks)
3. Swanee Blues (Delcamp)
4. Racing Blues (Von Tilzer)
5. St. Louis Blues (Handy)
6. Yes Sir, That's My Baby (Donaldson)
7. Blue Hoosier Blues (Friend)
8. Sweet Man (Pinkard)

**SIDE TWO — Other Women** Total Time - 21:03

1. The Melrose Rag (Bauersachs)—Sybil Court
2. Bye, Bye, Pretty Baby (Gardner)—Pauline Alpert
3. Changes (Donaldson)—Vee Lawnhurst
4. Would You Rather Be a Colonel (Gottler)—  
Bertha Wolpa
5. In the Land of Old Black Joe (Donaldson)—  
Eva Reeves
6. I Wonder Where My Sweet Daddy's Gone (Stark)—  
Doris Goodwin
7. Never Again (Jones)—Ruth Mack
8. Knockout Drops (Klickman)—Zema Randale

### CREDITS

Compiled & Annotated by DAVID A. JASEN

Remastering by Carl Seltzer

We wish to thank David A. Jasen, Joel Markowitz, Mike Schwimmer,  
Ed Sprankle and Trebor J. Tichenor for the use and for their  
recording of their rare piano rolls for this album.

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632 BROADWAY, N.Y.C., 10012 N.Y., U.S.A.

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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## THE PIANO ROLL ARTISTRY OF EDYTHE BAKER & OTHER WOMEN

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It is unhappily true that women composers and performers have been given short shrift throughout the history of music. It was with the creation of Tin Pan Alley, the establishment of companies to publish and nationally market popular music in the United States starting in the "gay nineties," that women came into their own. For the first time, their photographs appeared on the covers of sheet music, both as composers and as performers. Some women even became sheet music publishers. With the advent of the popularization of the piano roll, women were given credit for their arrangements as well as their performances. When radio became popular, women performers appeared regularly on the air, some with their own programs. And so, from the first decade of the player piano through the twenties, women became active making rolls - both as arrangers as well as performers. While they found such employment, do not think that they dominated the field. It was just that for the first time, they became visible, not numerous.

The most musically versatile and the one who created the most consistent excitement on rolls was Edythe Baker. She was born on August 3, 1895 in Kansas City, Missouri and studied piano for the concert stage. After arriving in New York City late in 1919, she attracted the attention of the Aeolian people who gave her a two-year contract to make piano rolls. Her first roll was her original rag, Blooie-Blooie, which to this day remains only available on her piano roll. She soon performed in vaudeville, first as part of famed dancer Harry Fox's act, then as part of Ziegfeld's Frolics and then

headlining an act of her own. She also appeared on Broadway in musical comedies as both actress and pianist. In 1927, she scored in her own London revue which British impresario Charles Cochran produced. After appearing in the West End and making a few gramophone recordings (see SWINGIN' PIANO, RBF-46), she retired from professional life when she married Gerald d'Erlanger, very young son of a prominent British banking family on January 2, 1928 in London. After the second world war she returned to this country where she became a piano teacher in the small town of Wurtsboro, New York and where she died on November 22, 1965.

### SIDE ONE - Edythe Baker

WHEN YOU'RE GOOD YOU'RE LONESOME was written and Edythe's version was made in 1920. It is a perfect example of how ragtime's syncopation became an integral part of popular songs. This tune was subtitled a One-Step. In any event, it is a joyous tune, made even more invigorating by Edythe's arrangement.

JEAN was the 1919 entry of Shelton Brooks, who, two years earlier, had a runaway hit with Darktown Strutter's Ball. Not only does this song feature unusual harmonies, but it also has the famous Baker left-hand of grace notes leading to a whole note. She created this very effective device and used it tellingly.

SWANEE BLUES was fellow roll artist J. Milton Delcamp's 1920 entry (also hear him perform it on RBF-46). Edythe's arrangement takes full advantage of the player piano. She preferred to record her arrangements in the very bright key of B major, which, if performed in concert live, would never have been used. Instead, the key of C major would have more



properly and easily have been used - indeed, this common key was the one in which this song was published.

RACING BLUES came from the very prolific pen of Albert Von Tilzer and was part of his 1920 Broadway musical, Honey Girl. The extremely clever and original opening measures of the verse was stolen by John Kander for his tune, "And All That Jazz" from his 1975 show, Chicago. Edythe herself uses a device normally associated with Charley Straight (see RBF-44) for the chorus.

ST. LOUIS BLUES, composed by W.C. Handy in 1914, was still immensely popular in 1920 when Edythe made this sensational arrangement for the Aeolian company. Unlike the rest of the tunes with "blues" in the title, this is the only genuine blues. The word was in vogue from 1919-1924 and many syncopated fox-trots were designated "blues."

