



Lady Be Good

Instrumental Women in Jazz

Produced and directed by Kay D. Ray
Directors of Photography are Erich Volkstorf, Mark Hubatsek
Editor is Jill Friedberg

Program Description

Jazz history has featured favored artists, a small portion of recorded musicians and narrow genres, styles and periods. These conventional standards have largely and inappropriately left women musicians out of historical narratives. **LADY BE GOOD** will bring to the American musical history a more complex framework.

LADY BE GOOD focuses on women who played jazz during decades when to be a woman in jazz was to be truly an exception. The homebound status of women was enhanced by women learning to play the piano. Emerging from these homes were excellent women musicians who joined minstrel bands and Ladies Orchestras in the late 1800's. From this beginning and into the twentieth century, these women moved to the all-women jazz bands, mostly male jazz bands, the women units of the thirties, to the big bands and swing units of the forties and to the combos of the fifties. These chapters of the ongoing story of women in jazz show that many were discouraged by prejudice and an unreceptive culture. Their presence, often against formidable odds, constituted a rebuttal to the argument that women cannot and should not play most instruments. These women are a part of history as pioneers and role models.

This is clearly an important story and chapter in American musical history, which is perfectly suited to the documentary format and is a story, which has yet to be told. In addition to telling powerful stories, **LADY BE GOOD** will educate people about the importance of female musicianship and their persistence in the male-dominated jazz field.

Subject Treatment

This documentary film in two one hour segments, will concentrate on the contributions of American women instrumentalists in jazz from the early 1920's to the 1970's and the development and extent of the all-woman jazz groups. Interviews with women jazz musicians, relatives of women musicians, authors of jazz books, jazz archive curators and jazz critics will convey the historical information and personal stories of these musicians. Pictures of the women, bands and film and television footage of the women and their performances will bring these stories to life. It will be punctuated with the rare and incredible music created by these women.

LADY BE GOOD is divided into segments which focus on particular issues; “All In The Family”, “Show Business” and “Dancehalls and Riverboats” (covers women’s musical opportunities in the 1920’s), “Gotta Have A Gimmick”, “Cut The Stuff”, “Swingin” and “Image” (covers stories of sexual and racial prejudice and overcoming vast and constant obstacles at different stages of careers), “USO” (includes the increase of all women bands during WWII) “Post War” and “Sell It” (regards womens roles and changes in the music business from small group combo’s to television in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s) and “Call Me A Musician” (details exhilarating stories of performances and the opportunities these women created for girls and women in the decades to follow).

Production Team

Seattle film and video **Producer and Director Kay D. Ray** has spent over two years researching and writing **LADY BE GOOD** and from 1997 to 2001 has shot interviews of over 60 women and men for the documentary. Past Film and video producer for the Experience Music Project, a Seattle music museum, she developed and created over 85 films. Her film on jazz singer great Ernestine Anderson: There Will Never Be Another You recently screened and aired on KCTS TV9. Recent awards; Women In Film Spirit of Nell Shipman award, short film Middle of Nowhere (Palm Springs Film Festival and KCTS), Jimi Hendrix Swingin London, DJ Scratch, Northwest Jazz, Western Front, Reggae for EMP (American Association of Museums, local and national AFTRA, local and national Media Communications Association International), Internet Kiosk with Bill Nye for the Microsoft Museum, Microsoft Encarta English Learning Language CD ROM.

Seattle **Director of Photography Erich Volkstorf** credits include, Evolution Series (WGBH), On Location with Art Wolfe, Those Who Dare (Discovery Channel) and Ancient Graves, Volcano and Kodiak Bears (National Geographic).

New York **Director of Photography Mark Hubatsek’s** documentary credits include Nazis The Occult, Ancient Religions (Discovery) River Dance At Radio City, Joan London Show Pilot and Lebensborn (ABC) in production.

Editor Lisa Day’s numerous credits include Nothing But The Blues (Martin Scorsese, WNET), Creation of the Universe (PBS), Hail, Rock ‘n Roll (Universal), Home of the Brave (Laurie Anderson) Raw; Eddie Murphy in Concert (Robert Townsend) and Stop Making Sense (Jonathan Demme).

Editor Jill Friedberg’s most recent credits include internationally acclaimed WTO film This Is What Democracy Looks Like, Life Beyond Earth (PBS) and Bill Nye the Science Guy (KCTS and Buena Vista TV)

Humanities Advisor Dr. Sherrie Tucker is currently Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of Kansas, is author of Swing Shift: All-Girl Bands of the 1940’s (Duke University Press) and is writing on the women jazz players from New Orleans for the New Orleans National Park Jazz Museum.

