

**margaret
whiting**
**the wheel
of hurt**



No one quite had a career to parallel Margaret Whiting's. Most major stars of her generation followed a pattern similar to the Great American Songbook itself: they had hit singles in their 20s and 30s, then made deeper and, generally, more artistically profound albums in their 40s and 50s, and, by the time they were in their 60s and upwards, had become elder statesmen. With Whiting, it was if much of the middle section – Act II – was missing. She was revered, by younger singers especially, as something even more than an elder stateswoman, but she was a highly accessible, super friendly, incredibly down-to-earth living legend. I've often witnessed the look on a young singer's face when she realized that Queen Margaret was



in the house – it was, indeed, like a royal audience – but Maggie’s own presence was never intimidating. She made it her business to know every singer in the jazz and cabaret rooms in New York even into the 21st century, and she inspired and encouraged all of them.

Yet one wonders, how much did they actually know about Margaret Whiting? She was a major role model to them, but compared to comparable figures from the swing and early post-war era, like Jo Stafford or Peggy Lee, singers and indeed, listeners in the last few decades of Whiting’s life had relatively few opportunities to actually listen to the full expanse of Whiting’s recorded work. The young singers who tried to impress her at



Margaret, Jo Stafford, Peggy Lee

Danny’s Skylight Room on West 46th Street undoubtedly had heard “My Ideal” or “Moonlight in Vermont,” but, unlike Stafford or Lee, there was remarkably little Maggie easily available in the long-playing era, few greatest hits anthologies and even fewer original albums. Even such seminal albums as Whiting’s two devastatingly beautiful songbooks, *Margaret Whiting Sings Rodgers and Hart* (recorded in 1947) and *Margaret Whiting Sings the Jerome Kern Songbook* (1960), were scarcely heard from after they were originally released. Whiting’s great-



ness, was, alas, something that younger singers were compelled to accept on good faith. It always seemed unfortunate that, unlike Rosemary Clooney or Doris Day, Whiting never lived long enough to see any kind of comprehensive collection of her recorded work, but she was too busy, helping everyone else as well as sustaining her own career as long as she could, to mind.

Looking over Whiting's output in the long-playing era doesn't take a whole lot of time, precisely because there is relatively little there. There are hits anthologies on Capitol, where her last chart single was "The Money Tree" in 1956 (The same year as her stellar *Sings For The Starry-Eyes* LP); moving to Dot in 1957, there were also albums like *Margaret Whiting's*



Great Hits and *Ten Top Hits*. From 1955 to 1957, Desilu Productions tried to channel the singer's popularity into a TV sitcom -- with musical numbers -- titled *Those Whiting Girls*, in which she co-starred with her younger sister Barbara -- it lasted two years and 26 episodes as a summer replacement for *I Love Lucy*.

Of all the times I interviewed Maggie, she was always most keen to talk about her breakthrough period, her salad days, the war years and the early postwar period -- especially Johnny Mercer, and how much he

contributed to her career. In 1948, Mercer officially stepped down from his position as general overseer of Capitol's pop singles, but Whiting continued to land hits – many from a surprising place. In a series of duets with singing cowboy star Jimmy Wakely, Whiting became one of the very first “mainstream” singers to infiltrate the country and western market – even before Tony Bennett sang “Cold, Cold Heart” and other Hank Williams classics.

In her 1987 memoir, *It Might As Well Be Spring*, Whiting is the first to point out that her recording career foundered away from Mercer and then Capitol. “I guess I never found the right genius to have as a manager or agent. My mother was always saying, ‘You’ve got to find the right person. You’ve got to have another Johnny Mercer to pick the right songs. You need somebody creative.’ Maybe she was right, but I didn’t want to listen to her.”



Margaret & Johnny Mercer



Nelson Riddle and Margaret

Her last Capitol singles were recorded in 1956 – after nearly 15 years with the label. In 1957, she was then approached by Randy Wood of Dot Records, who had the idea of doing more country music with Whiting – she enjoyed a minor hit with Hank Williams’ “I Can’t Help It (If I’m Still In Love With You)” for the label – and also wound up doing a very interesting jazz album (*Goin’ Places*) in the process. In 1960, she launched an arrangement with Norman Granz of Verve Records (which was summarily assimilated into MGM Records) that

