



Teresa Brewer

Her Life & Career

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Child Prodigy ...the 1930s

Teresa Brewer was born in Toledo, Ohio on May 7, 1931 - the first child of a glass inspector for the Libby-Owens Company and his homemaker wife. Neither of Teresa's parents possessed a particular aptitude or interest in music or performance, and none of the four younger brothers that would eventually make up the family pursued vocal music, but it was clear from early in her life that Teresa was a natural talent.

Recognizing her young daughter's remarkable abilities and drive, Mrs. Brewer auditioned Teresa, just over two years old, for radio station WSPD's "Uncle August's Kiddie Show". Teresa performed on the show, singing *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*, for pay consisting of cupcakes and cookies from the show's sponsor.

As a child, Teresa sounded much the way she later did as an adult. Mrs. Brewer had said, "People who heard her on the radio didn't believe that she was just a baby. Some even phoned accusing me of lying about her age." Success on the "Kiddie Show" whetted the appetite of the child star. Teresa took dance lessons and excelled as a strutting tap dancer but, surprisingly, Teresa never took singing lessons. An energetic Teresa would sing and dance whether or not she had an audience, and she enjoyed performing tricks with her voice just as much for her own entertainment as for the listener's.

At age five, Teresa sang in a talent competition at Toledo's Paramount Theater. Soon after, her rendition of *O! Man Mose* helped her win a contract to perform on national radio and tour with one of the Major Bowes production units. Teresa's life revolved around her singing and dancing and it all came naturally to her. She required little instruction about when to smile, how long to bow, or how to make the most of an audience's applause. For the next seven years, she sang and tap danced as a regular on one of the country's most popular radio shows, "Major Bowes Amateur Hour," and continued touring the country with the Bowes unit at the same time.

Teresa always travelled with her Aunt Mary, beginning with her days as a child performer -- and continuing until she married Bill Monahan in 1949. Teresa was devoted to her Aunt, and the two remained close. In her later years, Aunt Mary lived with Teresa until her death in 1993.

- TERESA: "WE TRAVELED BY BUS SOMETIMES, BUT USUALLY BY TRAIN. THE UNIT WOULD RENT A WHOLE TRAIN CAR, BUT NOT A SLEEPER. WE'D TAKE THE SEATS APART AND EVERYBODY WOULD MAKE BEDS. SOMETIMES WE ATE OUR MEALS IN THE CLUB CAR, BUT USUALLY WE COULDN'T AFFORD IT. I CAN'T REMEMBER EVER GETTING AN ALLOWANCE. I GOT PAID A HUNDRED DOLLARS A WEEK, WHICH WAS QUITE GOOD FOR THAT TIME. IN FACT, THEY PAID ME MORE THAN ANYBODY ELSE IN THE UNIT. WE USED TO SEND HOME ABOUT \$25 AND LIVE ON \$75. THEY MUST HAVE PAID SOME OF THE EXPENSES BECAUSE SOMETIMES THE ROOMS WERE REALLY DUMPY." SHE DIDN'T TOUR CONTINUOUSLY. "IT WAS LIKE TWO WEEKS AT A TIME. I'D COME BACK HOME FOR A MONTH OR SO AND THEN GO OUT FOR ANOTHER TWO OR FOUR WEEKS. WHEN YOU DID THE SHOW IN NEW YORK, YOU'D SEE MAJOR BOWES. OTHERWISE HE HAD DIFFERENT PEOPLE HANDLING THE DIFFERENT SHOWS HE SENT OUT. TED MACK (OF "AMATEUR HOUR") AND STUBBY KAYE WERE EMCEES, AND THERE WERE A FEW OTHERS."
- TERESA ON ONE MAJOR BOWES CHRISTMAS PARTY: "THEY SAID EVERYBODY HAD TO GET UP AND ENTERTAIN. I USED TO STAND IN THE WINGS AND WATCH EVERYBODY'S ACT. THERE WAS A BLACK GROUP, A DANCE TEAM WITH SKATERS - JUST LIKE A CIRCUS. FOR MY THING, I GOT OUT AND DID THEIR WHOLE SHOW. AFTER THE DANCERS SAW ME DO THEIR ENTIRE ROUTINE THEY SAID TO THEIR MANAGER, 'SHE'S NOT ALLOWED TO STAND IN THE WINGS ANYMORE. WE'RE NOT PAYING A LOT OF MONEY TO GET A ROUTINE TOGETHER TO SEE THIS LITTLE BRAT STEAL IT!' THEY WERE FURIOUS. AND THEN I GOT OUT AND DID THE GOSPEL GROUP'S NUMBER AND THEY LAUGHED. THEY WERE SO NICE!"

