

The
HARP
of
ADELE BEATRICE GIRARD
MARSALA

Born: Holyoke, Massachusetts, June 25, 1913
 Died: Denver, Colorado, Sept. 7, 1993

Introduction:

I remember very well when we heard Adele Girard's harp on records with trumpeter Joe Thomas on Black & White and Musicraft, but we did not take her very seriously. Half-a-century later, the focus is different, and her contributions represented something different, and isn't that what jazz is all about?

History:

At age fourteen, she was given harp lessons by Alice Mikus, a family friend who played in the Springfield Broadcasting Symphony. In 1933, she got a job as a vocalist with the Harry Sosnik orchestra in Chicago. She performed with the Dick Stabile orchestra in New York City in 1935 and in 1936 with the Three Ts at the Hickory House in NYC. on 52nd Street. She replaced Casper Reardon (the first harpist in jazz). Was introduced to Joe Marsala and in 1937 wed him and became member of his band. Worked at the Hickory House as house band for ten years. She had perfect pitch. She and Marsala performed publicly for the last time in 1970 during a two-weeks residency at Donte's in North Hollywood. After Marsala died in 1978 she performed at venues along the California coast, sometimes accompanied by Bobby Gordon (excerpt from Wikipedia, lots of interesting information there!!).

Message:

Travelling has been difficult these days, and a visit to Rutgers/IJS has been not possible, thus there are unnormally many missing items in this solography. I am sure this can be repaired later.

ADELE GIRARD SOLOGRAPHY

THE THREE T's**NYC. Dec. 11, 1936**

Charlie Teagarden (tp), Jack Teagarden (tb, vo), Frankie Trumbauer (c-mel, vo), Adele Girard (harp), Herman Crone (p), Min Leibbrook (b), Stan King (dm).
NBC broadcast from Hickory House, three titles have AG:

Liza	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Eclipse	Intro. Acc. (c-mel). (S)
Little Old Lady	Intro. Break. Acc. (vo). (M)

NYC. Dec. 25, 1936

Same. Adele Girard also (vo-“... My Skin”).
Four titles have AG (some ‘breaks’ and very weak background have been omitted):

Theme	Intro. Coda. (M)
Ode To A Chimney Sweep	Acc. (tb). (S)
I've Got You Under My Skin	Vocal. (SM)
Hejre Kati	Acc. (c-mel). (S)

Adele Girard makes her recording debut at the age of twentythree, but she is mostly used as a fill-in, and to create a nice intro or coda, or background as in “Eclipse” and “... Kati”. Only one real solo, “Liza”, technically good enough, and there are sections that really swing, but not enough evidence to judge her abilities as an improviser.

FRANKIE TRUMBAUER & HIS BAND**NYC. Jan. 8, 1937**

Johnny Davis (tp, vo), Ford Leary (tb, vo), Frankie Trumbauer (c-mel), Adrian Rollini (vib), Herman Crone (p), Frank Victor (g), Adele Girard (harp), Stan King (dm), Frances Lane (vo).

Live at the Hickory House, twelve titles, five have (harp):

Theme And Opening	Intro. (M)
Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 12 bars. (M)
Eclipse	Intro. Acc. (c-mel). (S)
Song Of The Islands	Acc. (tb). (M)
I Never Knew	Acc. (tp). (M)

NYC. Jan. 15, 1937

Bunny Berigan (tp), Ford Leary (tb, vo), Frankie Trumbauer (c-mel), Adrian Rollini (vib), Frank Carter (p, vo), Frank Victor (g), Adele Girard (harp), Stan King (dm), Frances Lane, Bill Davis (vo).

Live at the Hickory House, twelve titles, four have (more than a minimum of) (harp):

Theme And Opening	Intro. In ens. (M)
Mr. Ghost Goes To Town	Acc. (tp). (FM)
When It's Sleepy Time Down South	Acc.(vo-FL). (M)
Strange Interlude	Acc. (c-mel). (S)

NYC. Feb. 3, 1937

Al Stuart (tp, vo), Ford Leary (tb), Frankie Trumbauer (c-mel, as), Min Leibbrook (bsx), Herman Crone (p), Adele Girard (harp), Stan King (dm).

