

marketplace. With this set, the Phonothèque Nationale has launched the publication of all 335 originals.

This sampler comes in an attractively boxed set containing two CDs and a book containing photos and 200 pages of notes in Arabic, English and French. Theoretical issues surrounding the Congress are discussed by Arab scholar and ethnomusicologist Bernard Moussali, who also has selected and annotated folk music from Egypt and art music from Baghdad on one disc, with music from the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco) on the second. He is familiar with Arabic discography and notes other versions of these tunes from the HMV, Pathé, Columbia and Baidaphon catalogs, either by these artists or as influential performances by earlier musicians. Though Moussali discusses each musical example in detail, the English translation is not always graceful or idiomatic; the ethnomusicologically uninitiated may (like me) have to read the discussions over a few times to get his drift.

The original 78s have been digitally remastered and sound fairly decent. The reproduction pitch problem was solved as the records were made, with an "A" from a pitch pipe sounded at the end of each performance, along with demonstrations of basic tunings and rhythms for each piece. Most of this has been edited out, except for one or two occasions when the pitch pipe was blown prematurely.

Despite the original theoretical and pedagogical aims of the 1932 conference, the records themselves have become its primary legacy. The spread of commercial recording from Cairo to Baghdad, beginning early in the century, already had begun to have a levelling effect in remote places, as regional music was being supplanted by styles and songs drawn from records. According to Moussali, music from the Maghreb had been particularly underrepresented on record, and the traditional ensemble performance style from the region is heard for the last time on these records from the Congress. As the thirties progressed, mass-marketing further encouraged the obsolescence of traditional music in much the same way that similar forces acted on regional and traditional music in America. When the entire body of records from the 1932 Congress is available, we will have an inspiring look—and listen—at a healthy cross-section of music from an important part of the world, captured at a critical juncture in its history. *Reviewed by Dick Spottswood*

### **Jane Green: Wild Romantic Blues.**

Superbatone 732 (LP). "Wild Romantic Blues," "The Blues Have Got Me," "You Went Away Too Far (And Stayed Away Too Long)," "Won't Be Long (Before He Belongs To Me)," "Ida—I Do," "Somebody Like You," "My Castle In Spain," "We're Back Together Again (My Baby and Me)," "Got No Time," "If You Hadn't Gone Away," "Honey Bunch," "Mine—All Mine!,"<sup>1</sup> "Singin' the Blues," "Down Where the Sun Goes Down," "Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now," "Just Like a Melody."

Jane Green? If the name is unfamiliar, even if you are a 1920s aficionado, don't feel too bad. Jane Green released a total of 22 sides between December 1920 and December 1927—hardly a prolific output. All but the two 1920 sides (Pathé ((0)20480) were released on Victor beginning with 19215 (29103-2/29104-2) recorded 4 December 1923.<sup>2</sup> The present reissue includes one of the Pathé sides (the title track), eleven Victor sides (unfortunately presented not quite in chronological order), and a Vitaphone soundtrack from circa June 1928, Green's last known recording, until now thought lost.

Jane Green was a multi-faceted artist: a champion trick horse rider in the early 1910s, beauty pageant contestant, fashion trend-setter, actress, and singer. She followed the traditional route to stardom, first becoming well-known locally in the Los Angeles area<sup>3</sup>, then traveling the Vaudeville circuits, making friends in the right places, and eventually making her mark with both Ziegfield and the Schuberts. She toured as an Orpheum headliner, topped bills both in the U.S. and in London, and made a couple of movie shorts. Beginning in 1927 things began to go awry with her career. A traffic accident left her more emotionally than physically scarred, and her star began to wane. Wiped out financially in the Great Crash, eventually she made her way back to San Francisco in 1931 with failing health. Although she continued to perform on radio shows, she died that August.

All of this and more (including complete song lyrics) is documented in the very informative eight-page booklet that accompanies this disc. Author/producer Brad Kay had access to a wealth of original source materials (including correspondence, contracts, and scrapbooks preserved by Green's sister-in-law, and interviews with many of her associates and family members) to derive what is no doubt the most complete biographical entry to date.

The 78 transfers (here onto blue vinyl) are much better than most for twenties pop music (at least No-Noise and other such "improvements" were not employed, and Kay is to be commended for that). In many instances he had less than mint-condition copies with which to work, such as the Pathé side which obviously is very much worn. The Vitaphone soundtrack is particularly harsh in this respect with occasions of gut-wrenching distortion, but it does seem worthwhile to have included it for historical reasons (but why, then, leave off the other Pathé?). Nevertheless, tonal balances and pitch seem to be quite accurate throughout, and the entire production has been done with care and a high degree of professionalism. There appears to be only one other post-78 compilation of Jane Green recordings, that on Daedalian DL001 (1986, all Victor sides), and there is very little overlap between the two records. Since this reviewer has not heard it, comments cannot be made concerning the relative merits or differences between the two.

