

Hazel Scott - Pianist, Vocalist



(1920 – 1981)

Hazel Scott began formal music training after the family had moved to the United States in 1924. She made her formal American debut at New York's Town Hall two years later and by 1929 Scott had acquired six scholarships to Julliard School of Music in New York City. Unfortunately she, at fourteen, was under age (the school admitted at the age of sixteen only). In the meantime she joined her mothers All-Woman Orchestra, playing piano and trumpet

By the time she was sixteen, in 1936, Hazel Scott was a radio star on the Mutual Broadcasting System and playing at the Roseland Dance Hall with the Count Basie Orchestra. In the late thirties, she appeared in the Broadway musical *Singing Out the News* and after that, *Priorities of 1942*. Scott's film credits include *Something to Shout About*, *I Dood it*, *Tropicana*, and *The Heat's On*, all in 1943, *Broadway Rhythm* (1944), and *Rhapsody in Blue* (1945).

During this time in one of the year's most fabulous social events, Scott married the popular preacher and politician Adam Clayton Powell Jr., though they separated several times and divorced in 1956.

During the early 1950s, she became the first black woman to have her own television show, but due to accusations of being a communist; her show was cancelled. Scott defended her position in fund-raising events, fighting for groups in the name of equal rights. She was widely recognized for her efforts in the struggle for racial freedom and justice.

She was known for her skill in combining jazz improvisations with a classical piece, and was quite adept at it. She was a consummate performer and her

nightclub performances were well patronized and acclaimed. Though Scott recorded for Decca, Signature, Tioch, and Columbia labels, she went into the Debut studios on January 1955 with no less than Charles Mingus and Max Roach. On the aptly titled (and newly expanded for CD) *“Relaxed Piano Moods,”* the sophisticated lady handles standards, her own blues *“Git Up from Here,”* and J.J. Johnson’s enduring jazz ballad *“Lament”* with considerable aplomb and a pearl-like touch. This has proven to be her most enduring jazz date, and is considered her premier effort.

In 1967, after living in Paris, she returned to America and appeared on the television shows *Julia* and *The Bold Ones*. In 1978, she was inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame. Hazel Scott continued to perform until her death in 1981.

Listen to Hazel Scott’s soothing music on the links below

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