WEAF/NBC broadcast from the Hickory House, six titles, two have (harp):

Theme And Opening	Intro. Coda. (SM)
You Took Advantage Of Me	In ens. (M)

Modest use of harp on the Trumbauer sessions. The only attempt on a solo is “... Rose”, which is a disaster, obviously AG has no knowledge of how the melody goes, and she is mercifully aborted.

JOE MARSALA & HIS CHICAGOANS**NYC. April 21, 1937**

Marty Marsala (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Ray Biondi (vln), Joe Bushkin (p), Adele Girard (harp), Eddie Condon (g), Artie Shapiro (b), Danny Alvin (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Variety, three issued:

412-1	Wolverine Blues	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
414-1	Jazz Me Blues	As below. (FM)
414-2	Jazz Me Blues	Solo 18 bars. (FM)
415-1	Clarinet Marmalade	Solo 16 bars. (F)
415-2	Clarinet Marmalade	As above? ()

Looking at the meagre results of her work with the Ts and Tram, it seems that AG's association with Joe Marsala gives her the chance she has been looking for to show her qualities. She solos on all three items with good results, real jazz! Two takes of "Jazz Me ..." show slight differences, and from these, it is not possible to tell how much improvisation there is, but she certainly deserves a place in jazz archeology!

JOE MARSALA & HIS CHICAGOANS**NYC. March 16, 1938**

Marty Marsala (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Ray Biondi (vln), Joe Bushkin (p), Adele Girard (harp?), Jack LeMaire (g, vo), Artie Shapiro (b), Buddy Rich (dm), Lou Hurst (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, but no (harp) to be heard.

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Aug. 18, 1939**

Marty Marsala (tp), Brad Gowans (vtb), Joe Marsala (cl), Bud Freeman (ts), Adele Girard (harp), unknown (p), Eddie Condon (g), unknown (b), Dave Tough (dm). Broadcast "America Dances", issued on IAJRC 38, (harp)-fill-ins between most of the titles:

Theme	In ens. (S)
I've Found A New Baby	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Stop And Go Blues	Solo 12 bars. (SM). Solo 24 bars. (F)
Keep Smilin' At Trouble	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Someday Sweetheart	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
You Took Advantage Of Me	Solo feature for (harp), long, free Intro. Solo 32 bars. Coda. (SM)
Jazz Me Blues	Break. (FM)
Muskrat Ramble	No solo. (FM)
Theme	In ens. (S)

This is a very nice and swinging broadcast with excellent contributions by everybody. It is also fine opportunity for AG to show her qualities. Several items feature her at length, and particularly "... Advantage ..." is her baby. However, she has a relaxed solo on "... Trouble", and my favourite is in fact "... New Baby", she really swings this one jazzwise!!

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA**NY. unknown date**

Personnel including Adele Girard (harp). Broadcast (Johs Bergh collection):

Birdman Blues (Theme)	Intro. (S)
Topsy	Solo 8 bars. With orch. Coda. (FM)
Mandy	Intro 4 bars. Solo 6 bars. (FM)
I've Got A Touch Of Texas	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
Be Careful, It's My Heart	With orch. (S)
Theme	Intro. (S)

Postscript of March 11, 2022: No prominent harp contributions here.

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA**unknown place(s) and date(s)**

Personnel including Adele Girard (harp). Various broadcasts, no information (Johs Bergh collection), the following items have AG:

'S Wonderful	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Yesterdays	With ens. Solo 36 bars. (SM)
Stardust	Long intro to solo 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. (S)
Jumpin' Jupiter	Solo/straight. (FM)
There'll Be Some Changes Made	With ens. Solo 36 bars. (FM)
Barrell Roll No. 1	Intro to solo 32 bars. (S) to solo 32 bars to coda. (SM)
Unknown Tune	Solo 8 bars. (M)
Unknown Tune (NC)	Soli 8 and 8 bars. (FM)
Unknown Tune (NC)	With ens. Solo/straight. (FM)

Postscript of March 11, 2022: However, among the items above you will find some of the very best AG soli around! It is really a pleasure to listen to "Stardust", "Barrell ..." and "Yesterdays" in slower tempi, and also "... Wonderful", "... Jupiter (feature for harp) and "... Changes Made" have long, nice contributions. Very valuable jazz archeological excavations here for those of you who enjoy the unusual jazz harp!