When Teresa was twelve, her parents decided that she should curtail her touring and traveling and return to Toledo to concentrate on her school work. Teresa studied at Toledo's Holy Rosary School, the Birmingham School and Waite High School as she was growing up.

However, even while going to school and having a somewhat more normal home life again, Teresa continued to keep active as a performer. She performed on local radio shows, including a featured spot on the "The Pick and Pat Show" and eventually starred in her own local program, billed as "Toledo's Miss Talent." Ultimately, Teresa quit school before finishing her education at Waite High School.

- TERESA: "I QUIT TWO MONTHS BEFORE GRADUATION BECAUSE I COULD NOT STAND IT! AND TO THIS DAY EVERYONE IS STILL SAYING 'HOW STUPID COULD YOU BE!' WHAT WOULD I LEARN IN THOSE TWO MONTHS? ALL I'D HAVE IS A SLIP OF PAPER. THEY SAID THEY WANTED TO GIVE ME AN HONORARY DIPLOMA. I SAID 'KEEP IT, WHO CARES?'"

Teenage Success ...the 1940s

In January 1948, at age sixteen, Teresa and three other Toledo entertainers won a local competition and were flown to Manhattan to appear on the Adams Hat "Stairway to the Stars" talent show with Eddie Dowling. Teresa won a recording machine on which she could cut her own acetates and a week's engagement at the famed Latin Quarter -- a fortuitous booking that launched her adult career. The new talent, Teresa Brewer -- Brewer was thought to appear more theatrical on marquees than the Breuer spelling -- ran through a string of talent shows in New York, winning many and sweeping away all of the prizes on Eddie Dowling's "The Big Break" and Mutual's "Talent Jackpot." Teresa's work continued in and around New York and she worked into a singing and dancing role at the Latin Quarter.

Teresa Brewer was making her mark in New York, but still lacked a good agent who could help her turn her ample talent into stardom. Another break for Teresa occurred one night while she was singing at the Sawdust Trail, a small night club just off of Times Square. To drum up business, the club manager would often place a portable speaker next to the open door and, during the floor show, turn up the volume as much as the law would allow. On one such night, agent Ritchie Lisella heard the sounds of Teresa Brewer on the sidewalk speaker and continued inside for a closer look and listen. By the time Lisella left the club that night, he and Teresa had signed a contract - Teresa had an agent, and Lisella had what was to become one of the hottest new voices in recording.

And the next stage of success was recordings. Teresa was soon signed with London Records, a fledgling label from England attempting to enter the American music market. After the release of three singles that went virtually unnoticed, Teresa recorded *Copenhagen* in late 1949 with the Dixieland All Stars. London considered the flip side a throw-away song -

a song titled *Music! Music! Music!*, by Stephen Weiss and Bernie Baum. *Music* eventually went gold, selling over a million copies - and, of course, became Teresa's signature title.

