

Anything Goes Pt.1

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Jan 18, 2024

Eleanor Kane Neary emerged from Southside Chicago in the summer of 1934 playing piano in Pat Roche's Harp and Shamrock Band. They played seven days a week at the Irish Village in the city's Century of Progress World's Fair, powered by the rhythmic force of Eleanor's keyboard, and they were a wild success. She didn't simply vamp standard chords under the band's melody. This was a melodic storm that kicked away the conventions of Irish music.

Decca brought them in for two brief recording sessions in October 1934 and, a year later, in November 1935. On November 15 though they also brought Eleanor back for a solo session recording one side featuring a set including 'Morning Dew', 'Travelers' and 'Shark's Favorite Reels'. The full track lasted only 2.42 minutes and at the end of it, Irish music was no longer the same. Eleanor roared through the performance like a tornado. There are many polite and intelligent points to be made about the importance of the session but every one of them should be prefaced by the reminder that this was a 20-year-old prodigy burning down tradition and enjoying every second of it.