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. April 14, 1940

Marty Marsala (tp), Fred John (tb), Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Don Girard (p), Gene Traxler (b), Don Carter (dm), Alistair Cooke (mc).
CBS broadcast to BBC, "America Dances", from Fiesta Danceteria:

Announcement	Solo with (mc) 12 bars. (S)
Birdman Blues (Theme)	Solo 12 bars. (FM)
Riverboat Shuffle	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Basin Street Blues	Solo with ens 16 bars. (S)
Birdman Shuffle (Theme)	No solo. (S)

Nice broadcast with fine harp soloing; a long solo on "Riverboat ..." should be particularly noted, and perhaps the highlight in fact is the beginning where AG plays beautifully behind the introduction of the band!

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Dec. 29, 1940

Personnel on acetate label: Adele Girard (harp), Carmen Mastren (g), Dave Tough (dm), but also including (tp), (cl), (ts).
WNEW broadcast recorded by Jerry Newman. Johan Helø collection.

Yesterdays Pt 2	Coda. (S)
Bull's Eye	Solo 32 bars. In ens. (F)
Blues (NC)	In ens. (S)

A fine solo on "... Eye", later to be recorded by Decca.

JOE MARSALA NYC. Feb. 17, 1941

Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Carmen Mastren (b), Dave Tough (dm).
NBC broadcast from "Chamber Music Of Lower Basin Street", two titles:

With A Twist Of The Wrist	Free intro to solo 16+12 bars, (cl) on bridge. Acc. (cl). (M)
Lower Register	Acc. (cl). Solo 12 bars to coda. (S)

Fine and transparent quartet here! AG has an important role in "... The Twist" and takes a nice, slow blues chorus on "... Register".

JOE MARSALA NYC. March 21, 1941

Marty Marsala (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Ben Glassman (as), John Smith (ts), Dave Bowman (p), Adele Girard (harp), Carmen Mastren (g), Jack Helleher (b), Shelly Manne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

68854-A	Bull's Eye	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (F)
68855-A	Lower Register	In ens. (S)

68856-A I Know That You Know Solo 32 bars. (F)
 68857-A Slow Down In ens. Straight 8 and 8 bars. (SM)

Two fine and swinging soli in uptempo here, this is not only nice but real jazz.

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Oct. 23, 1942

Bigband personnel including Max Kaminsky, Marty Marsala (tp), Al Jennings (tb, vo), Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Dave Tough (dm), Don Darcy (vo) and others.

Live from Log Cabin Restaurant, eight titles:

Theme	Intro. In ens. (S)
I've Got A Gal In Kalamazoo	Acc. (cl). (FM)
Lullaby In The Rain	Acc. (cl)/ens. (S)
Can't Get Out Of The Mood	In ens. (S)
Blue Skies	Long intro and melody. (S) Soli 4 and 4 bars. In ens. (M)
There Are Such Things	Intro. Acc. (cl). Solo 4 bars. (S)
Solid Geometry For Squares	In ens. Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Theme	Brief coda. (M)

NYC. Oct. 30, 1942

Same. Seven titles:

Theme	Intro. In ens. (S)
Barrell Roll	Soli 8 and 8 bars. Acc. (cl). (FM)
So Nobody Cares	Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (M)
Mr. Five By Five	In ens. Acc. (vo-ens). (SM)
Lover	Long intro and melody. (SM) Solo with cl/ens. (FM)
Be Careful, It's My Heart	In ens. Acc. (vo). Coda. (SM)
Topsy	Solo 8 bars. Soli with ens 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge. (FM)

With a full bigband there s not much space for harp improvisations, but there are some bright spots here. Her interpretation of "Blue Skies" is high class, a very pleasant slow tempo chosen, and in "Topsy" she goes straight into a pure jazz number with fine soloing.