- TERESA RECALLS: "IT WAS A GERMAN-TYPE SONG AND WHEN IT WAS PLAYED TO ME FOR THE FIRST TIME, I SAID, 'I CAN'T DO THAT SONG. THE TEMPO IS JUST TOO SLOW.' BUT I DID IT... AND I'M GLAD! LONDON RECORDS IN ENGLAND WAS JUST STARTING TO SIGN AMERICAN ARTISTS TO RECORD IN THE STATES, BUT THE RECORDS THEMSELVES WERE ACTUALLY PRESSED IN ENGLAND. THERE WAS A STRIKE OVER THERE WHEN *MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!* CAME OUT AND WE COULDN'T GET THE RECORDS PRESSED. IT SOLD OVER A MILLION, BUT IT COULD HAVE SOLD MUCH, MUCH MORE IF THERE HADN'T BEEN THE STRIKE. STILL, IT KICKED OFF MY RECORDING CAREER RATHER NICELY!"

For jazz buffs, Teresa's session men for both *Music* and *Copenhagen* were The Dixieland All Stars: Jack Pleis, Ernie Casceres, Max Kaminsky, Cutty Cutshall, George Wettling, Ed Safranski and Danny Perri. No lightweights here!

Following the success of *Music! Music! Music!*, London Records released another catchy, novelty-type song called *Choo'n Gum* (1950) which also made the Top 20 list. With the release of *Molasses*, *Molasses*, Teresa was cast into a brassy, bouncy, up-beat image, even though at the time she preferred Dixieland jazz, blues, and ballads. Teresa's only ballad to make the charts during her tenure with London Records was *Longing for You* (1951), a song based on Oskar Straus' *Waltz Dream*.

- TERESA SAYS, "THAT WAS MY OOTSY-POO PERIOD. THAT'S ALL THEY GAVE ME. CHOO'N GUM, MOLASSES, EVERYTHING WAS ICKY, STICKY. NOW, THEY WERE HITS, BUT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN CHILDREN'S RECORDS. I DID MANY, MANY OF THAT TYPE OF SONG. I WAS LOCKED INTO IT. MOLASSES WAS MY FAVORITE SONG TO SING MY CHILDREN TO SLEEP. I USED TO BOUNCE THEM ON THE BED OR ROCK THEM TO SLEEP, SO THAT WAS GREAT. THAT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST SONGS MY GIRLS EVER KNEW."

Nonstop Hits ...the early 1950s

Teresa turned twenty and joined the Coral Records roster of artists in 1951. By this time she had also married Bill Monahan and given birth to her first daughter, Kathleen. Teresa still didn't read music - when it came time to record, a demo of the cut was delivered to her so that she could listen to it and learn it. It was a system that would be proven by a successful string of hits under the Coral label during the 1950s. It was also while recording for Coral -- a subsidiary of Decca Records - that Teresa met and worked with a young artists and repertoire (A&R) man by the name of Bob Thiele, a man who would remain an important influence in her life.

Teresa's third release for Coral was her first hit for the label, *Gonna Get Along Without Ya Now* (1952). *Gonna Get Along* would later become a hit for Patience and Prudence in 1956 and for Skeeter Davis in 1964 as well. Another Top 20 hit, *You'll Never Get Away* with Don Cornell, followed. Then, in 1952, Teresa Brewer's biggest selling record of all time, *Till I Waltz Again With You*, was produced by Bob Thiele and released on Coral.

- TERESA: "THE FIRST TIME I HEARD IT, I THOUGHT IT WAS A VERY PRETTY SONG. I MET ITS WRITER IN AN ELEVATOR IN NEW YORK. HE SANG THE SONG FOR ME AS WE WERE GOING UP IN THE ELEVATOR! HE SANG IT IN A COUNTRY TEMPO - YOU KNOW, WITH AN EXTRA FIFTH BAR. I SAID IT JUST DOESN'T WORK. THE SONG WAS CALLED TILL I WALTZ AGAIN WITH YOU AND IT WASN'T EVEN A WALTZ! BUT IT WAS BEAUTIFUL SO WE PUT IN A 'POP' METER... AND THAT WAS A BIG HIT, TOO. I THINK IT'S MY FAVORITE OF ALL THE HITS I HAD."

