

= Jo Stafford =

Jo Elizabeth Stafford ( November 12 , 1917 ? July 16 , 2008 ) was an American traditional pop music singer and occasional actress , whose career spanned five decades from the late 1930s to the early 1980s . Admired for the purity of her voice , she originally underwent classical training to become an opera singer before following a career in popular music , and by 1955 had achieved more worldwide record sales than any other female artist . Her 1952 song " You Belong to Me " topped the charts in the United States and United Kingdom , the record becoming the first by a female artist to reach number one on the U.K. Singles Chart .

Born in Coalinga , California , Stafford made her first musical appearance at age twelve . While still at high school she joined her two older sisters to form a vocal trio named The Stafford Sisters , who found moderate success on radio and in film . In 1938 , while the sisters were part of the cast of Twentieth Century Fox 's production of Alexander 's Ragtime Band , Stafford met the future members of The Pied Pipers and became the group 's lead singer . Bandleader Tommy Dorsey hired them in 1939 to perform back @-@ up vocals for his orchestra .

In addition to her recordings with the Pied Pipers , Stafford featured in solo performances for Dorsey . After leaving the group in 1944 , she recorded a series of pop standards for Capitol Records and Columbia Records . Many of her recordings were backed by the orchestra of Paul Weston . She also performed duets with Gordon MacRae and Frankie Laine . Her work with the United Service Organizations ( USO ) giving concerts for soldiers during World War II earned her the nickname " G.I. Jo " . Starting in 1945 , Stafford was a regular host of the National Broadcasting Company ( NBC ) radio series The Chesterfield Supper Club and later appeared in television specials ? including two series called The Jo Stafford Show , in 1954 in the U.S. and in 1961 in the U.K.

Stafford married twice : first in 1937 to musician John Huddleston ( the couple divorced in 1943 ) ; then in 1952 to Paul Weston , with whom she had two children . She and Weston developed a comedy routine in which they assumed the identity of an incompetent lounge act named Jonathan and Darlene Edwards , parodying well @-@ known songs . The act proved popular at parties and among the wider public when the couple released an album as the Edwardses in 1957 . In 1961 , the album Jonathan and Darlene Edwards in Paris won Stafford her only Grammy Award for Best Comedy Album , and was the first commercially successful parody album . Stafford largely retired as a performer in the mid @-@ 1960s , but continued in the music business . She had a brief resurgence in popularity in the late 1970s when she recorded a cover of the Bee Gees hit , " Stayin ' Alive " as Darlene Edwards . In the 1990s , she began re @-@ releasing some of her material through Corinthian Records , a label founded by Weston . She died in 2008 in Century City , Los Angeles , and is interred with Weston at Holy Cross Cemetery , Culver City . Her work in radio , television and music is recognized by three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame .

= = Early years = =

Jo Elizabeth Stafford was born in Coalinga , California , in 1917 , to Grover Cleveland Stafford and Anna Stafford ( née York ) ? a second cousin of World War I hero Sergeant Alvin York . She was the third of four children . Both her parents enjoyed singing and sharing music with their family . Stafford 's father hoped for success in the California oil fields when he moved his family from Gainesboro , Tennessee , but worked in a succession of unrelated jobs . Her mother was an accomplished banjo player , playing and singing many of the folk songs which influenced Stafford 's later career . Anna insisted that her children should take piano lessons , but Jo was the only one among her sisters who took a keen interest in it , and through this she learned to read music .

Stafford 's first public singing appearance was in Long Beach , where the family lived when she was twelve . She sang " Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms " , a Stafford family sentimental favorite . Her second was far more dramatic . As a student at Long Beach Polytechnic High School with the lead in the school musical , she was rehearsing on stage when the 1933 Long Beach earthquake destroyed the school . With her mother 's encouragement , Stafford originally

planned to become an opera singer and studied voice as a child , taking private lessons from Foster Rucker , an announcer on California radio station KNX . Because of the Great Depression , she abandoned that idea and joined her older sisters Christine and Pauline in a popular vocal group The Stafford Sisters . The two older Staffords were already part of a trio with an unrelated third member when the act got a big booking at Long Beach 's West Coast Theater . Pauline was too ill to perform , and Jo was drafted in to take her place so they could keep the engagement . She asked her glee club teacher for a week 's absence from school , saying her mother needed her at home , and this was granted . The performance was a success , and Jo became a permanent member of the group .