YES SIR, THAT'S MY BABY was one of many million-selling hits of Walter Donaldson. This 1925 winner reflects the enormous success of the Charleston and Edythe's treatment takes full advantage including some breath-taking modulations.

BLUE HOOSIER BLUES was pop songwriter Cliff Friend's contribution in 1923. Edythe treats this fox-trot as a blues. Her unusual harmonies in the verse help make this an unforgettable performance.

SWEET MAN was composed in 1925 by Maceo Pinkard who, in the same year, turned out another million-seller sweet with his Sweet Georgia Brown. Edythe continues to reflect the charb ston beat in this margelous tune.

#### SIDE TWO - Other Women

THE MELROSE RAG was composed and published by the composer Hubert T. Bauersachs at the end of 1921. This bright version was created by Sybil Court for the Connorized company. A latin beat adds spice to the trio.

BYE-BYE PRETTY BABY was bandleader Jack Gardner's lovely entry for 1927. New York born and bred Pauline Alpert (1900- )

demonstrates her tremendous skill and creativity with her splendid arrangement and performance. She can also be heard on disc recordings on RAGTIME PIANO INTERPRETATIONS (RBF-24) and on SWINGIN' PIANO (RBF-46).

CHANGES is the imaginative 1927 work by prolific tunesmith Walter Donaldson (1893-1947). Vee Lawnhurst (1905- ), herself a pop song composer, was a remarkable pianist who was an original member of Roxy's Gang, appeared on radio extensively (especially in tandem with Muriel Pollack - see RBF-24) and made disc recordings as early as 1921. This incredible roll arrangement demonstrates just how musically sophisticated she was.

WOULD YOU RATHER BE A COLONEL WITH AN EAGLE ON YOUR SHOULDER OR A PRIVATE WITH A CHICKEN ON YOUR KNEE? was the 1918 World War I musical question asked by Archie Gottler. This early and charming performance was the work of the unknown Bertha Wolpa who worked both for Rhythmodyk and U. S. Music.

IN THE LAND OF OLD BLACK JOE was champ songwriter Walter Donaldson's 1920 effort. Eva Reeves made her splendid syncopated arrangements for Connorized and this performance is among her very best.

I WONDER WHERE MY SWEET SWEET DADDY'S GONE is the splendid 1921 blues by Ray H. Stark. Aileen Stanley made a hit with her recording of it and Doris Goodwin's performance on Arto here assured its continued success.

NEVER AGAIN is a 1924 Isham Jones (1894-1956) entry. It was the same year he came out with his million-selling song, Spain. The unknown Ruth Mack does a splendid and catchy arrangement bringing out the beauty inherent in this special song. A medium success during the year of its publication, it enjoyed several recordings, including one by its composer.

KNOCKOUT DROPS was written by composer-arranger F. Henri Klickman (1885-1966) in 1910. This arrangement by Zema Randale was done early in 1918. Her bright and cheerful version fairly snaps out at you.



**FOLKWAYS Records**

AND SERVICE CORP., 632 BROADWAY, N.Y.C. 10012  
Long Playing Non-Breakable Micro Groove 33 1/3 RPM

**THE PIANO ROLL ARTISTRY OF  
EDYTHE BAKER & OTHER WOMEN**

Compiled & Annotated by DAVID A. JASEN

SIDE ONE

RBF 50 A

**EDYTHE BAKER**

1. WHEN YOU'RE GOOD YOU'RE LONESOME (Doro)
2. JEAN (Brooks)
3. SWANEE BLUES (Delcamp)
4. RACING BLUES (Von Tilzer)
5. ST. LOUIS BLUES (Handy)
6. YES SIR, THAT'S MY BABY (Donaldson)
7. BLUE HOOSIER BLUES (Friend)
8. SWEET MAN (Pinkard)

Total Time - 22:26

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SIDE TWO

RBF 50 B

### OTHER WOMEN

1. THE MELROSE RAG (Bauersachs) — Sybil Court
2. BYE, BYE, PRETTY BABY (Gardner) — Pauline Alpert
3. CHANGES (Donaldson) — Vee Lownhurst
4. WOULD YOU RATHER BE A COLONEL (Gottler) —  
Bertha Wolpa
5. IN THE LAND OF OLD BLACK JOE (Donaldson) —  
Eva Reeves
6. I WONDER WHERE MY SWEET DADDY'S GONE  
(Stark) — Doris Goodwin
7. NEVER AGAIN (Jones) — Ruth Mack
8. KNOCKOUT DROPS (Klickman) — Zema Rendale

Total Time - 21:03

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