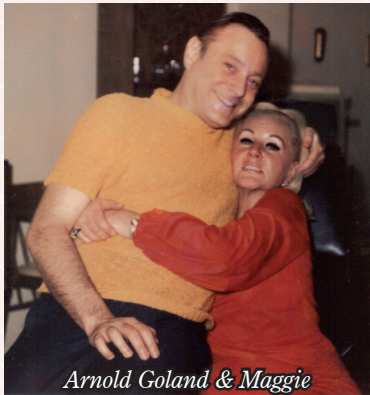
resulted in the brilliant double album of Kern (and enough material for three other albums, including a decidedly different Broadway duets set with Mel Tormé). She was mostly out of the studio for a few years, from 1961 to 1965, although she returned to Capitol for a one-off single release. Like many artists of her generation, she still had huge audiences all over the world, but the record industry wasn’t paying attention, and that, combined with the singer’s self-admitted lapse in taking care of business, meant that she was scarcely heard from during this period, record-wise. Instead, Whiting toured the night club circuit, performed in the far east and starred in stage musicals such as *Gypsy* and *Pal Joey* around the country.

Then, in late 1965, producer – composer – arranger – conductor Arnold Goland came into Whiting’s life. He was, like so many music business movers and shakers in the 1960s, a rock and roll guy who had grown up

on classic popular music and the classic American songbook. Goland and Whiting had first met in a music publisher's office when she was looking for a new arranger to do some charts, and Goland was then working as an orchestrator and conductor. She considered hiring Goland as an orchestrator, but instead, he proudly recalls, he gave her a gig and set up a record date for Whiting. He talked to the singer's manager, realized that she was at liberty (and not Liberty Records), recordings-wise, and had the not-so-nutty idea to make contemporary-style hits with a traditional pop singer. The idea wasn't quite so far-fetched: all three members of the Ratpack were frequently on the charts at the time, as were Peggy Lee, Tony Bennett, Nancy Wilson, Jack Jones, and others. After recording a handful of songs with Whiting, Goland shopped around for a label to release the finished masters. His first choice was United Artists, where he had been connected, working with producer Jack Gold (best known as the manager of Andy Williams). Gold suggested taking the project to London Records, where Walt Maguire was serving as company president. Goland remembers, "So I go up to Walt's office with the demo to see if he'd release it. Well luck has it Walt is as big a fan of Margaret's as I was."

The three principals, Goland, Gold, and Maguire, were so firmly committed to the project – re-establishing Whiting's commercial viability in the





Arnold Goland & Maggie

music world of 1966 – that even when the first single couldn't get airplay they decided to give it another try. "So we go in and we're looking for songs and looking for songs and one comes in that has a good title called 'Wheel of Hurt.' But the original [song] was terrible. So Jack and I rewrote it with permission of the writers - they're getting a record so they don't care. And that's the version Margaret recorded. And Walt put it out. Lo and behold! London releases it and 'The Wheel of

Hurt' starts to take off, but not in the pop area, in the country area. Country music was the only place in the 1960s where there was any good music." Ultimately the song hit not only the pop top thirty but went to number one on the *Billboard* easy listening chart. It's interesting to note that when radio DJs initially resisted the new Whiting record, strong jukebox play helped make it a hit.

"The Wheel of Hurt" rebooted Margaret Whiting's recording career for about five years, from 1966 to 1970, resulting in a dozen or so singles as well as three-full length albums, *The Wheel of Hurt*, *Maggie Isn't Margaret Anymore*, and *Pop Country*. For this brief period, Whiting was current - she was a contemporary artist once again, not a remnant of a previous generation who was only remembered by the parents of the present generation of record-buyers. For Whiting it was a mixed blessing, as Goland explains,

“Maggie never liked it that she had a country hit. She identified herself as a pop artist.” In fact, Whiting’s London singles were most successful with the easy listening stations, later known as “adult contemporary.”

The three Whiting London albums are divided up appropriately: *The Wheel of Hurt*, is roughly half country-style songs, including the title song, while the rest of the proceedings can be essentially described as pop. *Maggie Isn’t Margaret* is mostly all-pop, and there’s even room for a genuine standard, “I Remember You,” by Maggie’s mentor, Johnny Mercer. (*Wheel of Hurt* features a discotheque-y “Time After Time.”) *Pop Country* is, exactly as the title promises, all Nashville-oriented material, leaning heavily on country standards like “I Love You So Much It Hurts.”