The Staffords ' first radio appearance was on Los Angeles station KHJ as part of The Happy Go Lucky Hour when Jo was 16 , a role they secured after hopefuls at the audition were asked if they had their own musical accompanist ( s ) . Christine Stafford said that Jo played piano , and the sisters were hired , even though she had not previously given a public piano performance . The Staffords were subsequently heard on KNX 's The Singing Crockett Family of Kentucky , and California Melodies , a network radio show aired on the Mutual Broadcasting System . While Stafford worked on The Jack Oakie Show she met John Huddleston ? a backing singer on the programme ? and they were married in October 1937 . The couple divorced in 1943 .

The sisters found work in the film industry as backup vocalists , and immediately after graduating from high school , Jo worked on film soundtracks . The Stafford Sisters made their first recording , " Let 's Get Together and Swing " with Louis Prima , in 1936 . In 1937 , Jo worked behind the scenes with Fred Astaire on the soundtrack of A Damsel in Distress , creating the arrangements for the film , and with her sisters she arranged the backing vocals for " Nice Work If You Can Get It " . Stafford said that her arrangement had to be adapted because Astaire had difficulty with some of the syncopation . In her words : " The man with the syncopated shoes couldn 't do the syncopated notes " .

= = The Pied Pipers = =

By 1938 , the Staffords were involved with Twentieth Century Fox 's production of Alexander 's Ragtime Band . The studio brought in many vocal groups to work on the film , including The Four Esquires , The Rhythm Kings and The King Sisters , who began to sing and socialized between takes . The Stafford Sisters , The Four Esquires and The Rhythm Kings became a new vocal group called The Pied Pipers . Stafford later said , " We started singing together just for fun , and these sessions led to the formation of an eight @-@ voice singing group that we christened ' The Pied Pipers ' " . The group consisted of eight members , including Stafford ? John Huddleston , Hal Hooper , Chuck Lowry , Bud Hervey , George Tait , Woody Newbury , and Dick Whittinghill .

As The Pied Pipers , they worked on local radio and movie soundtracks . When Alyce and Yvonne King threw a party for their boyfriends ' visit to Los Angeles , the group was invited to perform . The King Sisters ' boyfriends were Tommy Dorsey 's arrangers Axel Stordahl and Paul Weston , who became interested in the group . Weston said the group 's vocals were unique for its time and that their vocal arrangements were much like those for orchestral instruments .

Weston persuaded Dorsey to audition the group in 1938 , and the eight drove together to New York City . Dorsey liked them and signed them for ten weeks . After their second broadcast , the sponsor ? visiting from overseas ? heard the group sing " Hold Tight ( Want Some Seafood Mama ) " . Until this point , the sponsor knew only that he was paying for Dorsey 's program and that its ratings were very good ; transcription discs mailed to him by his advertising agency always arrived broken . He thought that the performance was terrible , and pressured the advertising agency representing his brand to fire the group . They stayed in New York for several months , landing one job that paid them \$ 3 @.@ 60 each , and they recorded some material for RCA Victor Records . Weston later said that he and Stordahl felt responsibility for the group , since Weston had arranged their audition with Dorsey . After six months in New York and with no work there for them , The Pied Pipers returned to Los Angeles , where four of their members left the group to seek regular employment . Shortly afterwards , Stafford received a telephone call from Dorsey , who told her he wished to hire

the group , but wanted only four of them , including Stafford . After she agreed to the offer the remaining Pied Pipers ? Stafford , Huddleston , Lowry and Wilson ? traveled to Chicago in 1939 . The decision led to success for the group , especially Stafford , who featured in both collective and solo performances with Dorsey 's orchestra .

