NAT KING COLE GOLDEN GREATS



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The Unforgettable NATKING COLE

NAT KING COLE is one of those rare artists who have made a name for themselves in two different branches of show business and one who, moreover, has enjoyed both artistic and commercial success. He began his career as a professional jazz pianist and is, to this day, remembered as one of the great performers in this field. In 1946 he won the Esquire Gold Medal as a pianist and there are many jazz fans who feel he could have reached really great heights as a jazz pianist had he stayed with this side of his talent. But it is as a singer that he is loved and remembered today.

NATHANIEL ADAMS COLES was born in Montgomery, Alabama, on March 17th 1917. In 1921 the family moved to Chicago where his father was a Pastor of the Truelight Spiritual Temple. By the time he was twelve years old Nat was playing the organ and singing in the choir there. He took a few piano lessons so that he might be

able to read music but he never really needed tuition, being a natural pianist.

In 1934 he began his professional career and for this purpose dropped the 's' in his name. His first job was as leader of a band called Rogues of Rhythm in which he worked with his brother Eddie around the Chicago clubs and dance halls. It was at this time, at the age of 19, that he made his recording debut on Decca with a sextette led by his brother on bass. He then joined a Road Company of "Shuffle Along" and married one of the chorus girls called Nadine Robinson. When the show folded and the band broke up Nat worked singly for some time until 1939 when he formed the historic Nat King Cole Trio with Wesley Prince on bass and Oscar Moore on guitar and where, initially, Nat was the star on piano. The Trio was the first small group to be commercially successful and paved the way for many others to follow them. Up to then big bands had been what the public wanted to hear.

Nat seems to have become a singer almost by accident. He was playing with the Trio in a Hollywood Club when the owner suddenly decided he wanted to have a singer. So as not to lose his job Nat promptly began singing, playing piano as he sang. His early singing was light rhythm and blues and one of his early successes was "SWEET LORRAINE", the theme song of the clarinetist Jimmy Noone, whom he had heard in his early days

in Chicago.

As Nat became more and more successful as a singer he began playing less and less piano. The words of a song were always important to him and by doing the two jobs his concentration was necessarily divided. It is also, not

easy to sing well whilst sitting down, especially for a singer with such a soft, intimate voice.

The Trio always did well but in 1944 they were signed to Capitol Records and recorded one of Nat's own numbers "STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT". This was an enormous hit and by then Nat's singing was the main attraction of the Trio and for recording he gradually began adding strings and then more and more instruments until he had a large orchestra backing him. The Trio began making films in which Nat played several quite important roles and in 1947, with his smash hit record of "FOR SENTIMENTAL REASONS", he was well and truly launched as a ballad singer. The Trio split up in 1951 and Nat continued as a solo singer as which, it has to be said, he achieved much more monetary success than he ever could have as a jazz pianist. He had one gigantic hit after another—"NATURE BOY", "MONA LISA", "SMILE", "DANCE BALLERINA DANCE", "TOO YOUNG"....He began touring all over the world; he had his own networked series on TV; he appeared in stage shows; he played, very successfully, the part of W. C. Handy in the film "St. Louis Blues". In every way his popularity increased, even when ballads fell under a cloud in the rock and roll era.

Nat was possibly the first black male singer to win acceptance from the white public which was prepared to accept black jazz musicians but less inclined to welcome black singers. He never made a conscious effort to appeal to a white audience but his velvety tones and great artistry won them over. He had a warm and gentle personality, was liked by everybody and was never spoiled by success, and all this was reflected in his voice.

He died at the early age of 47 on February 15th 1965, but happily for us, he left behind him many recordings which are as popular today as they have ever been and which still continue to sell in larger quantities than those of most living artists.

Unforgettable

by IRVING GORDON



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Ramblin' Rose

WORDS & MUSIC BY NOEL SHERMAN AND JOE SHERMAN



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Too Young

Music by

F+



Cm7

P7

§ 1951 by Jefferson Music Co. Inc., New York, Sub-published Francis, Day and Hunter Ltd London (U.K.).

Cm7

F7



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Dance Ballerina Dance

Lyric by BOB RUSSELL Music by CARL SIGMAN



 $^{\$}$ 1947 Jefferson/Harrison/Cromwell Music Inc N.Y., Sub-published Peter Maurice Music Co, Ltd/Tro Essex Music Ltd London (U.K.).





Mona Lisa

Words and Music by JAY LIVINGSTON and RAY EVANS



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Eb

B 67

Words by JOHN TURNER and GEOFFREY PARSONS



Music by
CHARLES CHAPLIN



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For All WE Know

Words by SAM M. LEWIS Music by J. FRED COOTS





 $^{\circ}$ 1934 Leo Feist Inc., New York. Sub-published Francis, Day and Hunter Ltd, London (U.K).





Words by
MITCHELL PARISH

Music by CLIFF BURWELL









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Words by Music by SAMMY GALLOP KURT ADAMS Slowly mf Here am I with - out Lost with - out_ your warm you, em mp Eb Bbm B67 Bb G7 Dm7 - brace. Still 80 mad bout you, And Ebm6 Bb Cm Bbm F7 d'ring won who took my place. 800

B67

P7

Cm

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The Very Thought Of You



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Those Lazy Hazy Crazy ORDS BY LES TOBIAS Days Of Summer HANS CARSTE,





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Nature Boy



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