THE MUSIC OF ETHEL WATERS
JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
SEASON 20, PROGRAM

1ST HALF: 24 mins

Bread and Gravy (4:08)
Harlem on My Mind (4:00)
Dinah (4:05)
Georgia On My Mind (4:55) *(drop if needed for time)*
Am I Blue? (4:10)
Heat Wave (2:40)
2nd HALF: approx 23 mins
I Must Have That Man (4:45)
Good for Nothing Joe (4:25) *(drop if needed for time)*
Taking a Chance on Love (4:00)
Stormy Weather (4:07)
His Eye on the Sparrow (5:52) – play as needed, under and out
Approx total: 47 mins

1) MUSIC: Stormy Weather up and under (play until :32 and under)

1A) VOX: FEINSTEIN @ 6:00 (from Set 1, Track 2)

She was one of the innovators of the contemporary style of singer popular music along with Louis Armstrong and Sophie Tucker. I consider Ethel, Louie and Sophie to be the three main influences on the sort of popular vernacular in the interpreting what we now call the Great American Song book (:18)

1c) PIERCE:

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN (fine-styne) IS NOT JUST A CABARET SINGER -- HE'S ONE OF THE FOREMOST OBSERVERS OF AMERICAN POPULAR SONG – AND *HE* SAYS THAT ETHEL WATERS' SINGING STYLE IS SO MUCH A PART OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC THAT WE TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.

WATERS WAS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN TO SING ON THE RADIO AND THE FIRST PERFORMER TO BE GIVEN EQUAL BILLING WITH WHITES ON BROADWAY. IN A SENSE, HER STYLE AND BREAKING OF RACIAL BARRIERS **ENABLED** THE CAREERS OF ELLA FITZGERALD, SARAH VAUGHAN AND SO MANY OTHERS. (:30)

WATERS WAS ALSO A DIFFICULT WOMAN: HARD TO WORK WITH, DIFFICULT IN RELATIONSHIPS, AND VERY HARD TO UNDERSTAND.

YET THAT DOGGEDNESS DROVE HER TALENTS AND SUCCESS OVER RACISM AND AN ABUSIVE CHILDHOOD. AND THAT SUCCESS MADE HER AN ICON FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS THROUGH THE YEARS OF RACIAL SEGREGATION AND BEYOND.

JUST AHEAD, MICHAEL FEINSTEIN LEADS A TRIO OF VOCALISTS TO HONOR THE ART AND THE LEGACY OF ETHEL WATERS.

IT'S JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER I'M WENDELL PIERCE. (:60)

1C) Music: Stormy Weather UP AND fades

2) MUSIC: UP AND UNDER

3) PIERCE:

IN THE YEAR 1896, WILLIAM MCKINNEY WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASE "PLESSY VERSUS FERGUSON" UPHELD 'SEPARATE BUT EQUAL' RACIAL SEGREGATION.

THAT YEAR ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT, IN CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA, THIRTEEN YEAR OLD LOUISE ANDERSON GAVE BIRTH TO ETHEL WATERS. THE CHILD WAS THE PRODUCT OF A RAPE. AND THE CONDITIONS SHE WAS BORN INTO WOULD COLOR HER OUTLOOK FOR A LIFETIME -- AND SHAPE HER SOUND AND HER SONGS.

4) VOX: FEINSTEIN @5:09 (from Set 2, Track 3)

Ethel Waters was many things – she was difficult and intractable; she was gentle and humble; (salacious when she sang those Sweet Mama String Bean songs; pious when she was part of the Billy Graham crusade). But one of the things that never changed about her was that she always sympathized with the disenfranchised and the marginalized. She never lost the common touch. And that's one of the things that people always resonated with her about. When she would sing songs about the simple things like this song Bread and Gravey… people knew she sang it from the heart and she knew where it came from.

PIERCE: (alt)

IN JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER'S ALLEN ROOM, CATHERINE RUSSELL LEADS OFF OUR CELEBRATION OF ETHEL WATERS WITH "BREAD AND GRAVY"

5) MUSIC: Bread and Gravy (4:08) Carmichael

6) PIERCE:

HOAGY CARMICHAEL'S BREAD AND GRAVY, RECORDED IN 1939 FOR BLUEBIRD RECORDS BY ETHEL WATERS AND SUNG ON THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER STAGE BY CATHERINE RUSSELL.

GROWING UP, ETHEL WATERS NEVER LIVED IN ONE PLACE FOR MORE THAN 15 MONTHS. AND THE NEIGHBORHOODS SHE GREW UP IN WERE PLAYGROUNDS FOR DRUNKARDS, PROSTITUTES AND THIEVES -- AN UNLIKELY START FOR A SUPERSTAR.

