

YESTERDAY / PLEASE SEND ME SOMEONE TO LOVE / LOOKING BACK / TRY ME AND SEE  
MISS BROWN'S BLUES / MY PRAYER / SINCE I FELL FOR YOU / THIS BITTER EARTH

SKYE STEREO SK-13 / SKYE RECORDING CO LTD / 40 W 55 / NY NY 10019  
PLAYABLE ON MONAURAL EQUIPMENT



The star always gets the best dressing room...

## PAYING DUES...

Yeah, man!  
She had her ass  
kicked good.



and the classiest restaurants (with rednecks  
for dinner companions)...



or with Nipsey Russell at the Waldorf of the  
Land of Freedom...

In the dark days they beat up on her soul from Harlem to Dixie. What for? Why, just for being black.

Ruth Brown paid her dues. It's the frizzly-haired truth. I ain't going into the whole pedigree, but there ain't no cause to lie or jive you or sweet-talk.

Folks who ain't suffered much can't appreciate it. Race-prejudiced dogs barked at her. Snarled. Nipped. Lickered-up honkies teased her, bad-mouthed her at gigs. When she was small they bugged her with put downs that took her mind. Those jail-house mothers did it all.

Ruth picked up on it. The Jim Crowing. The heavy sadness. Keeping her place. Getting somewhere. Recognition. Star. Miss Rhythm. They were messing with her all the time but she was getting along climbing on the side of nowhere.

She had it all together when the R & B scene turned on. She jumped in with her hat in her hand and turned it on. Musicians knew real well. She was saying something.

It seeped into her and oozes out. So when she sings, what comes out is what she feels. No more. No less. But what she feels is all of it. You know it, baby. She has a kinda "it-gets-down-to-where-you-live" thing. In my life there ain't been many that had such natural sounds.

In the beginning whitey didn't know what

she was singing about. Then some few stray cats latched on to her and what she was saying. And more folks heard her and listened and dug. Then came the hit records and the name in lights and the one-night stands.

But let's go back a minute. She comes out of the South. Portsmouth, Virginia and grew up before and during World War II. Her father was the choir director in church. She got her musical beginning there. Lavozier Lamar heard her, taught her the first 'pop' tunes. (He's still teaching talented young ones. Now he is the Director in the Y.M.C.A. in Newark, N.J.) Her father didn't like it. She was the first of 8 kids. So she started to sneak gigs at Army bases and U.S.O.'s. She worked the lunch counter at the Portsmouth U.S.O. and did shows at Langley Field and Camp Lejeune. Her mother said it was okay and cooled her dad.

Name performers heard her. Redd Foxx. Bette Roche. Ruth was moving. To Petersburg and Moe Barney's Theatre. To Detroit and the Frolics Show Bar. Chico Alvarez of Stan Kenton's Band caught her, told Lucky Millinder about her. She joined Lucky. She was 16 then. The war was slowed down. Jimmy Nottingham, Bernie Peacock and Al Grey were with the band. They looked after her, kept her straight. But she riled up Lucky one night in Washington and she was fired. Stranded.

Otis Mosely introduced her to Blanche

(continued inside...)

(continued from back cover)

Calloway, who put her to work singing at the Crystal Cavern. The bread was \$30.00 a week. But folks were hearing her, talking about her. Willis Conover dropped in one night. He called Atlantic Records, which was just starting. They told her to come up to New York.

Blanche got her booked into the Apollo on a bill with Dizzy Gillespie. The word was out on Ruth by then. The word was good. But she had no wardrobe. She bought 4 gowns at the Salvation Army and headed North. On the drive up there was a bad accident. It laid her up for months. It was part of the dues.

The hit records started with "So Long" and "Teardrops In My Eyes" and "Oh, What A Dream" and "Mama, You Treat Your Daughter Mean." Herb Lance knows about "Mama." He wrote it with Johnny Wallace (Coley's brother) and was at Atlantic when Ruth cut it. Hal Jackson shook the tambourines. The effect had something. It became part of Ruth's act. She had to join the Union to play it.

Ruth was in on the start of the whole R & B scene. She was beating the story out of her own life. The hurt in her soul was coming through. It leaped. It jumped and hollered and shouted. It reached out and took your mind.

She was a star. Miss Rhythm in lights. The big gigs began. The one-night stands. Travelling in her own Cadillac with her own band down South. It was the early '50s.

Yeah! The one-night stands and riding thru' the land of muck, the bottom and segregation and honky-tonks and red-necks and the Man. Dressing in sheds and outhouses by candlelight. In Gulfport, Miss. she tried to use the

white facilities at a gas station. The man was gonna beat up on her. The salty man and that motherin' klan. She-e-e-t! Ruth Brown was payin' her dues... by the installment plan.