Teresa Brewer's popularity soared, and she continued to ride a wave of success in 1953. *Till I Waltz Again With You* went gold and became the year's biggest-selling record. Teresa's looks, singing talent, and popularity made her an easy winner when Paramount Pictures conducted a poll to select the country's most popular female singer to cast in their 3D Technicolor movie, *Those Redheads from Seattle*. Brewer screen tested and landed one of the title roles. Variety's review said, "Teresa Brewer comes over the screen like a million bucks," and Paramount eventually offered her a seven-year contract. However, in consideration of the demands of her family life, she declined the offer. She chose instead to stay on the east coast living in New Rochelle, about a half hour drive from New York City, where she continued to record and make television

appearances while attending to needs of her growing family.

- TERESA: "THE MOVIE WAS FILMED ON THE PARAMOUNT LOT IN 1953. THEY DID THE LOCATION SHOTS WITHOUT US. I HAD NEVER ACTED IN MY LIFE WHEN I DID THAT AND THEY WANTED TO GIVE ME A SEVER-YEAR CONTRACT! I WAS GOING TO BE A STARLET BUT I ALREADY HAD TWO KIDS AND WAS EXPECTING MY THIRD, SO I THOUGHT THAT WAS RIDICULOUS. I SAID, 'NO, THANK YOU.'"

In the summer of 1953, Teresa Brewer and Mel Torme costarred on network television in the well-received series "Summertime USA". It aired Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7:45 pm. Critics, fans and fellow celebrities praised the pairing of Brewer and Torme. Bing Crosby, observing her that Teresa's big voice was disproportionate to her diminutive size, dubbed her the "Sophie Tucker of the Girl Scouts."

The record hits kept coming in 1953 too, including *Dancin' with Someone*, *Into Each Life Some Rain* *Must Fall*, and another gold record, *Ricochet*.

- TERESA RECALLS, "RICOCHET WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE RELEASED - AT LEAST NOT THAT PARTICULAR TAKE. IN THOSE DAYS, IT WASN'T ON TAPE AND EVERYTHING HAD TO BE RIGHT AT THE SAME TIME - THE ORCHESTRA, VOCALIST, EVERYTHING. I HAD A COLD AND DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY IT TURNED OUT. WE REDID IT ANOTHER DAY, BUT BOB (THIELE) RELEASED THE FIRST TAKE - THE ONE WITH MY COLD. IT TURNED OUT TO BE A BIG, BIG HIT WHICH SHOWS THAT A PERFORMER ISN'T ALWAYS NECESSARILY RIGHT ABOUT WHAT SONG TO PUT OUT OR WHAT TAKE. I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'M AT MY BEST, IT SEEMS. EVERYTHING I SAID I DIDN'T LIKE WAS A HIT!"

Teresa was consistently on the charts during the following years with *Baby, Baby, Baby* (from *Those Redheads from Seattle*), *Bell Bottom Blues*, *Our Heartbreaking Waltz* -- written by *Till I Waltz Again With You* composer Sidney Prosen, *Skinny Minnie*, and more. Her crisp and powerful voice prompted one critic to call her a "stick of vocal dynamite." Teresa was rated as the favorite female vocalist for two consecutive years in 1955 and 1956.

During these years, Teresa was also headlining in prestigious supper clubs throughout the country -- the Versailles in Manhattan, Ciro's in Hollywood, The Coconut Grove, Chicago's Palmer House, Blinstrub's in Boston, and many others. Teresa's performances broke house records at the Latin Quarter in New York and at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas.