JOE MARSALA NYC. Nov. 29, 1944

Joe Thomas (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Charlie Queener (p), Chuck Wayne (g), Irv Lang (b), Buddy Christian (dm), Linda Keene (vo).

Three titles were recorded for Black & White (others without AG):

BW37	Romance	Long free intro. Solo 16 bars. Acc. (cl). (FM)
BW38	Zero Hour	Long free intro. Solo 8 bars. (FM)
BW39	Joe Joe Jump	Solo 36 bars. (F)

Two years have passed since the last session, and we are now entering the rich postwar recording environment. We purchased this B&W session for the fine trumpeter, but were struck by the confident harp playing and how naturally it fitted into the all over happy and swinging atmosphere of the session. These three items belong to our treasures, and AG contributes to a part of it. The three fast blues choruses on "... Jump" proves that she is, and maybe always has been, a real jazz musician.

JOE MARSALA NYC. May 4, 1945

Joe Thomas (tp), Joe Marsala (cl, vo-5287), Adele Girard (harp), Charlie Queener (p), Chuck Wayne (g), Sid Weiss (b), Buddy Christian (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Musicraft:

5284-1	Southern Comfort	Intro. Solo 8 bars. (SM)
5285	Lover	Intro. Solo 16 bars. (F)
5286	Don't Let It End	Solo 8 bars. (S)

5287-1 Gotta Be This Or That Solo 8 bars. (M)

Musicraft is taking over from Black&White, but the Marsalas are standing firmly. Brief harp soli but a variety of tempi, and one should be amazed by the fast "Lover", moved by the slow and emotional "... End", and happy with the two other brief soli.

JOE MARSALA

unknown place and date

Personnel including Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp) and orchestra.
Broadcast (Johs Bergh collection) one title:

Lover Solo with (cl) and orch. 3:04. (FM)

First an interview with the couple, indicating that the date is removed from the vintage years, and then "Lover" which seems to be one of her favourite numbers.

JOE MARSALA

NYC. Nov. 30, 1945

Marty Marsala (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Gene Di Novi (p), Chuck Wayne (g), Clyde Lombardi (b), Buddy Christian (dm).
Three titles (or more?) were recorded for Musicraft:

5346 East Of The Sun Intro to solo 8 bars.
Solo 8 bars. Acc. (cl). (S)

5348 Slightly Dizzy Acc. (b) to solo 12 bars. (FM)

I Would Do Anything For You Intro. In ens. (SM)

Not generally as exciting as the previous sessions, but the bebopping "... Dizzy" is interesting.

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. April 29, 1946

Quentin Thompson (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Lou Bredice (p), Salvatore Mancuso (g), Emil Powell (b), Buddy Christian (dm), possibly Ahmed Rai (vo), Earl Oxford (vo), Judy Bakay dance, Betty Underwood, Eileen Clarence (actors).

Four soundies: "Don't Be A Baby, Baby", released July 22, 1946, "Millenium Jump", released Aug. 26, 1946, "The Boy And The Girl From North and South Carolina", released Sept. 16, 1946 and "Southern Comfort", released Dec. 12, 1946. One has (harp)-solo:

2:31 Millenium Jump Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Quoting Mark Cantor: "Jazz-On-Film": "Adele Girard does battle with the harp, and once again is victorious in bringing swing, improvisation and a great deal of rhythmic variety to this most difficult of instruments". Agree, a swinging solo!

ADELE GIRARD TRIO

same date

Adele Girard (harp), Salvatore Mancuso (g), Emil Powell (b), Rusha Holden (dance).

Soundie, released Aug. 12, 1946:

2:31 Harp Boogie Solo/straight/acc. (dance)
8 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

Catalogue description: "Adele Girard beating out hot boogie with her harp plus the dancing of Rusha Holden". We watch and listen to "an improvisation on the basic blues", a very interesting item. And she is so good looking, if allowed to say so.

