



B A R B A R A L E E O W E N S

Falling in love
WITH LOVE
SONGS YOU' LOVE TO HEAR, VOLUME II



Falling in love with Love ---

For those unacquainted with Barbara Stamy (or Barbara Lee Owens, as she was once known by her stage and maiden name), reading the liner notes to Volume 1 of her 2013 release entitled *Songs You Love to Hear* may provide a meaningful introduction. With such background, hopefully you will be better prepared to enjoy these long-lost tracks from her live weekly radio program broadcast on KDKA during the late 1940s. If you don't own the first album, those notes can be found on her website by visiting www.barbaraleeowens.com.

Live transcriptions were made of the shows by simultaneously “cutting” them on 16-inch acetate discs that were subsequently couriered to other radio stations for syndication via playback as a phonograph record. Twelve of these master broadcast discs survived for more than 60 years, and digitized tracks from those recordings now enable us to share some of her music with you. Barbara is accompanied by Russ Merritt on piano and celesta, and Johnny Mitchell on the organ; Paul Shannon is the announcer.

Lorenz Hart's lyrics of the title track “Falling in Love with Love” notwithstanding, Barbara has always loved people, and was never confused by any fanciful notion of love. So, despite what those lyrics might convey, the reader should know that the title of this second collection of songs in my mother's multi-volume series is just that—a catchy title.

Barbara's passion for conveying her love of people and life through music was a half century-long endeavor. Though recognized later in her career for singing oratorios, sacred, and classical music, she is best remembered as a songstress of Broadway show tunes.

It was singing music of that genre which first propelled her into the national spotlight by winning the *Wilkins Amateur Hour* contest at age 21, immediately after which she was signed by the Breakfast Cheer Coffee Company, which sponsored her radio show. Barbara's professional career spanned six decades—from the mid 1940s through the early 1990s, though even today she will break into song if requested.

To accompany this second release, and in her own words, Barbara wanted to share some comments about those she loved and loves, beginning with her husband, Lloyd F. Stamy, whom she lost in 1998.

Lloyd was everything I wasn't—savvy in business matters and knowledgeable about all things practical. He was also decisive, and most of his choices were good ones. For example, I first met him on the dance floor at the University Club, where he literally swept me off my feet—bad back and all, as I would only later find out about. That same night a girlfriend told me she had overheard Lloyd saying that he had already made up his mind that I was the one for him. That's how his courtship and our love began, and we never looked back.

His pursuit of me was immediate and relentless. Though he often would later say his approach had been "patient and persistent", that just wasn't so. His chivalry knew no bounds—lots of flowers, handwritten poetry (which I later learned he'd plagiarized and "adapted" as his own), going to fancy events, dining out and dancing. He was a marvelous dancer...and a great kisser! As to marriage, it wasn't the first time I'd been asked. Why, I even got a few proposals in the mail from total strangers who only knew my voice over the radio. But I knew, almost from the start, that Lloyd was a keeper.

My husband was steady as a rock, dependable, complex, funny, a workaholic and, predictably, a good provider and father.





He was also eighth generation Pennsylvania Dutch and the first to leave the family farms since 1694, which provides a significant clue as to what made him the man he was.

Though music was first in my heart and Lloyd will always be my only love, it is our children (and now grandchildren) who have been my real joy in life, and each one, in his or her own way, has been a daily blessing and continued source of inspiration.

According to family legend, I was conceived during the Great Thanksgiving Snow Storm of 1950, and a few months after Mom had sung in the Civic Light Opera's production of "Roberta" by Jerome Kern and Otto Harbach. Of course, little did she know then that it would be her final performance with Pittsburgh CLO (which, I suppose, was at least somewhat my fault). But thanks to my father, that would not be our family's last "connection" with the CLO, which years later staged its productions from 1959 to 1961 at the Melody Tent.

Consisting of a stainless steel quonset hut for administrative offices and ticketing, with an adjoining tent for performances, the Melody Tent was the CLO's interim venue while awaiting construction of its new home, the Civic Arena, on the same site. When that temporary venue was to be cleared to build the Arena's parking lot, and without mentioning a word about it to my mother, Dad bought the Melody Tent from the Urban Redevelopment Authority. Moreover, he purchased it for nothing, paying only the cost to have the building dismantled and hauled to his own company's site.

When my mother found out, Dad claimed he "just had to preserve a piece of her history so that she could return to the stage anytime she wanted". Truth was, he planned to re-erect it for use in his business all along, but never did, and much of it rusted away over the next 40 years until I sold it for scrap when winding-up his affairs. So, since he never confessed, we'll never know if Dad was indeed a sentimentalist or just a bargain hunter.