As daughter Debbi Whiting points out, her mother never was in better voice. In her early to mid-40s, Whiting was at her absolute peak, which would have made it even more of a tragedy if she were entirely unable to make any records. “Now looking back at it, this was her best period, vocally. This is what is greatest about these recordings. She was in her strongest voice in these songs.”

In fact, the presence of a strong, clear voice is one of the most important elements of most of the hit records from the mid to late 1960s, a genre which is sometimes called “Producer Pop.” So many successful singles of the era are more about the producer and the production rather than the voice itself, and it makes perfect sense that many of the biggest names of the era weren’t singers at all – Herb Alpert, Sergio Mendes, Burt Bacharach – these were all bigger selling points than the names of their vocalists, like Lani Hall and Dionne Warwick – in fact, only a few hardcover pop nerds even remember the names of the vocalists with Brasil ‘66. Whiting is



completely overqualified for this job; she's more than a pretty voice, she's a major interpreter, one of the all-time best traditional pop singers out of the immediate generation that followed Sinatra. The majority of the pop-oriented recordings she made at London may not always give her a chance to do that but you can hear Whiting's superior voice on every track.

Conversely, the absolute best material of the London period – and some of the best even of her entire storied career – is the country album, even though the singer herself felt precisely the opposite. In 1949, Whiting had an unlikely hit with 'Slippin' Around,' a duet with Jimmy Wakely, one of Capitol's earliest country music stars. (In fact, "I Love You So Much It Hurts," one of the tracks on *Pop Country*, was originally one of Wakely's signature hits.) In other duets and solos in the early 1950s, Whiting established herself as a pioneer, one of the first mainstream artists to captivate the Nashville market. There would be a tradition, represented by Bing Crosby and Tony Bennett, then later Nat King Cole and Ray Charles, of non-country artists doing country songs for their own audiences, but Whiting was possibly the most successful mainstream artist to appeal to the country market itself, even garnering an honorary membership in the Grand Ole Opry.

This CD includes the complete album, *The Wheel of Hurt*, supplemented by Whiting's London single sides that didn't appear on the trio of albums. It's

rather disarming to hear Whiting tackle tunes associated with the likes of Elvis Presley and Dusty Springfield – in fact, the album is a polyglot of producer pop, country and western, and Euro-pop. It's hard to believe that Whiting would tackle the trite orchestration provided for her on the imported British jukebox hit “Winchester Cathedral,” but that novelty song is another typical product of the times. The best song, fittingly, is the one that was the hit, the titular “Wheel of Hurt,” an archetypical Nashville power ballad. “Nothing Lasts Forever,” is at least upbeat, and some of Whiting's own personal cockeyed optimism comes through. Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn's classic “Time After Time” is totally updated – it could be an arrangement for Petula Clark. (In fact, Margaret's determination to be relevant in the '60s prompted her to spend many hours listening to daughter Debbi's Petula Clark albums.)

“You Don't Have To Say You Love Me” is probably the best non-country song here. This Italian aria famously followed the familiar trajectory of originating in Europe and then becoming popular internationally with an English lyric, recorded most successfully by Dusty Springfield in the UK and Elvis Presley in the USA. Goland's “It Hurts To Say Goodbye” took the opposite route, being an American song that took off in France with a new lyric. “Nothing Lasts Forever” combines aspects of various hits by Burt Bacharach, including an odd but intriguing time signature, and Whiting certainly sings it with conviction. She's even more invested in the semi-slow



“Show Me A Man,” which is underscored by an anonymous individual (Mr. Goland himself?) who shouts, “One more time, Maggie!” as she builds to the climax, at about 2:50.

The London singles are nothing if not multicultural. The track that makes the most impression 40 plus years later is “Life Goes On,” Mikis Theodorakis’s theme from the 1969 thriller *Z*. In the tonsils of Margaret Whiting, it will remind American listeners both of “Never On Sunday” and “Life Is...” Both the message and the melody are similar to “Life Is...,” which is the main number from the Broadway version of *Zorba The Greek* – and, famously, it was Mikis Theodorakis who wrote the music for the original Greek film *Zorba*. (Pop archeologists will note the tonal and melodic similarity to the major gypsy pop hit of the period, “Those Were The Days.”)