When Frank Sinatra joined the Dorsey band , The Pied Pipers provided backing vocals for his recordings . Their version of " I 'll Never Smile Again " topped the Billboard Chart for twelve weeks in 1940 and helped to establish Sinatra as a singer . Stafford , Sinatra , and The Pied Pipers toured extensively with Dorsey during their three years as part of his orchestra , giving concerts at venues across the United States . Stafford made her first solo recording ? " Little Man with a Candy Cigar " ? in 1941 , after Dorsey agreed to her request to record solo . Her public debut as a soloist with the band occurred at New York 's Hotel Astor in May 1942 . Bill Davidson of Collier 's magazine reported in 1951 that because Stafford weighed in excess of 180 lb , Dorsey was reluctant to give her a leading vocal role in his orchestra , believing she was not sufficiently glamorous for the part . However , Peter Levinson 's 2005 biography of Dorsey offers a different account . Stafford recalls that she was overweight , but Dorsey didn 't try hiding her because of it .

In November 1942 , The Pied Pipers had a disagreement with Dorsey when he fired Clark Yocum ? a guitarist and vocalist who had replaced Billy Wilson in the line up ? when he mistakenly gave the bandleader misdirections at a railroad station in Portland , Oregon . The remaining three members then quit in an act of solidarity . At the time the number one song in the United States was " There Are Such Things " by Frank Sinatra and The Pied Pipers . Sinatra also left Dorsey that year . Following their departure from the orchestra , The Pied Pipers played a series of vaudeville dates in the Eastern United States ; when they returned to California , they were signed to appear in the 1943 Universal Pictures movie Gals Incorporated . From there , they joined the NBC Radio show " Bob Crosby and Company " . As well as working with Bob Crosby , they also appeared on radio shows hosted by Sinatra and Johnny Mercer , and were one of the first groups signed to Mercer 's new label , Capitol Records , which was founded in 1942 . Weston ? who left Dorsey 's band in 1940 to work with Dinah Shore ? became music director at Capitol .

= = Solo career = =

= = = Capitol Records and United Service Organization = = =

While Stafford was still working for Dorsey , Johnny Mercer told her , " Some day I 'm going to have my own record company , and you 're going to record for me . " She subsequently became the first solo artist signed to Capitol after leaving the Pied Pipers in 1944 . A key figure in helping Stafford to develop her solo career was Mike Nidorf , an agent who first heard her as a member of the Pied Pipers while he was serving as a Captain with the United States Army . Having previously discovered artists such as Glenn Miller , Artie Shaw , and Woody Herman , Nidorf was impressed by Stafford 's voice , and contacted her when he was demobilized in 1944 . After she agreed to let him represent her , he encouraged her to reduce her weight and arranged a string of engagements that raised her profile , and confidence .

The success of Stafford 's solo career led to a demand for personal appearances , and from February 1945 she embarked on a six @-@ month residency at New York 's La Martinique nightclub . Her performance was well @-@ received ? an article in the July 1945 edition of Band Leaders magazine described it as " sensational " ? but Stafford did not enjoy singing before live audiences , and it was the only nightclub venue she ever played . Speaking about her discomfort with live performances , Stafford told a 1996 interview with The New Yorker 's Nancy Franklin , " I 'm basically a singer , period , and I think I 'm really lousy up in front of an audience ? it 's just not me . "

Stafford 's tenure with the United Service Organizations ( USO ) during World War II ? which often saw her perform for soldiers stationed in the U.S. ? led to her acquiring the nickname " G.I. Jo " . On returning from the Pacific theater , a veteran told Stafford that the Japanese would play her records

on loudspeakers in an attempt to make the U.S. troops homesick enough to surrender . She replied personally to all the letters she received from servicemen . Stafford was a favorite of many servicemen during both World War II and the Korean War ; her recordings received extensive airplay on the American Forces radio and in some military hospitals at lights @-@ out . Stafford 's involvement with servicemen led to an interest in military history and a sound knowledge of it . Years after World War II , Stafford was a guest at a dinner party with a retired naval officer . When the discussion turned to a wartime action off Mindanao , the officer tried to correct Stafford , who held to her point . He countered her by saying , " Madame , I was there " . A few days after the party , Stafford received a note of apology from him , saying he had re @-@ read his logs and that she was correct .

