

## The Ultimate Jazz Archive Vol.152 – Mildred Bailey [1935-1939] [2005]



*01. When Day Is Done 02. I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm 03. Rockin' Chair 04. Thanks For The Money 05. Rock It For Me 06. 'Tain't What You Do 07. Daydreaming 08. A Cigarette & A Silhouette 09. You Leave Me Breathless 10. Savin' Myself For You 11. Put Your Heart In A Song 12. Wigwammin' 13. Jumps Jumps Here 14. St. Louis Blues 15. Barrelhouse Music 16. Arkansas Blues 17. There'll Be Some Changes Made 18. A Ghost Of A Chance 19. Darn That Dream 20. Peace, Brother!*

An early jazz singer with a sweet voice, Mildred Bailey balanced a good deal of popular success with a hot jazz-slanted career that saw her billed as Mrs. Swing (her husband, Red Norvo, was Mr. Swing). Born Mildred Rinker in Washington state in 1907, Bailey began performing at an early age, playing piano and singing in movie theaters during the early '20s. By 1925, she was the headlining act at a club in Hollywood, doing a mixture of pop, early jazz tunes, and vaudeville standards. Influenced by Ethel Waters, Bessie Smith, and Connie Boswell, she developed a soft, swinging delivery that pleased all kinds of nightclub audiences in the area. After sending a demonstration disc in to Paul Whiteman in 1929, she gained a spot with one of the most popular dance orchestras of the day.

The added exposure with Whiteman soon gave Bailey her own radio program. She had already debuted on a recording date with guitarist Eddie Lang in 1929, but in 1932 she gained fame by recording what became her signature song, "Rockin' Chair" -- written especially for her by Hoagy Carmichael -- with a Whiteman small group. While recording for Vocalion during the 1930s, Bailey often utilized her husband, xylophonist/vibraphonist Red Norvo. She also appeared on his recordings of the late '30s, and the arrangements of Eddie Sauter proved a perfect accompaniment to her vocals.

Though she and Norvo later divorced, Bailey continued to perform and record during the 1940s.

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She appeared on Benny Goodman's Camel Caravan radio program, and gained her own series again during the mid-'40s. Hampered by health problems during the late '40s, she spent time in the hospital suffering from diabetes and died of a heart attack in 1951. --- John Bush

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