SHE TRIED DIFFERENT WAYS TO ESCAPE –- WORKED AS A HOTEL MAID, STAYED OUT ALL NIGHT AT DANCE CLUBS AND EVEN GOT MARRIED AT AGE THIRTEEN. NONE OF IT WORKED.

THEN ON HER 17TH BIRTHDAY -- AT THE JUNIPER CLUB IN PHILADELPHIA -- SHE SANG A COUPLE OF TUNES ON A LARK. FROM THAT, SHE GOT A BOOKING AT THE LINCOLN THEATER IN BALTIMORE AND SOON WAS TOURING THE BLACK VAUDEVILLE CIRCUIT AS THE SEXY HIP-SHAKING "MAMA STRINGBEAN" -- SHE'D SAY SHE WORKED FROM "NINE UNTIL UNCONSCIOUS."

IN THE STRESS OF THOSE TOURS – STAYING IN FLOPHOUSES, TOURING THE HOSTILE SOUTH AND FIGHTING FOR THE ATTENTION OF AUDIENCES IN ROWDY CLUBS AND RUNDOWN THEATERS – SHE LEARNED HOW TO ENTERTAIN FOR ANY TYPE OF CROWD.

6) PIERCE: continues

BY 1919 WATERS WAS JUST 23, BUT A VETERAN WITH SIX YEARS ON THE BLACK VAUDEVILLE CIRCUIT WHEN SHE MOVED TO HARLEM.

IN THE NEXT DECADES, WATERS, DUKE ELLINGTON, ZORA NEAL HURSTON, W.E.B. DUBOIS , ROMAIRE BEARDEN, LANGSTON HUGHES AND DOZENS OF OTHERS WOULD FIRE A "HARLEM RENAISSANCE" INFUSING AMERICA'S VISION OF ITSELF -- AND SET THE STAGE FOR THE MIGHTY CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

7) MUSIC: Harlem on My Mind (4:00) 1933 As Thousands Cheer

8) PIERCE:

HARLEM ON MY MIND. -- BY IRVING BERLIN. SUNG IN THE MODE OF ETHEL WATERS BY CATHERINE RUSSELL.

8a) **Music bed**: Old Man Harlem up and under

8C) PIERCE:

IN 1921, ETHEL WATERS CONVINCED PIANIST FLETCHER HENDERSON TO ACCOMPANY HER AND SIGNED WITH BLACK SWAN RECORDS -- THE FIFTH AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN TO MAKE A COMMERCIAL RECORDING, AND THE FIRST TO APPEAR ON RADIO.

SHE THRIVED IN THE BLACK THEATERS IN HARLEM:
" THEY DID WHATEVER THEY PLEASED WHILE YOU WERE KILLING YOURSELF ON STAGE, " SHE SAID.

"THE AUDIENCE THERE WAS CALLED THE HARDEST TO PLEASE IN THE COUNTRY. BUT WHEN THEY LIKED YOU, YOU KNEW IT…THEY'D SCREAM, STOMP AND APPLAUD UNTIL THE WHOLE BUILDING SHOOK. YEARS LATER, WHEN I FIRST STEPPED BEFORE A WHITE AUDIENCE, I HOUGHT I WAS A DEAD DUCK BECAUSE NO ONE TRIED TO TEAER THE HOUSE DOWN. THEY MERELY CLAPPED THEIR HANDS." [1]

8D) PIERCE (continues)

[1] FROM HEAT WAVE BY D. BOGLE PG 28

THOUGH CURIOUS CROWDS WOULD MAKE THEIR WAY UP TOWN TO SEE HER., ETHEL WATERS HARBORED A DEEP SUSPICION OF WHITE AUDIENCES AND SHE HAD NO DESIRE TO CATER TO THEM.

ONE OF THESE VENUES WAS HARLEM'S PLANTATION CLUB, WHERE SHE PUT HER MARK ON THIS 1923 TUNE – "DINAH."

9) MUSIC: Dinah (4:05) 1925

10) VOX: FEINSTEIN @6:10 (SET 2, TRACK 5)

This next song you will know. It's another great American Standard. Most notably connected with Ray Charles. And this particular song was one that Ethel put her own particular stamp on in 1938. And the thing that I find interesting is that many many years after he composed the music H. Carmichael said that this song Georgia on My Mind is not about a state but was about a lady.

