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BY NATE CHINEN

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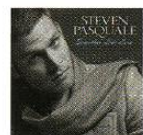


jazztimes.com

for a sultry "If I Had You," and Norah Jones, on hand for some delightfully playful sparring on "Baby, It's Cold Outside." Still, Nelson best flies solo, whether merrily gliding through "Fly Me to the Moon" or descending to the gloomily reflective depths of "Angel Eyes," bringing richer inscrutability to that incomparable exit line, "Excuse me while I disappear," than any artist before him.

STEVEN PASQUALE

Somethin' Like Love (PS Classics)



Steven Pasquale and Jessica Molaskey first collaborated in 2002, castmates in the too-brief Lincoln Center run of the musical *A Man of No Importance*. Now they're reunited, sort of. As Pasquale, best known these days as firefighter Sean Garrity on the hit TV series *Rescue Me*, wades into the Great American Songbook for his debut album, he has corralled Molaskey as co-producer (along with her husband, John Pizzarelli).

Disappointingly, Molaskey doesn't appear on any of the dozen tracks. Fortunately, Pizzarelli does, providing placid backing on guitar,

alongside brother Martin on bass, Tony Tedesco on drums, Larry Fuller and Tony Monte sharing piano duties and Marcus Parsley raising a gorgeously muted trumpet. Though Pasquale has been likened to the young Chet Baker, he is neither as fragile nor as haunted. His light baritone and charming manner more strongly suggest the romantic sophistication of, say, Ivor Novello or Fred Astaire. He eases into the likes of Gershwin ("They All Laughed," "Summertime") and Loesser ("If I Were a Bell," "The Lady's in Love With You," "I Wish I Didn't Love You So") with cashmere elegance.

But the standout is the sole new tune, "Somethin' Like Love," crafted for him by Molaskey and Pizzarelli. A fine example of the pair's flair for Cole Porter-esque list songs, it sways as gently, and invitingly, as an oceanfront porch swing on a cloudless summer afternoon.

JANET PLANET

Of Thee I Sing (Stellar!)



Inspired by Barack Obama's promise of change, veteran jazz vocalist and educator Janet Planet entered a studio late last year to map a

cross-country musical tour and celebration of America. With drummer Danny Lueck, bassist John Gibson, pianist John Harmon, guitarist Tom Theabo and saxophonist Tom Washatka along for the ride, the venerable Planet carves a jaunty path from east to west.

Co-arrangers Harmon, Theabo and Washatka prove uniformly adept at making long-familiar destinations sound fresh and new, particularly on a butter-soft "Manhattan," a delectably sensual "My Kind of Town" and a dreamy, slow-chuggin' "Chattanooga Choo Choo." Still, as on most road trips, unexpected side excursions—a rapid-fire "Gary, Indiana," a loping "Song of Wyoming" (in tribute to Planet's home state), Scott McKenzie's sanguine "Summer of Love" anthem "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)" and the obscure Ralph Blane-Kay Thompson confection "Love on a Greyhound Bus"—prove equally delightful.

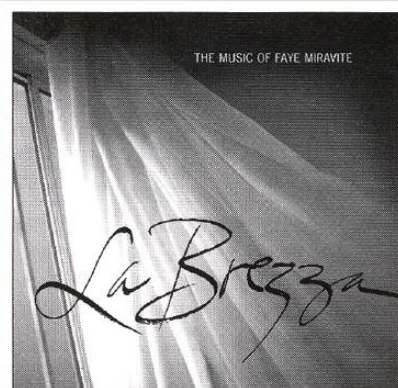
JACKIE RYAN

Doozy (Open Art)



Last we heard from Irish-Mexican enchantress Jackie Ryan, she of the flawless contralto and towering three-and-a-half octave range, was the exemplary *You and the Night and the Music*, recorded in Hollywood in April 2006. Turns out, though, that only four months passed before Ryan was back in the studio (this time at Dae Bennett's New Jersey facilities) with bassist Ray Drummond, drummer Carl Allen and "special guests" Cyrus Chestnut, Romero Lubambo, Eric Alexander and Jeremy Pelt to begin work on what would become this aptly titled double album. For reasons unexplained, the sessions, transferred west to L.A. with Dezron Douglas and Neal Smith subbing for Drummond and Allen, didn't resume until January 2008. Now, more than an additional year and a half later, the full, bi-coastal slate of 20 tracks is finally available.