The single that most stood out for Goland and the the two Whitings, Maggie and Debbi, is “Faithfully,” which they recorded on April 4, 1968. As Goland recalled, “We were ready to get the final take. So we take five. And the guys go out and have coffee or smoke a cigarette. And then they come back from their break. We had a lot of black guys in the orchestra. They walk in to the studio and there’s something different about them. Whoever the engineer was - I say something’s wrong in here. The mood is different. They start to play and it’s not right.. A guy walks in and he says, ‘Did you hear what just happened? Martin Luther King was just shot.’ It came over the radio. During the break the guys had already heard it. So I walk out from the booth and I talk to the guys. We still have ‘Faithfully’ and one more song to do in the session, but I say to the guys, ‘Listen guys just do a great job on this next take of “Faithfully” and we’ll go home.’ They played their hearts out on ‘Faithfully’ and then we canceled the rest of the session.”

The singer's work with Arnold Goland and London Records, though hardly resulting in "traditional" Margaret Whiting fare, was, the last truly mainstream period of her recording career. She continued to work the big rooms, and her career would later be further revived by her participation in the "4 Girls 4" touring stage show, teaming up with fellow song-



birds Rosemary Clooney, Helen O'Connell, Rose Marie and other rotating friends. But when she recorded again, it would be for niche and boutique labels aimed at a specialist audience, like Audiophile and DRG. Ironically, as Goland points out, Whiting truly never appreciated that her best work from the late 1960s – and some of the best of her entire catalog – was in the field of country and western music. The singer herself was, in fact, more perplexed than pleased by this fact, which merely goes to prove the old saw that artists themselves are not always the best judge of their own work. If Maggie were still around, I'd debate this point with her the next time I ran into her at the Carlyle or Birdland. But, ultimately, there would be no need to have that discussion. Margaret Whiting was a giant in American music, and the quality of her best work, from this or any other period, speaks for itself.

~ Will Friedwald

Will Friedwald writes about jazz and nightlife for *The Wall Street Journal*. He also is the authored books on music and popular culture, including the award-winning *A Biographical Guide To The Great Jazz And Pop Singers*, *Sinatra: The Song Is You*, *Stardust Melodies*, and *Tony Bennett: The Good Life*.



special thanks

This project is part of a promise I made to my mom to keep her music and legacy alive. I am grateful to so many who have helped me to keep that promise and I offer my special thanks to them here:

First and foremost, the Universe for bringing all these wonderful individuals together and for making the dream of reissuing Mom's London-era recordings a reality.

Arnold Goland, for believing in Margaret, and proving that she was one of the greatest singers of the 20th century.

Kathy Brown for teaching me the mantra "I CAN" and taking my dreams and running with them.

Gordon Anderson of Real Gone Music for being my Walt Maquire and teaching me so much!

Jim Pierson for his dedication to preserving this great music and believing in Mom and making the seemingly impossible possible.

Will Friedwald for his friendship with Mom, his generosity, and his words.

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Rose Marie, Holly Foster-Wells, Robert Bader, Tony Gottlieb, Larry Kerchner, Jerry Osterberg, Hughes-Kessler Consulting, Dennis Costante, Carol Roberts, and Julia Riva for their encouragement and support.

My dad, Lou Busch and my aunt Barbara Whiting Smith, for being with me ALL THE TIME!

And last, but by no means least my mom, Margaret Whiting

~Debbi Bush Whiting

For information about Margaret Whiting visit www.margaretwhiting.com
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margaret whiting

the wheel of hurt

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Produced by **JACK GOLD**

Cover photograph: **PAUL GNALI**
Color consultant: **PETER BITLISIAN**

LONDON RECORDS, INC.
539 West 52nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10001

PS 497 (also available in Mono, LL 3497)

What a pleasure to be writing the liner notes for a new Margaret Whiting Album. I have been a close friend as well as a fan of Margaret's for many years. Her father Richard Whiting was one of the greatest song writers this country has ever produced and his marvelous feeling for melody and lyric was clearly inherited by his daughter.

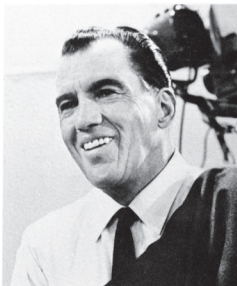
Originally a protégé of the great Johnny Mercer, Margaret Whiting emerged as one of the brightest stars in a golden age of singers, with a fantastic string of hit singles and albums that lasted for years. During the sensational run of million sellers the following songs were included: "It Might As Well Be Spring," "A Tree In The Meadow," "Far Away Places," "Moonlight In Vermont," "Guiltily," "Baby It's Cold Outside," "Come Rain Or Come Shine," "Wonderful Guy," "Let's Go To Church On Sunday." Her repertoire ranged all the way from pop songs to jazz and included sacred and country songs as well. Indeed, with Jimmy Wakely, she formed one of the most successful recording teams in country music history. Their recording of "Slippin' Around" is a classic and has sold millions.