10A) MUSIC: Georgia On My Mind (4:55)

11) PIERCE:

TWO SONGS OF THE SOUTH -- GEORGIA ON MY MIND WITH TRACY THOMS ON VOCALS AND BEFORE THAT, THE COMPOSITION BY HARRY AKST, WITH LYRICS BY SAM M. LEWIS AND JOE YOUNG -- *DINAH – FROM CAROLINA* -- SUNG BY OUR MUSICAL DIRECTOR MICHAEL FEINSTEIN. (fine-styne)

11 A) PIERCE ALT:

DINAH – MADE FAMOUS BY ETHEL WATERS IN 1925 AND SUNG HERE BY MUSICAL DIRECTOR MICHAEL FEINSTEIN. (fine-styne)

Music window: St. Louis Blues (Ethel Waters)

11B) PIERCE:

THOUGH ETHEL WATERS WOULD GO ON TO SING SHOWTUNES AND BALLADS -- AND MAKE HER MARK ON THE GREAT AMERICAN SONG BOOK -- SHE EMBODIED THE BLUES. UNLIKE THE POPULAR 'SHOUT

SINGERS' OF THAT TIME, SHE OFFERED THE BLUES WITH WRY AND SUBTLE INTERPRETATIONS -- FULL OF INTROSPECTION AND INNUENDO.

EVEN BESSIE SMITH – "THE QUEEN OF THE BLUES" – RECOGNIZED IT. EARLY ON, WHEN THEY WERE BILLED TOGETHER, SMITH FORBADE WATERS FROM SINGING ANY BLUES SONGS.

LATER IN HER CAREER, WATERS WOULD MAKE A SIGNATURE OF THIS BLUES -- FROM HER FILM TRIUMPH IN "*ON WITH THE SHOW*."

12) MUSIC: Am I Blue? (4:10) 1929 On with the Show

13) PIERCE:

AM I BLUE – FROM THE 1929 FILM *ON WITH THE SHOW* – SUNG HERE BY CATHERINE RUSSELL

THAT MOVIE WAS ETHEL WATERS' ACTING DEBUT AND THE FIRST FULL-COLOR, TALKING MOVIE RELEASED BY WARNER BROTHERS. WATERS WAS BY THEN, SUCH A BIG STAR THAT SHE PLAYED HERSELF IN THE MOVIE.

ON WITH THE SHOW EXPANDED HER FAME WITH BLACK AND WHITE AUDIENCES.

BY 1933, WATERS WAS RECORDING FOR DECCA, PARAMOUNT AND COLUMBIA RECORDS; PLAYING GIGS WITH DUKE ELLINGTON; AND WOULD TAKE ON THE "GREAT WHITE WAY" – WHEN IRVIN BERLIN APPROACHED HER TO BE THE ONLY BLACK PERFORMER IN THE MUSICAL REVIEW *AS THOUSANDS CHEER*.

14) MUSIC: Heat Wave (2:40) As Thousands Cheer 1933

15) PIERCE:

HEAT WAVE BY IRVING BERLIN SUNG ON OUR STAGE BY TRACY THOMS. THE SONG WAS MADE FAMOUS BY ETHEL WATERS IN THE 1933 BROADWAY REVIEW *AS THOUSANDS CHEER.*

ALTHOUGH WATERS WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR DRAWS OF THE SHOW, SHE DIDN'T RECEIVE EQUAL BILLING TO THE WHITE

PERFORMERS -- AS SHE HAD FOR THE HOLLYWOOD FILM. BUT WATERS WOULD SOON HAVE HER SATISFACTION AS THE HIGHEST PAID PERFORMER ON BROADWAY.

15A) PIERCE: (CON'T)

WE'RE CELEBRATING THE GREAT ETHEL WATERS AND YOU CAN HEAR OR SHARE THIS PROGRAM ANY TIME YOU LIKE – JUST CLICK OVER TO J-A-L-C (DOT) ORG.

WHILE YOU'RE THERE, CHECK OUT OUR *JAZZSTORIES* PODCAST WITH VOCALIST CATHERINE RUSSELL. *JAZZSTORIES -- The Music in the Makers' Words.*

UP NEXT, ETHEL WATERS' CAREER GOES FROM HEAT WAVE TO STORMY WEATHER. BACK IN A MINUTE, WITH MORE *JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER*. I'M WENDELL PIERCE.

16) MIDBREAK (:60) "Frankie and Johnny"

17) MUSIC: __(Brother can you spare a dime?_)_____

17A) PIERCE:

THE DEPRESSION HAD A TIGHT GRIP ON THE COUNTRY BY THE 1930S, BUT ETHEL WATERS WAS WORKING STEADILY. SHE WAS THE BEST PAID PERFORMER, BLACK OR WHITE, ON BROADWAY. ONE OF HER NEGOTIATING TACTICS WAS TO ASK FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY SUM TO TRY TO GET OUT OF A GIG, BUT SHE WAS IN-DEMAND AND THAT SALARY WAS ALWAYS MET.