Suggesting Sarah Vaughan filtered through Natalie Cole, the marvelously dexterous Ryan soars to new heights as she bonds seamlessly with her elite companions. Whether softly tracing the relentless heartache of "I Haven't Got Anything Better to Do," slinking through a wickedly fine "Tell Me More and More and Then Some," or plumbing the soul-deep devotion of "Solamente Una Vez," she reconfirms her place among the all-time greats. **JT**



"Faye Miravite has created a world of jazz that has Italian, Philippine and even Brazilian roots. The overall sound is very rich due in big part to the many players on the record. You hear piano, drums, vocals, guitar, soprano & tenor sax along with contrabass. The entire album encompasses a feeling of worldly value; a quality that seemed to be very well-polished throughout. The overall listen is worldly, easy listening jazz that offers energy, romanticism, sophistication and one great group of musicians. Feel the calm & cool breeze for yourself!"

—*Skopec Magazine*

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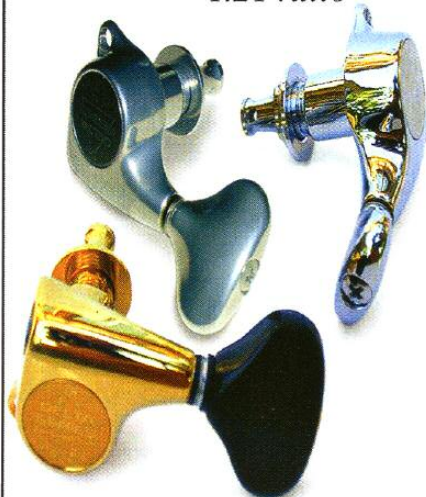
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NEW ISSUES

JANET PLANET OF THEE I SING

STELLAR 1021

*RHODE ISLAND IS FAMOUS FOR
YOU / MANHATTAN / OLD CAPE
COD / MOONLIGHT IN VERMONT
/ LOVE ON A GREYHOUND
BUS / WAY DOWN YONDER IN
NEW ORLEANS / MY KIND OF
TOWN (CHICAGO IS) / GARY,
INDIANA / SONG OF WYOMING
/ CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO
/ HOME ON THE RANGE / DEEP
IN THE HEART OF TEXAS / (GET
YOUR KICKS ON) ROUTE 66 /
SAN FRANCISCO (BE SURE TO
WEAR FLOWERS IN YOUR HAIR).*

49:52.

Planet, vcl; John Harmon, p,
arr; Tom Theabo, g, arr; Tom
Washatka, ts, arr; John Gibson, b;
Danny Lueck, d. 12/8, 9, 14, 15/08,
Oshkosh, WI.

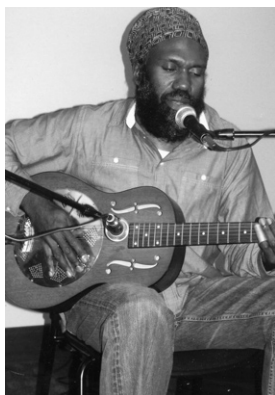
comes on “Abschied vom hochbett” when bass and drums cut out and Wember and Klaus Heidenreich trade fours, alternating blowing lead and riffing in the background. Elsewhere the joys of the session come from Wember’s skills at interlocking the horn lines, achieving rich, at times clashing harmonies. He often employs Braun’s bass as a third voice. Drummer Silvio Morger serves as the percussion second, laying down subtle grooves and coloring the session. Drawing on contemporary classical language as much as on Jazz, Wember and Hornstrom have created a distinctive, satisfying session.