= = = Chesterfield Supper Club , duets , and Voice of America = = =

Beginning on December 11 , 1945 , Stafford hosted the Tuesday and Thursday broadcasts of NBC musical variety radio program The Chesterfield Supper Club . On April 5 , 1946 , the entire cast , including Stafford and Perry Como , participated in the first commercial radio broadcast from an airplane . The initial plan was to use the stand @-@ held microphones used in studios but when these proved to be problematic , the cast switched to hand @-@ held microphones , which because of the plane 's cabin pressure became difficult to hold . Three flights were made that day ; a rehearsal in the afternoon , then two in the evening ? one for the initial 6 : 00 pm broadcast and another at 10 : 00 pm for the West Coast broadcast .

Stafford moved from New York to California in November 1946 , continuing to host Chesterfield Supper Club from Hollywood . In 1948 , she restricted her appearances on the show to Tuesdays , and Peggy Lee hosted the Thursday broadcasts . Stafford left the show when it was expanded to 30 minutes , making her final appearance on September 2 , 1949 . She returned to the program in 1954 ; it ended its run on NBC Radio the following year . During her time with Chesterfield Supper Club , Stafford revisited some of the folk music she had enjoyed as a child . Weston , her conductor on the programme , suggested using some of the folk music for the show . With her renewed interest in folk tunes came an interest in folklore ; Stafford established a contest to award a prize to the best collection of American folklore submitted by a college student . The annual Jo Stafford Prize for American Folklore was handled by the American Folklore Society , with the first prize of \$ 250 awarded in 1949 .

Stafford continued to record . She duetted with Gordon MacRae on a number of songs . In 1948 , their version of " Say Something Sweet to Your Sweetheart " sold over a million copies . The following year , they repeated their success with " My Happiness " , and Stafford and MacRae recorded " Whispering Hope " together . Stafford began hosting a weekly program on Radio Luxembourg in 1950 ; working unpaid , she recorded the voice portions of the shows in Hollywood . At the time , she was hosting Club Fifteen with Bob Crosby for Columbia Broadcasting System ( CBS ) radio .

Weston moved from Capitol to Columbia Records and , in 1950 , Stafford followed suit . Content and very comfortable working with him , Stafford had had a clause inserted in her contract with Capitol stating that if Weston left that label , she would automatically be released from her obligations to them . When that happened , Capitol wanted Stafford to record eight more songs before December 15 , 1950 , and she found herself in the unusual situation of simultaneously working for two competing record companies , an instance that was very rare in an industry where musicians were seen as assets . In 1954 , Stafford became the second artist after Bing Crosby to sell 25 million records for Columbia . She was presented with a diamond @-@ studded disc to mark the occasion .

In 1950 , Stafford began working for Voice of America ( VOA ) , the U.S. government broadcaster transmitting programmes overseas to undermine the influence of communism . She presented a weekly show that aired in Eastern Europe , and Collier 's magazine published an article about the program in its April 21 , 1951 issue that discussed her worldwide popularity , including in countries behind the Iron Curtain . The article , titled " Jo Stafford : Her Songs Upset Joe Stalin " , earned her

the wrath of the U.S. Communist Daily Worker newspaper , which published a column critical of Stafford and VOA .

= = = Marriage to Paul Weston and later career = = =

Although Weston and Stafford had known each other since their introduction at the King Sisters ' party , they did not become romantically involved until 1945 , when Weston traveled to New York to see Stafford perform at La Martinique . They were married in a Roman Catholic ceremony on February 26 , 1952 , before which Stafford converted to Catholicism . The wedding was conducted at St Gregory 's Catholic Church in Los Angeles by Father Joe Kearney , a former guitarist with the Bob Crosby band who left the music business , trained as a priest and served as head of the Catholic Labor Institute . The couple left for Europe for a combined honeymoon and business trip : Stafford had an engagement at the London Palladium . Stafford and Weston had two children : Tim was born in 1952 , and Amy in 1956 . Both children followed their parents into the music industry . Tim Weston became an arranger and producer who took charge of Corinthian Records , his father 's music label , and Amy Weston became a session singer , performing with a trio , Daddy 's Money , and singing in commercials .