The Superstar ...the late 1950s

In the mid-1950s, Teresa began to branch out by recording different types of material. Some releases were introduced by rhythm and blues artists - songs like *Pledging My Love*, *Tweedlee Dee* and *Rock Love*. She also covered country songs with success - songs like *Jilted* and *I Gotta Go Get My Baby*. Some years after the release of the original country version, Teresa recorded *Let Me Go Lover*, which was to become another of her biggest hits.

- TERESA: "LET ME GO LOVER WAS THE THEME SONG FROM A TV SHOW. THE SHOW WAS ON AT EIGHT OR NINE O'CLOCK AT NIGHT AND WE WERE IN THE STUDIO RECORDING THAT SONG AT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING - JUST HOURS LATER. EVERY A&R MAN CALLED THE TOP ARTIST ON HIS PARTICULAR LABEL AND SAID THEY WERE GOING TO DO THAT SONG. I HAD A RECORD OUT OF IT; PATTI PAGE HAD ONE. THE GIRL WHO SANG IT ON THE TV SHOW, JOAN WEBER, HAD A BIG HIT ON IT. I THINK WE EACH SOLD A MILLION COPIES."

The arrangements and orchestrations of some of Teresa's songs also began to evolve during the mid-1950s. Most of the recording through 1955 had strong components of trumpets, trombones, and saxophones, with Brewer's voice acting as the lead instrument of a brass ensemble. After 1955, her voice would be more and more often complemented with strings added to the brass and with the use of male and full choral voices in the mixes.

By 1956, Teresa had added daughters Susan and Megan to the family -- three children under the age of six. To meet the needs of the family, Teresa cut back further on her personal appearances. Instead, she opted to appear on television, finding that the schedule -- a day spent rehearsing plus the actual air date performance -- meshed well with her lifestyle. At the same time she continued her recording.

By her own estimate, Teresa was spending only six to eight weeks a year away from home. Her professional schedule consisted of 2-3 weeks of television appearances, 3 weeks of club appearances, and a week or two in the recording studio for Coral. When Teresa was on the road for club appearances, she avoided one night performances and preferred longer runs at venues like the Las Vegas showrooms so that her family could travel with her and settle in for a longer stay.

This schedule earned Teresa the reputation of being a mother and wife who moonlighted as a performer rather than the reverse, which seemed to occur more often in show business. During this time, her

popularity and prolific catalog of hits helped her reach a remarkable income level - which allowed her the luxury of spending more time with her children.

In 1956, Teresa released *A Tear Fell*, with Fats Domino's *Bo Weevil* on the flip side. The two sides vied with one another in a race up the charts. The followup release to the twin smash single was *A Sweet Old Fashioned Girl*.

- TERESA ON A TEAR FELL: "I LOVED THAT SONG. IT WAS REALLY TAKEN FROM THE RHYTHM AND BLUES RECORD. AT THAT TIME, THE R&B ARTIST JUST COULDN'T BREAK OUT IN THE POP MUSIC WORLD. SO EVERYBODY, EVERY POP ARTIST, WAS COVERING THE R&B RECORDS. I FELT VERY GUILTY ABOUT IT BECAUSE THEY HAD BETTER RECORDS OUT THAN WE MADE. BUT THE SONGS WERE SO GREAT THAT THE POP ARTISTS DID THEM TOO."

TERESA ON SWEET OLD FASHIONED GIRL: "HALF OF IT WAS THE OLD POP SOUND, THE OTHER HALF WAS THE NEW ROCK AND ROLL SOUND. IT'S ALMOST A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE TWO STYLES. I'M SURE IT WAS DELIBERATE BECAUSE ROCK AND ROLL WAS JUST COMING IN. THE SONG WAS A CLEVER IDEA, A CUTE LITTLE IDEA. AND AT THE TIME IT SUITED ME JUST FINE. IT'S FUNNY, A LOT OF MY HITS HAD A FAMILIAR MELODY TO THEM. MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC! HAD A MIDDLE THAT CAME RIGHT OUT OF LIZST'S SECOND HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY. A MELODIC PASSAGE FROM GERSHWIN'S AN AMERICAN IN PARIS WAS RECURRENT IN CHOO'N GUM. A TEAR FELL SOUNDED LIKE A MODERN VERSION OF CLEMENTINE, AND A SWEET OLD FASHIONED GIRL SOUNDED LIKE A DOZEN OTHER SONGS."

