

Anita O'Day and Billy May - Swing Rodgers and Hart (1960)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Johnny One Note* 2. *Little Girl Blue* 3. *Falling in Love with Love* 4. *Bewitched* 5. *I Could Write A Book* 6. *Have You Met Miss Jones* 7. *Lover* 8. *It Never Entered My Mind* 9. *Ten Cents A Dance* 10. *I've Got Five Dollars* 11. *To Keep My Love Alive* 12. *Spring Is Here*

Anita O'Day – Vocals Billy May & His Orchestra: Pete Candoli - Trumpet Joe Castro - Piano Irving Cottler - Drums Fred Falensby - Sax (Tenor) Chuck Gentry - Sax (Baritone) Justin Gordon - Sax (Tenor) Conrad Gozzo - Trumpet Al Hendrickson - Guitar Eddie Kusby - Trombone Stan Levey - Drums Murray McEachern - Trombone Ted Nash - Sax (Alto) Tommy Pederson - Trombone Ralph Pena - Bass Uan Rasey - Trumpet Bill Schaeffer - Trombone Wilbur Schwartz - Sax (Alto) Tommy Shepard – Trombone Billy May - Arranger, Conductor

Anita O'Day and Billy May had met before, on a glorious 1959 date swinging Cole Porter, before they reconvened just 14 months later to do similar damage to the songbook of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. While Porter songs such as "Just One of Those Things" and "I Get a Kick out of You" translated well to the high-energy treatment of May's brassy arrangements and O'Day's spitfire performances, Rodgers & Hart were a more difficult proposition. Broadway fans could understandably fear that O'Day and May would pulverize the waltzing balladry of Rodgers as well as Hart's intricate wordplay. They should have realized that, like the breakneck yet technically perfect performances of bop originators Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, O'Day would miss no subtleties -- and would probably add some of her own -- while she graced these energized versions of American pop classics. Anita O'Day and Billy May Swing Rodgers and Hart begins on a high note, with the absolutely frenetic "Johnny One Note," and finds May unsurprisingly goosing several of Richard Rodgers' wonderful waltzes, including a version of "Lover" that provides the excited American equivalent of Peggy Lee's bustling, exotic hit version of the same song. Despite her technical gifts, Anita O'Day still sings a ballad very sweetly, as on "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," although she predictably can't help scatting out the song. She also delivers just the perfect amount of man-killer tartness on the obscure serial-killer tale "To Keep My Love Alive." ---John Bush, Rovi

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