In Knoxville, Tenn. at Chillo-wee Park Ruth tried to hang her gowns in a dressing room on the white level. A big, part-time cop ate her out. "You black New York bitch. Dress with the other niggers downstairs!" Ruth bit back. The man pulled a pistol. Amos Millburn, with Ruth then, pulled the man off. It started a riot. Ruth hasn't played Knoxville since.

In Bradentown, Florida. They stopped on the highway at an orange-juice stand for refreshments. She and her group were travelling in her Caddie. Her manager, Niek Zale, white, was driving. Ruth was asleep with her head resting on his shoulder. There was noise. And cussing. "Get up, you bitch!" She opened her eyes and was staring into a .12-gauge shotgun held by a red-neck. The local sheriff rode them to the city limits and told them to keep moving.

In Macon, Georgia they were doing a show at the Municipal Auditorium. The Caddie sedan with RB insignia and plates was parked outside. When Ruth got back to the car there was red paint on the seats and flour in the gas-tank. Southern hospitality.

In Birmingham, Alabama, Ruth was the first act to follow that Nat Cole riot there. She had to do two shows. One for the whites. One for the blacks. The klan marched around the theatre every minute.

In Opalocka, Florida, Ruth and her group had to stay on the road all night and sit. They were



Or a travelling motel...



and spacious closet space...



and smiles and happy talk with Billy Eckstine at 3 A.M. after 4 weeks of one-nighters...



and Southern Hospitality with strange rest room privileges...none.

out of gas. The white cracker wouldn't sell them any because she couldn't explain the Caddie and how she came by it good enough to satisfy him.

In Meridian, Miss., they stopped for gas. Charlie Brown was with her then. So was his 80-year-old grandfather. (Ruth can't remember why.) She got out to use the facilities. The owner pointed up the road to the woods and said: "Use that, nigger, but don't let the troopers see yo' ass turned up to the light or they'll shoot it off." An argument started. The law came in an open truck. Ruth isn't sure yet why they got away. She does know Charlie's grandpa took the troopers aside and talked and talked. She doesn't know what he said or did.

In New Orleans. Ruth headlined with Billy Eckstine and the Count Basie Band. The orchestra floor had 2,500 seats. 500 whites filled all the front rows. There were no blacks. The rest of the orchestra was empty. The blacks were all crowded at the rear of the stage so that they would have seen only the backs of the entertainers. When Billy came out to start the show and saw that, he put up his hand. The band turned their stands around so they faced the blacks. Their backs were turned to the whites in the audience. Ruth and Billy and the Count



and stage-struck fans...



in New York...



in Dixie...



in any dues-paying town.

did the whole show just like that.

In Gulfport, Miss. again. Joe Louis was travelling with Ruth. She got out for a drink at a gas station. The cracker screamed at her. When Joe stepped out to see what went on, the cracker recognized him and shut his own mouth. Quick. Apologized. And fixed a special pitcher of water.

Maybe some of it is passé, gone, finished. Maybe you don't hear: "Hey, bitch, what are you doing in this neighborhood?" as often. Maybe it's getting better.

But the hurt in her soul ain't ever gonna be all gone. It's all there. She's got it all together as good as any ever can and puts more into a song than most people can ever know. She's got no gimmicks. No gyrations. No gestures. She's pure.

Listen to what she does to "Yesterday." It's never been done like this. Real gospel. An R&B Ballad. The truth. And get on to "Miss Brown's Blues." It's

more than 7 minutes of the baddest feeling that'll make you feel you lived.

Yeah, man! She had her ass kicked good. Look at these photos. The living is clear. Ruth Brown has been paying her dues. Hear what she's saying. You know it's the truth.

as told to Mort Goode by  
"Cousin Herb" Lance (WIGO,  
Atlanta) and Ruth Brown

SIDE A  
YESTERDAY ..... 4:02  
PLEASE SEND ME  
SOMEONE TO LOVE ..... 2:57  
LOOKING BACK ..... 4:07  
TRY ME AND SEE ..... 2:08

SIDE B  
MISS BROWN'S BLUES ..... 7:00  
MY PRAYER ..... 3:49  
SINCE I FELL FOR YOU ..... 4:57  
THIS BITTER EARTH ..... 3:54

featuring  
HERBIE LOVELLE, drums  
ERIC GAYLE, guitar  
CHUCK RAINEY, fender  
BILLY BUTLER, guitar  
RICHARD TEE, organ  
and the HOWARD ROBERTS CHORALE

Arrangements—GARY McFARLAND  
Recorded at—A&R STUDIOS, New York, August, 1969  
Director of Recording—DAVE SANDERS  
Cover Photo and Design—RONNIE BÖNDER  
Art Director—DAVID STAHLBERG  
Produced by—BEN TUCKER and GARY McFARLAND  
Executive Producer—NORMAN SCHWARTZ



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