In the summer of 1956, Teresa cowrote *I Love Mickey*, honoring baseball great Mickey Mantle - and Mantle actually appears with Teresa on the recording. This single is now one of the most collectible of all her recordings. *Mutual Admiration Society* (backed by *Crazy with Love*) was another big hit for Brewer in 1956.

Teresa continued to guest-star on many television shows during the late 1950s. She also guest-hosted several of the leading variety shows - including those of Ed Sullivan, Perry Como, and Arthur Godfrey.

Hits for 1957 included a pop version of the country song *Teardrops in My Heart* and covers of *Empty Arms* and *You Send Me*.

- TERESA: "IN THE LATE '50'S, EARLY '60'S, IF I GOT THROUGH WITH A HIT SONG, IT WAS USUALLY COVERING RHYTHM AND BLUES. I COVERED MANY OF THOSE - IVORY JOE HUNTER, SAM COOKE. THAT'S WHAT THE RECORD COMPANIES WERE DOING AT THE TIME. THEY WERE TAKING THE ARTISTS THEY HAD UNDER CONTRACT AND COVERING A BLACK ARTIST WHO HAD A SEMI-HIT. I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW UNFAIR IT WAS UNTIL MUCH LATER. TWO

SONGS I COVERED SUCCESSFULLY AT THIS TIME WERE
EMPTY ARMS AND YOU SEND ME"

Toward the later 1950s, record buyers were beginning to recognize the original recordings of songs more and more. The industry began to realize that the cover version of a recording - the version promoted on the cover of a single -- was no longer necessarily the better seller. In Teresa's case, the results were mixed from the middle of the decade. She sold more copies of Ivory Joe Hunter's *A Tear Fell* and *Empty Arms*, Fats Domino's *Bo Weevil* and possibly Johnny Ace's *Pledging My Love* (both versions reached the same position on the Billboard charts) than the original artists. However, her version of *Rock Love*, *Tweedlee Dee* and *You Send Me* were bigger hits for the original artists - Lula Reed, LaVern Baker, and Sam Cooke, respectively.

Teresa's fourth daughter Michelle was born in 1958, and Teresa was still topping the various popularity polls and was strong on the charts with the infectious *Pickle Up a Doodle*. In the same year, she saw her version of *The Hula Hoop Song* leap-frog up the hit

parade in competition with the version by Georgia Gibbs.

However, the end of the 1950s also marked the end of the heyday of Teresa Brewer's mega-hit records. After the end of the decade, her songs continued to make the charts, but not as consistently or as successfully. In 1959, *The One Rose* and *Heavenly Lover* sold well, but were not the overwhelming hits Teresa had previously produced.

Teresa continued to be in strong demand for personal appearances and television. After appearing on his show nearly 40 times, Teresa was invited by Ed Sullivan to be guest hostess for a special show saluting the US armed forces.

Peace of Mind and renditions of the country hits *Anymore* and *Have You Ever Been Lonely* were chartmakers for Teresa in 1960. In 1961, *Milord*, Teresa's English version of French chanteuse Edith Piaf's best known song, was the last song by Teresa to make the pop charts.

Slowing the Pace ...the 1960s

In 1962, Teresa Brewer signed a recording contract with Philips Records, ending her work with Coral. This association produced eight albums over the following four years, including *Teresa Brewer's Greatest Hits*, a collection of her previous songs re-recorded with the Nashville sound that was popular at the time. During the same time, Teresa released about a dozen singles for Philips.