In the 1950s , Stafford had a string of popular hits with Frankie Laine , six of which charted . Their duet of the Hank Williams song " Hey Good Lookin ' " made the top ten in 1951 . She had her best @-@ known hits ? " Jambalaya " , " Shrimp Boats " , " Make Love to Me " , and " You Belong to Me " ? around this time . " You Belong to Me " was Stafford 's biggest hit , topping the charts in the United States and the United Kingdom . In the U.K. , it was the first song by a female singer to top the chart . The record first appeared on U.S. charts on August 1 , 1952 , and remained there for 24 weeks . In the U.K. , it entered the charts on November 14 , 1952 , at number 12 , reached number one on January 16 , 1953 , and stayed on the charts for 19 weeks . In a July 1953 interview , Paul Weston said his wife 's big hit was really the " B " side of the single " Pretty Boy " , which both Weston and Columbia Records believed would be the big seller .

Stafford hosted the 15 @-@ minute The Jo Stafford Show on CBS @-@ TV from 1954 to 1955 , with Weston as her conductor and music arranger . She appeared on NBC 's Club Oasis in 1958 , and on the American Broadcasting Company ( ABC ) series The Pat Boone Chevy Showroom in 1959 . In the early 1960s , Stafford hosted a series of television specials called The Jo Stafford Show , which were centered around music . The shows were produced in England and featured British and American guests including Claire Bloom , Stanley Holloway , Ella Fitzgerald , Mel Tormé , and Rosemary Clooney .

Both Stafford and Weston returned to Capitol in 1961 . During her second stint at Capitol , Stafford also recorded for Sinatra 's label Reprise Records . The albums issued by Reprise were released between 1961 and 1964 , and were mostly remakes of songs from her past . Sinatra sold Reprise to Warner Brothers in 1963 , and they retargeted the label at a teenage audience , letting go many of the original artists who had signed up with Sinatra . In late 1965 , both Stafford and Weston signed to Dot Records .

= = Comedy performances = =

During the 1940s , Stafford briefly performed comedy songs under the name " Cinderella G. Stump " with Red Ingle and the Natural Seven . In 1947 , she recorded a hillbilly @-@ style parody of " Temptation " , pronouncing its title " Tim @-@ tayshun " . Stafford created Stump after Weston suggested her for the role when Ingle said his female vocalist was unavailable for the recording session . After meeting Ingle at a recording studio she gave an impromptu performance . The speed of her voice was intentionally increased for the song , giving it the hillbilly sound , and the listening public did not initially know that her voice was on the record . Because it was a lighthearted , impromptu performance and she accepted the standard scale pay , Stafford waived all royalties from the record . Stafford , along with Ingle and Weston , made a personal appearance tour in 1949 , and she performed " Temptation " as Cinderella G. Stump . Stafford and Ingle performed the song on

network television in 1960 for Startime . Stafford recorded a second song with Ingle in 1948 . " The Prisoner of Love 's Song " was a parody of " Prisoner of Love " , and featured in an advertisement for Capitol releases in the January 8 , 1949 edition of Billboard magazine .

Throughout the 1950s , Stafford and Weston entertained party guests by performing skits in which they impersonated a poor lounge act . Stafford sang off @-@ key in a high pitched voice and Weston played songs on the piano in unconventional rhythms . Weston began his impression of an unskilled pianist in or around 1955 , assuming the guise " when things got a little quiet , or when people began taking themselves too seriously at a Hollywood party . " He put on an impromptu performance of the act the following year at a Columbia Records sales convention in Key West , Florida , after hearing a particularly bad hotel pianist . The audience was very appreciative of his rendition of " Stardust " , particularly Columbia executives George Avakian and Irving Townsend , who encouraged Weston to make an album of such songs . Avakian named Weston 's character Jonathan Edwards , for the 18th century Calvinist preacher of the same name , and asked him to record under this alias . Weston worried that he might not be able to find enough material for an entire album , and he asked his wife to join the project . Stafford named her off @-@ key vocalist persona Darlene Edwards .

Stafford 's creation of Darlene Edwards had its roots in the novelty songs that Mitch Miller , the head of Columbia 's artists and repertoire department , had been selecting for her to sing . These included songs such as " Underneath the Overpass " , and because she did not agree with Miller 's music choices for her , Stafford and her studio musicians often recorded their own renditions of the music , performing the songs according to their feelings about them . Because she had some unused studio time at a 1957 recording session , as a joke Stafford recorded a track as Darlene Edwards . Those who heard bootlegs of the recording responded positively , and later that year , Stafford and Weston recorded an album of songs as Jonathan and Darlene , entitled The Piano Artistry of Jonathan Edwards .

