

Benny Goodman And His Orchestra □ – Featuring Great Vocalists Of Our Times (1965)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 10 May 2018 13:30 -

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1 –Ella Fitzgerald *Goodnight My Love* 2 –Martha Tilton *The Lady's In Love With You* 3 –Johnny Mercer *I Sent For You Yesterday And Here You Come Today* 4 –Helen Ward *Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea* 5 –Buddy Clark *I'm Livin' In A Great Big Way* 6 –Ella Fitzgerald *Did Ja Mean It (Hope You Did-'Cause So Did I)* 7 –Martha Tilton *Thanks For The Memory* 8 –Helen Ward *There's A Small Hotel* 9 –Jimmy Rushing *He Ain't Got Rhythm* 10 –Johnny Mercer *Cuckoo In The Clock*

The mid-to-late 1930s were the golden years of Benny Goodman's group. He had several different "girl singers" (as they were called) during this stretch. The first full-time singer was Helen Ward, who sang with Goodman from 1934 to 1936, although Goodman did record one-offs with a few singers during this stretch, including Ella Fitzgerald. It's thought that a failed relationship with Goodman convinced Ward to leave the group.

Helen Ward was replaced by Martha Tilton, who performed with Goodman at the famous Carnegie Hall concert. After Tilton became sick, she was replaced by Louise Tobin, a bluesier singer, who also happened to be married to Goodman's lead trumpeter Harry James. When Tobin left in 1939, Goodman's band was in transition. A few temporary singers were brought in for a session or two, including one of the biggest stars of the day Mildred Bailey. Bailey was not a permanent fixture of Goodman's band—she worked with her husband Red Norvo. Rather she filled in with Goodman in 1939 when there was an opening.

Female singers were used most often to front Goodman's band, but on occasion, a male singer would step out in front. He did a few single sessions or short engagements with some well-known male singers, including Jimmy Rushing, Johnny Mercer, and even Frank Sinatra. But his full time male singers included Art London (also known as "Art Lund") and Dick Haymes.

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One of the reasons Goodman didn't hire many male singers is because, whenever possible, he put himself behind the microphone. Benny Goodman sang on more Benny Goodman sides than any other male vocalist, and perhaps any vocalist, male or female. He had a nice voice: it was light and swinging with a bit of a Johnny Mercer quality to it, although probably not suited for a tender ballad. ---indianapublicmedia.org

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