Teresa continued to make frequent television guest appearances on many of the major talk shows in the early 1960s. She and Tony Bennett were cast to cohost "Perry Presents" -- a New York-based summer replacement show for the Perry Como Saturday night time slot -- in the summer of 1959. Teresa only appeared for the first four weeks of the show. After her departure, other performers -- Jaye P. Morgan, for instance -- filled in for her.

- TERESA ON "PERRY PRESENTS": "I DID FOUR SHOWS AND CANCELED, AND GOT 'FRONT PAGE'. THEY SAID I WALKED OUT AND I SAID I WAS FIRED. THERE WAS A TUMULT ABOUT WHAT WAS LEGALLY THE BEST THING TO SAY IF YOU WERE FIRED. IT WAS JUST A STUPID MISUNDERSTANDING. I THINK IT WAS STRICTLY AGENCIES INVOLVED, AND BILLING WITH TONY BENNETT - WHO WAS GOING TO GET THEIR NAME FIRST AND THAT KIND OF BUSINESS. SO I SAID, CALL IT 'THE TB SHOW' - WE BOTH HAD THE SAME INITIALS - AND WHO CARES?' WE SANG DUETS, ANYTHING THEY WANTED. I SANG MORE WITH TORME, BUT I ENJOYED WORKING WITH BENNETT. I REALLY DIDN'T WANT THAT SUMMER REPLACEMENT. THERE WERE SO MANY THINGS I DID THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO DO, LIKE THE MOVIE. I ASKED FOR TWICE AS MUCH TO DO THE SUMMER REPLACEMENT SHOW - DOUBLED IT, AND THEY WENT AHEAD WITH IT! EVIDENTLY THEY WEREN'T PAYING ME ANYTHING AT FIRST, AND EVEN DOUBLE, THEY WEREN'T PAYING TOO MUCH. BUT THOSE ARE TWO OF THE THINGS I CAN REMEMBER SAYING, 'OH, THEY'LL NEVER DO IT. TELL 'EM I WANT DOUBLE. THEY'LL NEVER DO IT.' AND THEY CAME BACK AND SAID, 'YOU'VE GOT IT. YOU'VE GOT DOUBLE!'"

Brewer spent the late 1960s almost exclusively with her family, releasing only occasional singles on the ABC Paramount and SSS International labels. She performed only when she wanted to, and even then only at very select engagements.

New Directions, New Dimensions

In the early 1970s Teresa became reacquainted with Bob Thiele. Thiele was a pop music and jazz pioneer in the recording industry, and was instrumental in launching the careers of Buddy Holly and Jackie Wilson, and produced for a diverse roster of artists including John Coltrane, Pat Boone, Jack Kerouac and Judy Garland - just to name a few. Most importantly, he had produced most of Teresa Brewer's hits at Coral in the 1950s. Teresa's passion for singing, and Thiele's enthusiasm for it, prompted Teresa to return to recording full time once again - this time for Thiele's label - Flying Dutchman Records.

In 1972, Teresa was divorced from Bill Monahan and was remarried to Bob Thiele -- his third marriage. Following this pairing, an entire new Teresa Brewer catalog began to develop. The only Brewer material available at the time was an assortment of compilations of her older hits. Beginning in the 1970s, Teresa began a new and prolific recording phase of her career, sampling many musical styles - jazz, rock, pop, country - and performing with some of the best known and loved musicians in each of these fields.

- TERESA: "MY DAUGHTERS INTRODUCED ME TO THE NEW MUSIC AND MY HUSBAND TAUGHT ME TO LISTEN TO JAZZ. IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF MUSIC FOR ME. I LOVE IT AND WANT TO BE A PART OF IT."

During the 1970s and 1980s Teresa recorded albums with jazz greats such as Count Basie (*The Songs of Bessie Smith*), Earl "Fatha" Hines (*We Love You, Fats*), Bobby Hackett (*What a Wonderful World*), the World's Greatest Jazz Band (*Good News*), Stephane Grappelli (*On the Road Again*), Slam Stewart and Ruby Braff (*Midnight Café*) and more.

