

Odetta Emulates No One; She's Developed Own Style

Name the most exciting singers to emerge in the past decade and the list must surely include the remarkable ODETTA, a musical descendant of Bessie Smith and Leadbelly, although she emulates neither, nor anyone else.

Certainly in her own field of folk music there has been no voice in recent times with such varicolored richness of sound, or so emotionally generated, as Odetta's.

Odetta is no ordinary interpretive artist. She is in no one's tradition. So individual is her style, so personal her idiom, and so rare her gift of voice that she is a phenomenon among singers, impossible to imitate.

HER APPEARANCE on stage is itself arresting, and when she immerses herself in song she has the power to overwhelm. Against her blues, work-songs, lullabies and fantasies the massive guitar slung about her shoulders rings in stunning punctuation, counterpoints and rhythms, creating a spell for a singer and audience alike.

Considering how potently the singing and song are mated in Odetta, it is surprising that she came upon folk music fortuitously and relatively late in life.

Yet, listening to her sing, one is forced to believe it inevitable that she could have found this mode of expression for herself.

FOLK MUSIC to Odetta is musical freedom.

No composer or tunesmith scored it with rigid rules of key and tempo and rests. The simple people who handed down the unwritten songs from generation to generation by rote allowed plenty of latitude for personal interpretation.

These are songs that arise from experience and grow in re-experience. In music, as in anything else, Odetta prefers finding her own way, and the songs she chooses are not necessarily those most requested by audiences but songs that mirror her own yearnings, sympathies and imaginings.

When Odetta was six her family uprooted itself from Birmingham, Ala., where she was born, and moved to Los Angeles. She had been thoroughly briefed in the fiction that it never rains in California, but on the day her family arrived it poured mightily.

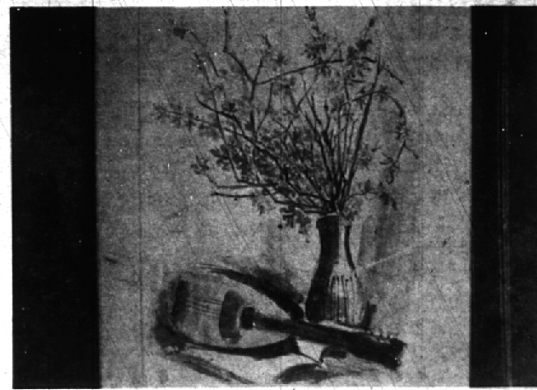
ODETTA SUDDENLY understood why the phrase "when it rains" occurred so often in the records her father collected of Lil Green, Joe Turner, Cleanhead Vinson and other great blues artists.

(See ODETTA, Page 14)



Bumbles

John Gregory, of Vanguard Playhouse, will amuse and delight children during the matinee production of "Bumbles" which is being presented during the Birmingham Arts Festival.



"Spring Sketch"

Paintings by
Jane Lorne

Will Be Exhibited During

Birmingham Arts Festival Week

at

255 North Woodward



MI 4-7720



"5 Figures"

Paintings by

Ruth Chaban

Will Be Exhibited During

Birmingham Arts Festival Week

at



142 West Maple



"Still Life"

Paintings by

Bert Fish

Will Be Exhibited During

Birmingham Arts Festival Week

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F. J. Mulholland Co.

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