David Dupont

Pitch Perfect Planet traverses our continent by train (“Choo Choo”), bus (“Greyhound”), and in what we must now take to be a congressionally sanctioned Chevy (“Route 66”), celebrating the “American spirit,” having been inspired, she says, by “the energy and excitement of the 2008 presidential campaign.” You may make of that what you like, but you’d do well to follow her as she rambles east (“Rhode Island”) to west (“San Francisco”), encountering only minor bumps (see below) in the road. Along the way, she defies expectation by refurbishing both “Manhattan” and “My Kind” as ballads, exploring the innards of both their lyrics and melodic lines. In her way, she renews both songs and reveals hidden depths in their respective designs. Her repertorial choices can surprise, as, for example, when she rescues “Wyoming” from country/western oblivion and proves that “Range” is much better than the average campfire song. Having proved as much, however, one might wish she had not tried to up the ante with “Texas,” which does not lend itself to the same degree of deliverance. And, didn’t Patti Page open and close the book on “Cod” in the late ‘50s? Then, too, “Wear Flowers” is another questionable selection—just an ironically grim reminder of our blind late ‘60s innocence, written by John Phillips (of Mamas and Papas fame) for the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival, where it might just as well have been left behind with the festival debris to be plowed under, after the flower children went back to their communes. It would seem that Ms. P. was taking pains to avoid leaving her heart in the city by the bay, but one can’t help but think that Peggy Lee’s “San Francisco Blues,” to offer just one offhand suggestion, might have been a better vehicle, if, indeed, a S.F. tune had to be included.

Still, Janet Planet is such an exemplary vocal artiste that any-thing she graces with her vocal chords benefits, and her ravishing

NEW ISSUES



Corey Harris by Jimmie Jones

MT. HOOD JAZZ BAND + COMBOS 2008 DOIN' THE BEST DEEDS SEA BREEZE 4583

"Way Down Yonder," which she prefaces with the seldom heard verse, reminded me of Dinah Shore's lovely *Dinah, Down Home* LP, which also touched upon geography, albeit only south of the Mason/Dixon divide. Ms. Planet's natural ease and infectious playfulness inform "Rhode Island," "Gary," and "Route 66," and Tom Washatka's tenor adds effective coloration on any number of tracks. The integration of singer with supporting quintet is generally salutary, even though one detects an occasionally distracting soft Jazz ambience emanating from either John Harmon's electronic keyboard or Tom Theabo's plugged in guitar. "Greyhound" is somewhat undermined by some unnecessarily metronomic drumming from an otherwise subtle Danny Lueck. But, despite these bumps, there's enough here to sustain Janet Planet's rep (4/06, p. 39; 9/05, p. 105) as a member of the top echelon of Jazz and/or Cabaret vocalists. And her "Way Down Yonder" absolutely has to be heard. Tom Washatka's arrangement and lyrically gruff tenor complement Janet's fervid phrasing in a track that is pure perfection.

Alan Bargebubr

1. WHERE OR WHEN / 2. ROAD TO UNCERTAINTY / 3. JEANINE / 4. CHIPS AND SALSA / 5. CHEROKEE / 6. MY FOOLISH HEART / 7. PEDALOGY / 8. 2ND RACE / 9. WHAT IS HIP / 10. GEORGIA / 11. FORGET REGRET / 12. WIGGLE WALK. 68:52.

Jazz Band: Susie Jones, dir; Michelle Christiansen, as; Sam Solano, as; Billy Gaechter, ts; Jon Vancura, ts, d (11); Samantha Dickinson, bari s; Tom Peters, Karl Blackwood, Dustin Williams, Matthew Mooney, Jennifer Munsey, tpts; Sean Wyatt, Heidi Aispuro, Emily Kerridge, Spencer Didlake, tbns; Solomon Thelin, g; Sam Hirsh, p; Ross Davis, b; Mitch Wilson, d, Nancy King, vcl (1). Additional combo performers: Cory Sterling, g (2, 7); Aaron Byers, g (11); Luke Tarter, p (11); Eric Wheeler, b (11). Jan. 21 and March 21, 2008, Gresham, OR.

The long-running tradition of Jazz from Oregon's Mt. Hood Community College continues with this recording of its 2008 performance groups. Under Director Susie Jones' leadership, Mt. Hood's big band displays versatility and strong ensemble work on varied material including the brisk "Cherokee," Matt Harris's fine bebop chart, the ballad "My Foolish Heart," a well-crafted Dave Barduhn arrangement, and rakish Jazz/rock vehicles "Chips and Salsa" and "What is Hip," from the arranging pens of Stan Bock and Mike Tamaro, respectively. The big band also provides sensi-

CABARETSCENES

Janet Planet

Of Thee I Sing

Stellar Records



The cliché review for a vocalist with a wonderful voice is that she could sing the phone book and sound great. The singer who goes by the name of Janet Planet could sound great singing a road map—and she sort of does do that with a set of songs extolling the marvels of various U.S.A. locales. Whether we're roaming through the "State of Wyoming" or "Deep in the Heart of Texas"—whatever state she croons deep, heartfelt affection for—this listener was in a state of joy with this richly rewarding road trip. What we have is not just an instantly appealing, warm, airy voice but a singer with caring phrasing, excellent diction and intelligence. She has jazz smarts, too.