Despite Kay's enthusiastic endorsement, Green's career on records was not stellar. She made her name and vocation as a superb vaudevillian singer, and as such won the admiration of people such as the Castles<sup>4</sup>, Fannie Brice, Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, Sophie Tucker, Isham Jones, and Walter Donaldson (who wrote "Somebody Like You" especially for her). There are moments when her vaudevillian roots are obvious, for example, on the Gus Kahn-Isham Jones song "Ida—I Do." The song itself is decidedly average; however, Green is able to transcend the material and put it across quite convincingly and with utter sincerity.

It is unfortunate that she was part of Victor's "stables" instead of another company that could have promoted her more. As it was, she was one of Victor's multitude of vocalists, and not of "star" status either. Even though she co-starred with Isham Jones and his orchestra in 1924 on Orpheum bills, and recorded some of his songs, she never entered the studio together with him. At the time Jones recorded for Brunswick, and certainly would have benefitted from better vocalists than those who actually recorded with him. Green's usual companion in the studio was Nat Shilkret and the Victor house band, except for three sides with Leroy Shield and two with the Virginians. One wishes producer Kay had included some of these other performances, or better yet issue a complete Jane Green anthology on two discs,

although perhaps he wished to avoid any more duplication of the Daedalion record mentioned above.

Her recorded repertoire was curious as well. She never recorded many of her stage hits, such as "Everybody Loves My Baby," "I Never Knew I Could Love Anybody (Honey, Like I'm Lovin' You)," and "I'd Rather Be Blue." Those songs she did record certainly are not classics (with the exception of her never-issued renditions of "Sweet Georgia Brown"), although some were minor hits and recorded by others, showing at least some contemporary popularity. Nevertheless, she made the most of what she was given, imbuing each song with just the right sense of mood while retaining her unique vocal qualities and accent. Green is at her best on the uptempo songs such as "Won't Be Long" (an inspired performance by both Green and the band) or "We're Back Together Again." Her style was as individual as Ruth Etting's would become, and certainly more so than most vocalists of that era. This is no doubt what made her such a success on stage. While Kay may be going too far to say that "she transcends her place and time to become a voice for today," she is certainly a singer who deserves the wider recognition this release hopes to provide. *Reviewed by Jim Farrington*

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>A discographical footnote: The matrix number listed on the jacket for this song is Victor BVE-41154-3. However, Rust (*Complete Entertainment Discography*, both editions) gives 41153-3, 41154-3 being the matrix for "My One and Only." This is corroborated by Daedalion Records DL001 (1986), another reissue of Jane Green songs. As the matrix number is not etched into the actual disc, we can only assume that this is a small typographical error.

<sup>2</sup>Two earlier Victor takes, from 13 November 1923, were rejected. Some of her later Victor discs were released on HMV, Regal, and Zonophone.

<sup>3</sup>She was born in Kentucky in 1897, not 1900 as given in Rust, and came to the West Coast in 1905 with her mother.

<sup>4</sup>Irene Castle, to judge by her letters to Green, befriended the singer early in Green's career, although in Castle's autobiography Jane Green is never mentioned; neither does she garner any words in Cantor's or Tucker's autobiographies, nor in most standard reference sources for that period

**The Smithsonian Collection of Recordings. American Musical Theatre. Shows, Songs, and Stars.** RD 0-36. Available on record, cassette, and CD.

Attempting to compile a comprehensive anthology of recordings from the golden age of the American musical stage presents a number of thorny problems. Despite the fact that performers often recorded popular songs from hit shows beginning as early as the 1890s, and although most musicals were recorded in America after the original cast album of *Oklahoma!* achieved significant popularity in 1943, there are many missing or inadequate performances. Selecting one track from each of the best of the post-1943 cast albums presents another problem: which of the show's songs best represents it out of context?

Dwight Blocker Bowers, who assembled this collection for the Smithsonian Collection of Recordings, has done a thoroughly creditable, if uninspired, job. In his "Note on the Selections," he explains that these 81 recordings "reflect significant trends, authors and performers" of the musical stage in that "great blossoming of innovation and achievement that occurred between 1898 and 1964." Although virtu-