The voice of Margaret Whiting has weathered many changes and styles of popular music. In this new Album, Margaret has been joined by two major talents; first the gifted composer-arranger Arnold Goland has supplied her with magic backgrounds that represent the best of today's musical stylings. Secondly, the Album was produced by Jack Gold who has a way with writing and selecting songs and who always gets the best performance possible out of those people involved in his projects.

Listen carefully to this Album: listen to the bright new version of "Time After Time," the brilliance of "You Don't Have To Say You Love Me," the tour de force on "Show Me A Man." Notice the deft Whiting touch on "Winchester Cathedral." Above all notice "The Wheel Of Hurt" her big hit recording and her stunning performance of "It Hurts To Say Goodbye."

...ED SULLIVAN

Noted TV Personality
and Syndicated Columnist



ED SULLIVAN

SIDE ONE

THE WHEEL OF HURT
(Bingleton, Snyder—BMI—2-40)

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY YOU LOVE ME
(Pallavicini; Wickham; Napier-Bell; Danagato—ASCAP—2-37)

THE WORLD INSIDE YOUR ARMS

(Cane; Ross—BMI—2-23)

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
(C. Stephens—ASCAP—2-45)

SOMEWHERE THERE'S LOVE

(Cane; Ross—BMI—2-30)

WHERE DO I STAND

(Roberts—ASCAP—2-37)

SIDE TWO

IT HURTS TO SAY GOODBYE

(Goland; Gold—ASCAP—2-45)

TIME AFTER TIME

(Slyne; Colan—ASCAP—2-30)

SHOW ME A MAN

(Wick; Riddie; Cantor—ASCAP—3-15)

YOU WON'T BE SORRY, BABY

(Miller; Atkins—BMI—2-21)

NOTHING LASTS FOREVER

(Udell; Gold—ASCAP—2-21)

BUT WHY

(Ballard—ASCAP—3-21)

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

PLAY THIS RECORD ONLY ON STEREOPHONIC EQUIPMENT

PS 497

THE WHEEL OF HURT

(London PS 497) 1966

1. THE WHEEL OF HURT
(Singleton/Snyder)
2. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY YOU LOVE ME
(Pallavacini/Wickham/Napier-Bell/Danaggio)
3. THE WORLD INSIDE YOUR ARMS
(Crane/Ross)
4. WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
(G. Stephens)
5. SOMEWHERE THERE'S LOVE
(Crane/Ross)
6. WHERE DO I STAND
(Roberts)
7. IT HURTS TO SAY GOODBYE
(Goland/Gold)
8. TIME AFTER TIME
(Styne/Cohn)
9. SHOW ME A MAN
(Wich/Roddie/Canton)
10. YOU WON'T BE SORRY, BABY
(Miller/Atkins)
11. NOTHING LASTS FOVEVER
(Udell/Geld)

12. BUT WHY

(Ballard)

BONUS TRACKS

13. LET'S PRETEND
(London 115) 1967
(Evans/Barnes)
14. FAITHFULLY
(London 122) 1968
(Styne/Grossman)
15. CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY MIND
(London 124) 1968
(Anka)
16. MAYBE JUST ONE MORE
(London 124) 1968
(Martin/Goland)
17. WHERE WAS I
(London 126) 1970
(Martin)
18. LOVE'S THE ONLY ANSWER
(London 126) 1970
(Gelber/Hoffer)
19. AT THE EDGE OF THE OCEAN
(London 128) 1970
(Goland/Walker)
20. LOVE HAS A WAY
(London 128) 1970
(Fox/Darrow)

21. ("Z" THEME) LIFE GOES ON

(London 132) 1970

(Theodorakis/Martin)

22. UNTIL IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO

(London 137) 1970

(Sainte Marie)

23. I'LL TELL HIM TODAY

(London 137, 1970)

(Gasman/Friberg)

24. THE WHEEL OF HURT

(German version)

(Singleton/Snyder)

25. NOTHING LASTS FOREVER

(German version)

(Udell/Geld)

ORIGINAL RECORDINGS

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