When Duke Ellington heard Teresa singing *The Songs of Bessie Smith*, he asked her pointblank: "When are we, you and I, going to do an album together?" The result was *It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing*, the Duke's last recording. Brewer enjoyed singing Ellington's music so much that she recorded and released another set of his songs with Shelly Manne (*A Sophisticated Lady*). Later, with the Duke's son Mercer, Teresa sang hits of the Cotton Club era on an album titled *The Cotton Connection*.

The "new Miss Brewer" received warm reviews for her jazz entries. Jazz aficionado Nat Hentoff probably said it best: "Teresa Brewer is irrepressibly herself, constantly evolving, constantly enjoying the surprise

of herself. The woman is a phenomenon. You think you know her style and, all of a sudden, she's moved in a new direction. Teresa is uncategorizable, perennially surprising. She is, in sum, a marvelous performer!"

Other albums released in the 1970s and 1980s represented a wide range of musical sounds. Teresa's rock entry *Teresa Brewer in London* included a rock version of *Music! Music! Music!*, with Chas Hodges and Dave Peacock - a version that reached the top ten charts in countries in the Orient. Teresa appeared as guest artist in three songs of George Segal's *A Touch of Ragtime*. Songs of the 1940's, performed as medleys, were featured in *I Dig Big Band Singers*. In 1983, Teresa's recording *No Way Conway* was a brief hit on the country charts. Throughout the period, there were several additional reissues of Teresa's "greatest hits" in various combinations and formats. Teresa also made guest appearances on several albums recorded by other artists.

Until the early 1990s, Teresa continued to make live performances. Highlights include her concert at Carnegie Hall in New York on April 5, 1978 with guest stars Dizzy Gillespie and Stephane Grappelli, and the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1983. Teresa was invited to appear at the famed Palace Theatre in London's West End in a UK commemoration honoring world peace on Sunday, May 5, 1985. The gala, "A Royal Celebration - Forty Years of Peace", was broadcast on live television and featured a host of international entertainers. Teresa opened the "Nifty Fifties" segment of the show with a performance of - what else -- *Music! Music! Music!*

On April 29, 1986, the US Postal Service issued a commemorative postage stamp honoring Duke Ellington. Teresa and Bob Thiele attended the issuance ceremony and the Ellington sacred concert at the Church of Saint John the Divine in New York. A first day cover, featuring a photo of Teresa and Duke Ellington in the recording studio - and autographed by Teresa and the Duke's son Mercer -- was also issued.



In 1991, Teresa returned to the recording studio to create a jazz tribute to Louis Armstrong, which was released as *Memories of Louis*. The recording includes trumpeters Wynton Marsalis, Dizzy Gillespie, Ruby Braff, Yank Lawson, Roy Hargrove and more.

Teresa Brewer's husband and creative partner Bob Thiele died at age 73 on January 30, 1996 following several months of declining health. He prided himself in being Teresa's biggest fan, and favored the world by bringing us Teresa's music.

After Bob's death, Teresa's interest in stage appearances and recording waned. She continued to live in New York -- close to her daughters and their families, including four grandsons and five great-grand children! She told fans that she enjoyed "antiquing," "gardening," and just "generally spending time with the family."

During the last decade of her life, Teresa stayed engaged with her worldwide fans through her long-time Fan Club, and -- from early 2005 until her death -- through *Ask Teresa!*, a monthly Q&A feature on the Teresa Brewer Center website.

In the last months of her life, Teresa was stricken by supranuclear palsy, a rare brain disorder that progressed rapidly. Ms. Brewer died at her home in New Rochelle, N.Y. on October 17, 2007. Teresa's four daughters were at her side just prior to her death. When announcing her death, one of Teresa's daughters said that "the angels in heaven are singing more strongly now." How very true.

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