



## "Jammin' the blues"

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Mili, Gjon (1904-1984),  
director  
Hollingshead, Gordon (1892-1952),  
producer

Concert films. Jazz

Material Projectable

What a half-hour potpourri of classic jazz! This video of various sessions goes way back into the seminal jazz days, featuring such icons as Lester Young, Charlie Parker and Ella Fitzgerald who were rising stars in the '40s and '50s. The best part of this black-and-white archival collection is "Jammin' the Blues," a 1944 film made by Gjon Mili and jazz promoter Norman Granz. It's a 10-minute recreation of a late-night jazz club that Warner Bros. produced to be shown as a "short" in movie theaters before the feature rolled. Granz wanted to give exposure to the burgeoning jazz movement being born in venues that were off the entertainment beaten path. This is where the stars of the short are introduced, including tenor saxist Lester Young, trumpeter Henry "Sweets" Edison, guitarist Barney Kessel and many others. A voiceover narrator introduces the shortie: "This is a jam session" and adds, "It could be called a midnight symphony." The highlight: remarkable vocalist Marie Bryant singing the soul into the today-standard "On the Sunny Side of the Street" (composed by Sweets). In another tune, Bryant and Archie Savage cut a rug dancing to the swing in silhouette. In 1995, "Jammin' the Blues" was honored for preservation by the U.S. National Film Registry in the Library of Congress. Next up on the video: a televised spot of jazz writer Leonard Feather presenting the 1951 Down Beat jazz awards to alto saxophonist Charlie Parker and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie who then perform a killing version of "Hothouse." Other segments are less jams and more arranged for '50s television consumption when jazz was in the air. The tunes are rendered by full bands that include Stan Getz on tenor saxophone, Buddy Rich on drums, Oscar Peterson on piano and on one tune, a stretch of scatting by Ella Fitzgerald. On screen information on the names of the all-star performers is largely nonexistent, which can offer a who's-who challenge to viewers seeking to dive deeper. Dan Ouellette

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**Título:** "Jammin' the blues" produced by Gordon Hollingshead ; directed by Gjon Mili

**Editorial:** Paris, France Qwest TV 1944

**Descripción física:** 1 online resource (30 minutes)

**Duración:** 002959

**Variantes del título:** Oldies goldies - "Jammin' the blues"

**Nota general:** Title from title screen (viewed November 30, 2022)

**Intérpretes:** Lester Young, Red Callender, Harry Edison, Marlowe Morris, Sidney Catlett, Barney Kessel, Joe Jones, John Simmons, Illinois Jacquet, Marie Bryant, Archie Savage

**Lengua:** In English

**Materia:** Jazz- 1941-1950

**Autores:** Mili, Gjon ( 1904-1984), director Hollingshead, Gordon ( 1892-1952), producer

**Entidades:** Qwest TV publisher

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