As a publicity stunt , Weston and Stafford claimed that Jonathan and Darlene Edwards were a New Jersey lounge act which they had discovered , and denied any personal connection . This ruse led to much speculation about the Edwardses ' identities . In an article titled Two Right Hands in September 1957 , Time magazine reported that some people believed the performers were Harry and Margaret Truman , but the same piece identified Weston and Stafford as the Edwardses . In 1958 , Stafford and Weston appeared as the Edwardses on Jack Benny 's television program Shower of Stars , and in 1960 on The Garry Moore Show . The Piano Artistry of Jonathan Edwards was followed up with an album of popular music standards , Jonathan and Darlene Edwards in Paris , which was released in 1960 and won that year 's Grammy Award for Best Comedy Album . The Academy issued two awards for the category that year ; Bob Newhart also received an award for " Spoken Word Comedy " for his album The Button @-@ Down Mind Strikes Back ! The Grammy was Stafford 's only major award .

The couple continued to release comedy albums for several years , and in 1977 released a cover of the Bee Gees ' " Stayin ' Alive " as a single , with an Edwards interpretation of Helen Reddy 's " I Am Woman " as its " B " side . The same year also saw a brief resurgence in the popularity of Jonathan and Darlene albums when their cover of " Carioca " was featured as the opening and closing theme to The Kentucky Fried Movie . Their last release , Darlene Remembers Duke , Jonathan Plays Fats , was issued in 1982 . To mark the occasion , an interview with Stafford and Weston ? in which they assumed the persona of the Edwardses ? appeared in the December 1982 edition of Los Angeles Magazine .

= = Retirement and later life = =

In 1959 , Stafford was offered a contract to perform at Las Vegas , but declined it to concentrate on her family life . Because she disliked continuously traveling for television appearances that took her away from her children , and no longer found the music business fun , she went into semi @-@ retirement in the mid @-@ 1960s . She retired fully in 1975 . Except for the Jonathan and Darlene Edwards material , and re @-@ recording her favorite song " Whispering Hope " with her daughter

Amy in 1978 , Stafford did not perform again until 1990 , at a ceremony honoring Frank Sinatra . The Westons devoted more time to Share Inc . ? a charity aiding people with developmental disabilities ? in which they had been active for many years . In or around 1983 , Concord Records tried to persuade Stafford to change her mind and come out of retirement , but although an album was planned , she did not feel she would be satisfied with the finished product , and the project was shelved .

Stafford won a breach @-@ of @-@ contract lawsuit against her former record label Columbia in the early 1990s . Because of a clause concerning the payment of royalties in her contract , she secured the rights to all of the recordings she made with the company , including those Weston and she made as Jonathan and Darlene Edwards . After the lawsuit was settled , Stafford and her son Tim reactivated Corinthian Records , which Weston ? a devout Christian ? had started as a label for religious music in the 1970s , and they began releasing some of her old material .

In 1996 , Paul Weston died of natural causes ; Stafford continued to operate Corinthian Records . In 2006 , she donated the couple 's library ? including music arrangements , photographs , business correspondence and recordings ? to the University of Arizona . Stafford began suffering from congestive heart failure in October 2007 , from which she died aged 90 on July 16 , 2008 . She was buried with her husband at the Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City , California .

= = Style , awards , and recognition = =

Stafford was admired by critics and the listening public for the purity of her voice , and was considered one of the most versatile vocalists of her era . Peter Levinson said that she was a coloratura soprano , whose operatic training allowed her to sing a natural falsetto . Her style encompassed a number of genres , including big band , ballads , jazz , folk and comedy . The music critic Terry Teachout described her as " rhythmically fluid without ever sounding self @-@ consciously ' jazzy ' " , while Rosemary Clooney said of her , " The voice says it all : beautiful , pure , straightforward , no artifice , matchless intonation , instantly recognizable . Those things describe the woman too . " Writing for the New York Sun , Will Friedwald described her 1947 interpretation of " Haunted Heart " as " effective because it 's so subtle , because Stafford holds something back and doesn 't shove her emotion in the listener 's face . " Nancy Franklin described Stafford 's version of the folk song " He 's Gone Away " as " wistful and tender , as if she had picked up a piece of clothing once worn by a loved one and begun singing . " Frank Sinatra said , " It was a joy to sit on the bandstand and listen to her " . The singer Judy Collins has cited Stafford 's folk recordings as an influence on her own musical career . The country singer Patsy Cline was also inspired by Stafford 's work .