DESPITE THAT SUCCESS, WATERS' PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WERE TURBULENT. AMONG HER COSTARS, HER BAD TEMPER WAS JUST AS RENOWNED AS HER SINGING. AND HER HARSH LOVERS' QUARRELS – WITH WOMEN AND MEN – SPILLED OUT INTO THE PUBLIC.

"*ALL MEN IN MY LIFE HAVE BEEN TWO THINGS – AN EPIC AND AN EPIDEMIC,*" SHE SAID. LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN HER LIFE, SHE POURED THE HEARTBREAK INTO HER SONGS.

FROM *THE BLACK BIRDS OF 1928*, "*I MUST HAVE THAT MAN*."

18) MUSIC: I Must Have That Man (4:45) 1928 Black Birds of 1928

19) MUSIC: Good for Nothing Joe (4:25) *(drop if needed for time)*

20) PIERCE:

VOCALIST TRACY THOMS – *GOOD FOR NOTHING JOE* AND BEFORE THAT *I MUST HAVE THAT MAN* -- MADE FAMOUS BY ETHEL WATERS IN THE SHOW AND RECORDING *"THE BLACK BIRDS OF 1928."*

ALT: VOCALIST TRACY THOMS -- *I MUST HAVE THAT MAN* -- MADE FAMOUS BY ETHEL WATERS IN THE SHOW AND RECORDING *"THE BLACK BIRDS OF 1928."*

20A) PIERCE: (CON'T)

BY THE LATE 30S, ETHEL WATERS HAD EVOLVED FROM VAUDVILLE'S 'MAMA STRINGBEAN' INTO A RESPECTED MUSICAL ACTRESS. SHE PROVED TO PRODUCERS AND AUDIENCES THAT THE BLACK ENTERTAINERS OF VAUDVILLE WERE NO NOVELTY. IN *MAMBA'S DAUGHTERS,* SHE PLAYED HAGER AND RECEIVED SEVENTEEN CURTAIN CALLS FOR HER PART. IN 1940, THE VETERAN SONGWRITING TEAM OF VERNON DUKE AND JOHN LATOUCHE CREATED A MUSICAL BASED ON THE LEGEND OF *FAUST* FEATURING AN ALL BLACK CAST. ETHEL WATERS WAS CAST AS PETUNIA IN BOTH THE STAGE VERSION AND IN THE 1943 MOVIE OPPOSITE LENA HORNE.

21) MUSIC: Taking a Chance on Love (4:00) 1940 Cabin in the Sky

22) PIERCE:

FROM CABIN IN THE SKY – MICHAEL FEINSTEIN *TAKING A CHANCE ON LOVE* -- AN ETHEL WATERS FEATURE FROM THE 1940 MUSCIAL **"**CABIN IN THE SKY."

WATERS WAS AT THE PEAK OF HER CAREER -- HER "*CABIN IN THE SKY"* PERFORMANCE WAS NOMINATED FOR AN OSCAR. BUT HER TEMPESTUOUS NATURE WOULD GET THE BETTER OF HER – AFTER FIGHTS WITH THE FILM'S CAST AND TOP PRODUCERS AT MGM, SHE WAS BLACK-LISTED IN HOLLYWOOD. IT WOULD BE SIX YEARS BEFORE SHE WOULD GET ANOTHER PART.

TO FILL IN THE LEAN YEARS, ETHEL WATERS PLAYED ANY GIG SHE COULD GET – NO MATTER HOW RUN-DOWN THE CLUB, AS LONG AS THERE WAS A STAGE. IN 1933 AT THE COTTON CLUB, SHE FIRST SANG *STORMY WEATHER*. THE SONG WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO FEATURE THUNDER AND RAIN SOUND EFFECTS. IT WOULD BECOME A TRADEMARK WHEN SHE STRIPPED IT DOWN AND POURED IN HER LIFE-LONG HURT.

"I FOUND RELEASE IN SINGING IT EACH EVENING," ETHEL WATERS SAID."ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DEEPLY HURT CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT PAIN IS, OR HUMILIATION. ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BURNED KNOW WHAT FIRE IS LIKE."

23) MUSIC: Stormy Weather (4:07)

24) PIERCE:

STORMY WEATHER — VOCALIST ADRIANE LENOX IN THE ALLEN ROOM WITH THE LIFE-SONG OF ETHEL WATERS.