JOE MARSALA

NYC. prob. Aug. 1947

Probable personnel: Marty Marsala (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Sherman Edwards (p), Chuck Wayne (g), Adele Girard (harp), Emil Powell (b), Johnny Blowers (dm), (vo-group).

Two titles were recorded for V-Disc:

How High The Moon Solo with ens 8 bars. Coda. (M)

Someone To Watch Over Me With ens. (SM)

Not much AG here, but she is heard ok.

JOE MARSALA

NYC. ca. 1957

Rex Stewart (cnt), Joe Marsala (cl), Dick Cary (p), Adele Girard (harp), Carmen Mastren (g), Pat Merola (b), Johnny Blowers (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Stereo-O-Craft/Hi-Life, issued as "Chicago Jazz", no (harp)-solo on "I Cried For You", "Via Rex" and "Chicago" but:

Wolverine Blues Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Night Train Solo 12 bars. (M)

Singin' The Blues	Intro with (cl) 8 bars. (S)
Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Mandy	Solo 16 bars. (SM)

Postscript of Dec. 14, 2020: A nice surprise; a session with lots of good music in general! AG's contributions are really among her very best, concentrated jazz and swing. The highlights for me are "Wolverine ..." and "Mandy", gorgeous harp!!

BARBARA LEE VOCAL ACC. BY **NYC. May 1, 1957**
 Johnny Windhurst (tp), Dick Cary (alto-hrn), Jimmy Lyon (p), Adele Girard (harp), Jimmy Raney (g), Beverly Peer (dm).
 Three titles were recorded for Prestige, no AG on "You'd Be So Nice To Come To" but:

True Love	Obbligato parts. (S)
A Straw Hat Full Of Lilacs	Obbligato parts. (S)

Beautiful!

BOBBY GORDON **Chi. Jan. 10/11, 1963**
 Bobby Gordon (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Eddie Higgins (p), Ray Biondi (g), Cleveland Eaton (b), Marshall Thompson (dm), (strings).
 Twelve titles were recorded for Decca, issued as "Warm And Sentimental", not available.

BOBBY GORDON **NYC. Oct. 7, 1965**
 Bobby Gordon (cl, ldr), Adele Girard (harp) with orchestra.
 Twelve titles were recorded for Decca, issued as "The Lamp Is Low", six have AG:

116604	The Lamp Is Low	With orch. (SM)
116607	Call Me Irresponsible	With orch. (S)
116608	Out Of Nowhere	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
116609	Willow Weep For Me	Solo 4 bars. (S)
116611	My Silent Love	With orch. (S/SM)
116613	Smile	With orch. (SM)

AG has only a modest role here, contributing to a pleasant atmosphere to back the clarinet leader. The solo on "... Nowhere" and the background on "Smile" are the most noteworthy.

BOBBY GORDON **Newport Beach, Ca., May 18/19, 1992**
 Bobby Gordon (cl-except "Limehouse ...", "Emaline"), Adele Girard (harp), Ray Sherman (p), Morty Corb (b), Gene Estes (dm).
 Twelve titles were recorded for Arbors, issued as "Don't Let It End", no (harp) on "Frankie And Johnny" and "Emaline" but:

	Someday Sweetheart	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (SM)
	Basin Street Blues	Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. (SM)
	Exactly Like You	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (SM)
	Muskrat Ramble	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (M)
*	Singing The Blues	Intro with (cl). Solo 32 bars. (S)
	Love Nest	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (SM)
*	Limehouse Blues	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
	As Long As I Live	Solo 32 bars. (M)
*	Indiana	Solo 64 bars. (M)
*	Don't Let It End	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (S)

Despite having suffered two strokes, she agreed to record this album, almost thirty years after last time in studio and almost 79 years old. Not only am I genuine impressed by her solo feature "Limehouse ...", but she makes fine music all over the session, swinging these evergreens nicely with details showing that she knows the art of improvising. Other highlights are the slow and beautiful "Singing ..." and "... Let It End". This fascinating lady gives us with this session a proper goodbye.

No further recording sessions.

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