In their guise of Jonathan and Darlene Edwards , Weston and Stafford earned admiration from their show business peers . The pianist George Shearing was a fan and would play " Autumn in New York " in the style of Edwards if he knew the couple were in the audience . Ray Charles also enjoyed their performance . Art Carney ? who played Ed Norton in the comedy series The Honeymooners ? once wrote the Edwardses a fan letter as Norton . However , not everybody appreciated the Edwards act . Mitch Miller blamed the couple 's 1962 album Sing Along With Jonathan and Darlene Edwards for ending his sing @-@ along albums and television show , while in 2003 , Stafford told Michael Feinstein that the Bee Gees had disliked the Edwards ' version of " Stayin ' Alive " .

In 1960 , Stafford said there were good and bad points to working closely with Weston . His knowledge of her made it easy for him to arrange her music , but sometimes it caused difficulties . Weston knew Stafford 's abilities and would write or arrange elaborate music because he knew she was capable of performing it . She also said she did not believe she could perform in Broadway musicals because she thought her voice was not powerful enough for stage work . In 2003 , she recalled that there was often limited rehearsal time before she recorded a song , and how Weston would sometimes slip musical arrangements under the bathroom door as she was in the bath getting ready to go to the studio .

Her work in radio , television and music is recognized by three stars on the Hollywood Walk of

Fame . In 1952 , listeners of Radio Luxembourg voted Stafford their favorite female singer . The New York Fashion Academy named her one of the Best Dressed Women of 1955 . Songbirds magazine has reported that , by 1955 , Stafford had amassed more worldwide record sales than any other female artist , and that she was ranked fifth overall . She was nominated in the Best Female Singer category at the 1955 Emmy Awards . She won a Grammy for Jonathan and Darlene Edwards in Paris , and The Pied Pipers ' recording of " I 'll Never Smile Again " was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1982 , as was Stafford 's version of " You Belong to Me " in 1998 . She was inducted into the Big Band Academy of America 's Golden Bandstand in April 2007 . Stafford and Weston were founding members of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences .

Stafford 's music has been referenced in popular culture . Her recording of " Blues in the Night " features in a scene of James Michener 's novel The Drifters ( 1971 ) , while a Marine Corps Sergeant Major in Walter Murphy 's The Vicar of Christ ( 1979 ) hears a radio broadcast of her singing " On Top of Old Smoky " shortly before a battle in Korea . Commenting on the latter reference for his 1989 book Singers and the Song ? which includes a chapter about Stafford ? the author Gene Lees says it " somehow sets Stafford 's place in the American culture . You 're getting pretty famous when your name turns up in crossword puzzles ; you are woven into a nation 's history when you turn up in its fiction . "

= = Politics = =

Stafford was a Democrat , supporting John F. Kennedy for president in 1960 .

= = Discography = =

= = Film and television = =

Stafford appeared in films from the 1930s onwards , including Alexander 's Ragtime Band . Her final on @-@ screen appearance was in the Frank Sinatra tribute Sinatra 75 : The Best Is Yet to Come in 1990 . She declined several offers of television work because she was forced to memorize scripts ( as she was unable to read the cue cards without her glasses ) , and the bright studio lights caused her discomfort .

= = Publications = =

Stafford , Jo ( 1951 ) . Easy Lessons in Singing with Hints for Vocalists . Carl Fischer .  
Weston , Paul ; Stafford , Jo ; Pawlak , Keith ( 2012 ) . Song of the Open Road : an Autobiography and Other Writings . BearManor Media . ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 59393 @-@ 287 @-@ 9 .

= = Listen = = =

Interview by KUOW @-@ FM 's Amanda Wilde

Jo Stafford and Nelson Eddy 1951 mp3 recordings and information at maceddy.com / blog site