Consultants are Dan Morgenstern - writer and director of Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University, Bruce Raeburn - director and curator of Tulane Jazz Archives, Dr. Karl Koenig - musician, retired professor and early New Orleans jazz historian, Dr. D. Antoinette Handy - previous director of NEA and author of Black Women In American Bands An Orchestras and International Sweethearts of Rhythm and Rosetta Reitz - writer and women's jazz historian.

Funding and Distribution History

I have been seeking funds from a variety of public, private and corporate sources in Washington State and around the nation who support education, music, jazz, black history, women's rights and documentary filmmaking.

Besides in-kind donations for camera and lighting packages, I have procured funds from the Allen Foundation Grant for Music, two King County Arts Commission Grants, Microsoft Giving Campaign, Lucent Technologies matching funds, 1998 Artist Trust GAP grant, non profit fiscal sponsorship from 911 Media Arts Center, 1998 Pacific Pioneer Fund Grant, \$15,000 private donation, numerous smaller private donations and film and/or video at cost from the Roy Dean Grant (donation of \$1050) totaling \$160,000.00. I have also been a finalist for ITVS grant. Most recently I have procured donations of in-kind graphics, offline facilities and audio sweetening services.

I am currently looking for finishing funds for post production, intellectual property, outreach and distribution support from various granting organizations, post production houses and am in dialogue with ITVS, PBS, CPB, WGBH The American Experience, Lifetime, KCTS TV9, OPB and KCET for television support and distribution.

Production Process and Timeline

In the fall of 1997, I shot eight interviews in Los Angeles: Clora Bryant, Jane Sager, Corky Hale, Roz Cron, Ann Patterson, Ralph Scaffidi, Betty O'Hara and Jessie Buster and Amy Denio in Seattle. In August of 1998, I interviewed Marian McPartland, Melba Liston, Willene, Barton, Carline Ray, Debra Weiss, Jane Jarvis, Emme Kemp Bertha Hope Jean Davis, Kit McClure, Dan Morgenstern of Rutgers Jazz Institute and Cobi Narita in New York. In SE US interviews included Jeanette Kimball, Lucille Dixon, Evelyn McGee Stone, Jesse Stone, Fagle Liebman, Flo Dreyer, Marian Gange, Dr. Antoinette Handy, Benjamin Jaffe at Preservation Hall, Tulane Jazz Archives, Amistad Research Center.

The trailer of **LADY BE GOOD** was recently screened at the Denver Jazz On Film Festival where I also interviewed Joy Cayler, Billie Stein and in Reno, Betty Rosner. In 1999, I had further interviews including; Vi Redd, Stacey Rowles, Kay Carlson, Carol Kaye, Jerrie Thill, Gerald Wilson, Ann Patterson, Pat Stulken, Helen Gisson, Sharon Rogers, Martye Awkerman, Dr. Karl Koenig, Helen Hammond, John Friedlander, Dottie Dodgion, Velzoe Brown, Dr. Sherrie Tucker and Mildred Springer. In 2000 interviews continued with Barbara Carroll, Vi Smith, Quincy Jones, Artie Shaw and Jane Ira Bloom. In 2001 final interviews around the US were conducted with Helen

Jones Woods, Fern Jaros, Sarah McLawler, Sherrie Maricle, Father Peter O'Brien, Paula Hampton, Aletra and Virtue Hampton, Nathaniel Peterson, Sadie Goodson and Patrice Rushen.

I am working with archivist Mark Cantor of Celluloid Improvisations regarding film and television footage as well as other archive sources (the National Archives, Library of Congress, Historic Films, Archive Films and Michael Chertok) I am in the beginning phases of research for the music rights. In February 2002 I completed the first rough cut of **LADY BE GOOD** and am looking at a completion date in the year 2003.

Evaluation

Television has the potential, though often underused, to be informative as well as entertaining and to reach a broad and diverse audience. The goal of **LADY BE GOOD** is to reach both a wide, gender and race diverse general audience and targeted audience of women and girl musicians involved in music education. I am aiming for a national broadcast and hope to secure broadcasts on thirty or more PBS stations. This would mean an audience of more than 10 million people.

LADY BE GOOD will create educational outreach programs and as an important educational resource, will enable people to fill the gap in the historical record of music. After completion, film distribution will be of at least 4,000 copies over the next five years. Programs will be set up on a web site, at schools, libraries and regional arts organizations.

Further distribution efforts would be to national and international film festivals which offer the public more exposure for more grass roots oriented subjects, give larger import to the documentary film as an art form and offer us a diversity of expression incomparable to mainstream theaters.

LADY BE GOOD is being created to educate the public on women in jazz which is an important chapter in American musical history and which has yet to be told on film or tape. The changing view of and about women musicians during the formative years through the 1970's is a telling metaphor for how society views women in general.