

HELLO AGAIN,HANNAH. Well after forty years they recovered GATSBY (Robert Redford) from the bottom of his remarkable swimming pool and Lo, and behold, Leo Di Caprio surfaced..Debate abounds as to the good looks and acting prowess of Redford vs Di Caprio. But this is not MY issue which is THE MUSIC in the film I first discussed this in the email sent to you and is retained below. Note that I have included too the remarks of Chris Tyle a jazz historian who shares my view.

I have seen the film. It is not without fascination : the clothes (even the men's are intriguing except for DiCaprio's pink suit), the cars , about which I wrote to you earlier, the parties which are explosive (you wonder if fireworks guru George Plimpton might have orchestrated these). The Plaza scenes were disappointing: I especially missed the Palm Court where Katie and I spent many memorable occasions and was shown in the 1974 Gatsby film.

In the Gatsby novel, Fitzgerald's prose trumps the plot of the novel. What is put "in play" is what is tantamount to a documentary and what brings back audiences repeatedly decade after decade is the prospect of revisiting the exciting Roaring Twenties-The Jazz Age. Documentaries seek authenticity and this film fulfills that requirement in an otherwise period faithful manner that excludes the music, the definitive music of The Jazz Age. If you listen carefully you will hear two recordings of our boy Satch: "Saint Louis Blues" and "Ain't Misbehavin'" and there are a few bars of: "The Charleston" which would have fueled your great grandmother through her own roaring 20s and for next sixty years punctuated in 1968 by her session with Louis A.

, [Bing Crosby said it all, "Louis Armstrong is the beginning and end of music in America" And the birth of the Gatsby novel coincides with Louis's most significant beginning. He had just arrived in NYC and joined Fletcher Henderson's band briefly leaving behind in Chicago such learning listeners as Benny Goodman, Bix Beiderbecke, Gene Krupa, Eddie Condon. In NYC Louis transformed American music impacting Henderson's arrangements and Duke Ellington's music as well as the playing style of almost all musicians including, for example, Coleman Hawkins. Be assured that the wealthy white audiences of Fitzgerald's WEST EGG and EAST EGG showed up to hear and dance to Armstrong's jazz. After a little over a year in NYC he returned to Chicago to form the HOT FIVE and HOT SEVEN groups whose recordings had such an impact that if he never did anything more he would be the most significant person in jazz history.



Fitzgerald's JAZZ enthusiasm was informed considerably too by his close association with Sara and Gerald Murphy that famed couple about whom I wrote following Woody Allen's MIDNIGHT IN PARIS. Their Long Island and Riviera homes had revolving doors through which passed Cole Porter , Hemingways

Fitzgeralds and others. Fitzgerald revered them who financed his daughter Scotty's Vassar education and who were models for his "Tender is the Night" novel. They named their seagoing sailboat " Weather Bird" after the Armstrong and Hines 's greatest of all jazz duets and they stored a recording in the boat's hull. Learn more about them by googling The New Yorker: Living Well is the .Best Revenge"

A little more homage to the jazz of the Jazz Age would have enhanced the movie's legendary impact...Members of my generation have almost without exception expressed disappointment with the omission of traditional jazz. Your generation I am convinced will be so mesmerized by the pyrotechnics and by the adherence limited to period customs and costumes that will not know or ask to know about what music is missing. .

Hi, Bill,

Thanks for sharing your article and the great photo!

I agree with you 100%. I don't get the thought process behind the expense with the costumes, etc., and so-called "modern" music. Why not just do the whole thing in modern time? I suspect there's more to this than the simplistic explanation they are offering. With Hollywood there usually is - payola, favors, etc.

Cheers,
Chris

On Mon, Apr 29, 2013 at 8:39 PM, billpeverill <pevcap@gwestoffice.net> wrote:

HI HANNAH—I received your memo on The Great Gatsby film and MOSTLY I agree that it will be fun to see the people, the clothes, the ambience and the automobiles. They have gone to great lengths to establish the authenticity of the settings and the wardrobes scouring the archives of The Metropolitan Museum, Tiffany's, and Brooks Brothers. Brooks Brothers have created a Gatsby Collection which includes a Straw Boater Hat which I would like to own but probably won't (\$200).

But after all this impeccable research to create historic credibility they arrived at THIS incredible decision regarding the music:

“While we acknowledge, as Fitzgerald phrased it, ‘the Jazz Age’, and this is the period represented on the screen, we –our audience- are living in the Hip-Hop Age and want our viewers to feel the impact of modern-day music the way Fitzgerald did for the readers of his novel at the time of his publication.”

Needless to say I do not endorse this view. You can be assured that Fitzgerald and his contemporaries were heavily informed by the music which we have come to describe as “traditional jazz” and to omit it would be to rob the film of its legendary impact. I will say more on this after I actually see the film and listen to the sound track.

Meanwhile, I thought it appropriate to include here again the attached photo of your great grandmother (I never tire of viewing it) as she completes her Jazz Age Charleston dance (she loved doing it all her life) with one of the icons of that era and the rest of the century.

Love

Pipa Bill