SEVEN YEARS LATER, WATERS WOULD FIND HER WAY BACK INTO THE GOOD GRACES OF HOLLYWOOD WHEN SHE WAS CAST IN THE DRAMA *PINKY*. HER ROLE AS THE ILLITERATE GRANDMOTHER "DICEY

JOHNSON" WON HER ANOTHER OSCAR NOMINATION – THIS TIME FOR 'BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS'.

SHE WAS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN ACTOR TO PLAY A DRAMATIC PART ON BROADWAY AND WAS QUICKLY FINDING A NICHE IN ROLES AS THE QUICK-WITTED AND HARD-WORKING MATRON.

ETHEL WATERS WOULD GO ON TO STAR ON STAGE IN *MEMBERS OF THE WEDDING* AND THE TV SERIES *BELUAH*.

SOME AFRICAN-AMERICANS FOUND THESE *MAMMY* ROLES TO BE DEGRADING, BUT WATERS PLAYED ALL HER CHARACTERS WITH A THOUGHTFUL DIGNITY -- THEIR STRUGGLES WERE THOSE OF HER MOTHER, GRANDMOTHER AND HER OWN LIFE. LENA HORNE CALLED HER '*THE MOTHER OF US ALL*.'

IN THE FINAL PART OF HER CAREER, ETHEL WATERS TRADED THE STAGE FOR THE PULPIT. STARTING IN 1957, SHE BECAME A FREQUENT GUEST ON THE REVEREND BILLY GRAHAM'S CRUSADE TOURS.

26) VOX: Michael Feinstein

Ethel Waters left a rich legacy, not just of the music she made but also she made it possible for so many people to follow in her footsteps. Being a woman of color reaching heights that had never been reached before prior to her existence. And she stayed a star over her entire lifetime. Even when she found religion she did it as a star becoming part of Billy Grahams' Crusade as part of her last years singing for salvation as the end neared for her existence. We are going to leave you with this last song so associated with her last years when all of her experiences as a blues and a jazz singer found their resting place in gospel.

26A) MUSIC: His Eye is on the Sparrow (5:52) – play as needed, under and out

26B) PIERCE:

HIS EYE ON THE SPARROW – ADRIANE LENOX BACKED UP BY -- CATHERINE RUSSELL, TRACY THOMS AND OUR MUSICAL DIRECTOR MICHAEL FEINSTEIN.

WATERS DIED IN 1977 AT THE AGE OF 81. IN 2004, HER STAR ON THE HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME WAS APPROVED. BUT FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN YET BEEN SECURED AND THE PUBLIC CAMPAIGN TO INSTALL

IT AND HONOR HER LEGACY CONTINUES FOR MORE ABOUT THAT YOU CAN GO TO WWW.ETHELWATERSSTAR (DOT) COM.

27) PIERCE:

SHARE THIS PROGRAM WITH FRIENDS AND HEAR IT AGAIN ANYTIME AT J A L C (DOT) ORG (SLASH) MULTIMEDIA .

CHECK OUT OUR STREAMS FROM DIZZY'S CLUB AND THE *JAZZSTORIES PODCASTS --The Music in the Makers' Words.* AND YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE ON I-TUNES. HOWEVER YOU DO IT. BRING HOME THE SWING

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER RADIO IS PRODUCED AT MURRAY STREET. THIS EDITION WAS WRITTEN BY ALEXA LIM, WHO PRODUCES THE SERIES WITH DAVID GOREN AND STEPHEN RATHE. THIS EPISODE WAS MIXED BY MICHAEL JONES

LIVE RECORDINGS FROM THE ALLEN ROOM BY XM PRODUCTIONS' ROB MACOMBER AND JEFF ROTHMAN. ADDITIONAL RECORDINGS BY JEFFERY TALBOT AT AUDIO WORKS.

CAT HENRY SUPERVISES BROADCASTS AND RECORDINGS. JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER'S ARTISTIC DIRECTOR IS WYNTON MARSALIS. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS GREG SCHOLL. I'M WENDELL PIERCE. THANKS FOR JOINING US. COME BACK NEXT WEEK.

SPARE PARTS

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN, MUSICAL DIRECTOR

ADRIANE LENOX

CATHERINE RUSSELL

TRACY THOMS

VOCALIST, ON VOCALS, SINGER, SINGING

THIS IS:

BREAD AND GRAVY

HARLEM ON MY MIND

DINAH

GEORGIA ON MY MIND AM I BLUE?

HEAT WAVE

I MUST HAVE THAT MAN

GOOD FOR NOTHING JOE

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STORMY WEATHER

PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME WHEN I'M GONE

HIS EYE ON THE SPARROW