Long before Dad, there were other loved ones who enabled and inspired Barbara along the way, the first of whom was my grandfather, Jonathan Lee Owens. Lee, as he preferred being called, was an accountant at Ernst & Ernst before joining one of his clients, Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, to handle their tax matters. The nation was at war, and because accountants didn't make the kind of money they do now, my mother remembers that the \$3 for her weekly voice lesson was at the time an extravagance, but one that her father insisted upon. Equally supportive was my grandmother, Ruth Lucié Owens, who was always Barbara's biggest fan.

Elizabeth Henderson, a ninth grade music teacher and the first to recognize her ability, encouraged Barbara's parents to begin her serious vocal training. Though there were several with whom she studied, one of particular note was the world renowned German soprano Ria Ginster, who taught at the Music Academy of Zurich, but was in Pittsburgh for a semester as a visiting professor at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie-Mellon University). Barbara recently said of Ginster that her best advice was that she "open up the contours of her mouth and sing like a woman, not a girl". Another of Barbara's coaches was Carolyn Gray, a Pittsburgh native and later famous pianist/accompanist in her own right who moved on to NBC, then CBS in New York, where she also coached Metropolitan Opera diva Lily Pons before spending her final 32 years in Hollywood coaching and accompanying singers and actors.

Others followed, including Anne Griffiths, but the last, best, and certainly most enduring coach was Joseph E. O'Brien. Their friendship and collaboration as mentor/pupil began in the late 1940s and continued for more than 50 years. Recently, Mom so aptly defined him in one sentence: "Nobody could touch Joe; vocally, he put it all together for me." I too studied with Joe in the 1970s and early 1980s, and can attest that he was not only a gifted musician, but one of the most exceptional people I have ever been privileged to know.





It was Joe who introduced Barbara to a pianist/organist who would become her long-time accompanist and dear friend, Dorothy Jean Coar "Dot" Shearer. Barbara was Dot's Maid of Honor in 1948 and Dot was a bridesmaid in Barbara's wedding party the next year. Dot accompanied Barbara in her Pittsburgh Concert Society debut recital on February 12, 1949, and for most classical music appearances thereafter. When I was growing up, it seemed they got together all the time to rehearse something, then visit for hours on end. As Barbara fondly recalls, "we'd fool around with pop stuff from time to time just for fun, but Dot and I only performed classical music." Dot was an organist/choir director at several Pittsburgh area churches over the years and a well regarded piano teacher. Our families visited frequently, and I have vivid memories of Dot's accomplished ability when pounding the ivories of her resounding Baldwin grand piano.

With all her love and appreciation, Barbara dedicates this album to the memory of her husband, mentors and musical colleagues.

Lloyd F. Stamy, Jr.

P.S. Thanks, Mom, for your pervasive and abiding influence of music. As you probably know by now, it made all the difference in how and what I have most enjoyed in life.

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www.barbaraleeowens.com

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B A R B A R A L E E O W E N S



BARBARA LEE OWENS

1. Ev'rything I Love
2. I Love You Truly
3. Moonbeams
4. Magic is the Moonlight
5. In The Still Of The Night
6. Anniversary Song
7. Giannina Mia
8. Falling In Love With Love
9. Stars In My Eyes
10. Silver Moon
11. The Very Thought Of You
12. What Is This Thing
Called Love
13. Something To Remember
You By
14. A Tree In The Meadow

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1. Ev'rything I Love COLE PORTER (1941) (2:51)
2. I Love You Truly CARRIE JACOBS-BOND (1901) (2:14)
3. Moonbeams VICTOR HERBERT/HENRY BLOSSOM (1928) (1:02)
4. Magic Is The Moonlight CHARLES PASQUALE/MARIA GREVER (1929) (2:29)
5. In The Still Of The Night COLE PORTER (1937) (2:24)
6. The Anniversary Song AL JOLSON/SAUL CHAPLIN/IOSIF IVANOVICI (1946) (2:10)
7. Gianinna Mia RUDOLF FRIML/OTTO HARBACH (1912) (2:51)
8. Falling In Love With Love RICHARD RODGERS/LORENZ HART (1938) (2:17)
9. Stars In My Eyes DOROTHY FIELDS/FRITZ KREISLER (1936) (3:08)
10. Silver Moon DOROTHY DONNELLY/SIGMUND ROMBERG (1927) (2:06)
11. The Very Thought Of You RAY NOBLE (1934) (2:21)
12. What Is This Thing Called Love? COLE PORTER (1929) (1:11)
13. Something To Remember You By ARTHUR SCHWARTZ (1930) (3:08)
14. A Tree In The Meadow BILLY REID (1948) (2:52)

This collection of songs sung by Barbara Lee Owens Stacy in the late 1940s is the second of a multi-volume series of recordings also available for purchase in electronic format through iTunes, Amazon and other fine digital retailers.

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To order Barbara's other recordings and to learn more about *Songs You Love to Hear* from the golden age of radio, please visit her website at www.barbaraleeowens.com



