

## Remember Anita? She's Still Belting Them Out

By SCOTT HUBBARD

"Let's pretend"—The old childhood flight of imagination was played by the big kids last week at Channel 12 in Philadelphia.

The producers of a jazz concert featuring Anita O'Day and the Monty Alexander Trio said let's pretend we're in a night club and these are the performers.

So they took lots of cellophane and made narrow fans of it from floor to ceiling and spotted colored lights on the material for changing decor.

They built a tri-level portable stage with room for a piano to one side. Almost-nightclub-small tables were scattered around. Nibbles and drinks and people gave the atmosphere.

The lights went on. Scottie, the floor technician, said he'd need a fast 3 seconds to get out of the middle of the scene. His little electronic

box started to beep. He did the disappearing act and gave the nod to Sid Mark to wing it.

And you know what, with those four camera taking shots from here and there, the whole make believe scene looked for real on the monitor.

The setting might have been fake, but the performers were true blue, dyed-in-the-wool pros.

Anita O'Day, so innovative a singer with Gene Krupa and Stan Kenton in the '40s is still a winsome, coy, cajoling, mugging one, almost too much so, until you realize it's her way of putting herself and those around her at ease. Once on stage she emerges as the iron butterfly and she is in command, a personality who revels in performing, and doing it just as well as possible each time she appears.

The trio that played with her was made up of piano, bass and drums. During a run through she startled the drummer by beating on one flat hip with the palm of her hand. Later she explained she was trying to pick up the beat, but promised wide eyed not to do it during performance.

The Los Angeles-based singer belted out Honestyucke Rose—she claims it is the most called-for song in the world—singing it straight, teasing it, skating it and, besides that, permitting her accompanists to riff at her will.

A bit of chatting with Mark, a song with the Monty Alexander Trio and she left with the audience applauding in hope she'd do just one more refrain.

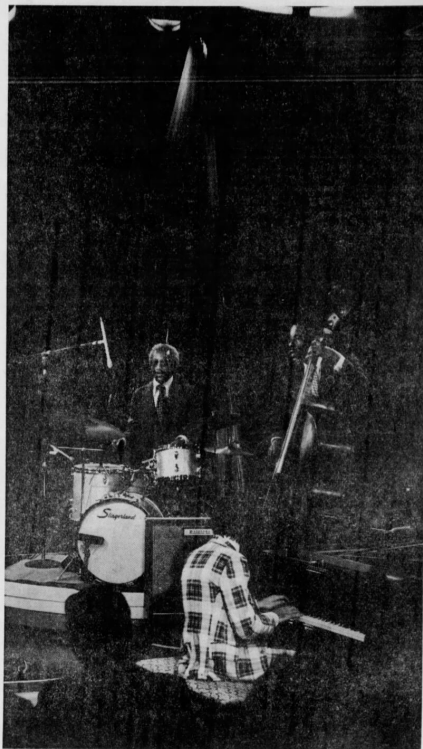
The host for the program, Mark of Jazz, Sid Mark, WWDB-FM's program director, invited viewers to pledge funds for the public service station, WHY-TV. But he urged the Monty Alexander Trio to both open and close the hour which will be shown on Channel 12 May 15 and May 18 at 7:30 p.m. during the station's fundraising week from tomorrow through May 19.

The trio-with-rapport had little trouble in providing a variety of rhythms for the audience's enjoyment. Alexander did get a little upset playing to the cameras rather than the people around the studio.

The dapper young-looking man from Jamaica, wore a superbly tailored suit of Stewart dress tartan and black dress shoes with extra heel height. Once into the music he hunches forward and the foot extending from a bony black silk-encased ankle beats with the abandon of a street urchin.

Calypsa, rhythm, blues and jazz are in his repertoire, but he feels he owes much of his piano technique to the late Nat King Cole. He enjoys experimenting with the African rhythms and says that in jazz you "bring it all together." His trio just finished cutting an album in Jamaica which is not on the market yet.

With a sweeping glissando Alexander brought the program to a close, the television lights went down and there was the audience in the drafty studio. But for an hour or so it had been transported.



O'Day demands the beat

Nice and easy