She's equally at home with "Home on the Range," with its images of nature, as she is cozying up to city life. (In Rodgers & Hart's valentine to "Manhattan" and its environs, she intones the words "The Bronx" and miraculously makes the glamour-challenged area sound like Paradise.)

The band is super: drummer Danny Lueke plus a pair of Johns (bassist Gibson and pianist Harmon) and a pair of Toms (sax player Washatka and longtime guitarist Theabo). The last three named contribute the often creative arrangements which showcase them prominently. They zip through a fleet, fun, frisky, jazzy jaunt in "Gary, Indiana" (from *The Music Man*) and go slo-mo so well with the tender territory. In that department, a major highlight is "My Kind of Town (Chicago Is)," its tempo slowed waaaaay down from its brisk, swinging origins. Revised and rethought, it's romantic, with Janet lovingly lingering over words and images. If your own travels coincide with a live gig by Miss Planet, plan it (as you can in August in NYC at Feinstein's) for she's even better in person. And that's saying something—because this CD is pure pleasure.

Rob Lester

Cabaret Scenes

July/August 2010

www.cabaretscenes.org

Tritone Time

The latest news about Tritone Jazz Fantasy Camps

Janet Planet's 'Of Thee I Sing': A Very Hip Trip

Forget that the title evokes Kate Smith and the contents include some of the potentially hokiest songs ever written—whether you're vacationing or staycationing this summer, pack this new recording into your iPod. If any of Janet's work is going to get major airplay, *Of Thee I Sing* is it.

The basic concept is a winner—14 mostly familiar tunes chosen specifically to celebrate our country, our communities, and the people who live there.

But what makes this recording outstanding—in addition to Janet's customary excellence and the solid musicianship throughout—is the good old American ingenuity of arrangers John Harmon, Tom Washatka, and Tom Theabo, who convert potentially somnolent tunes like "Home on the Range," "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," "Gary, Indiana," and "Old Cape Cod" into high-octane jazz, fueling a very hip trip.

On the jazzical journey, which runs roughly east to west, you'll make musical stops—some expected, some not—in Rhode Island, Manhattan, Cape Cod, New Orleans, Chicago, Gary, Wyoming, Chattanooga, Texas, and San Francisco. You'll also fall in love on a Greyhound bus, somewhere along Route 66.

Aside from the pitch-perfect Janet, your traveling companions include Harmon on piano, Washatka on sax, Theabo on guitar, John Gibson on bass and Danny Leuck on drums.

With drivers this skillful, you can just sit back and enjoy the ride.

BISTRO 25th Anniversary AWARDS

Janet Planet – “Like a Complete Unknown”

Feinstein's at Loews Regency – August 13, 14

By Elizabeth Ahlfors

With vocals that are clear and sultry, a tone as soft as fine cashmere and expressive with spontaneous jazz rhythms and accents, Janet Planet may be a complete unknown in New York City. This, however, is not due to any lack of talent. Many cabaret performers call themselves jazz singers but Janet Planet is the real deal. She hears the music and the timing and she adds her own jazz point of view with eloquent virtuosity and sensitivity.

Her opening song at Feinstein's at Loews Regency was not a rousing belt and it wasn't a catchy swing tune—at first. Instead, she delivered the vocalese "Get Lost," by singer-songwriter Meredith d'Ambrosio, paraphrasing Cole Porter's "Get Out of Town." With a rhythm trio behind her, Planet then picked up the pace and moved into the catchy and swinging "Get Out of Town." With two versions of the same message, Planet revealed her tight connection to the songs' intent and also the sound of the words, illustrated again later, with "I Like You, You're Nice" by Blossom Dearie and Linda Alpert. Here, Planet relished in the distinctive warmth of the words, "cup of Costa Rican coffee."

This show, she said, was about words. She devoted the program largely to Cole Porter, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Blossom Dearie, and Bob Dylan. After naming Dylan, Planet wryly wondered whether she'd heard the audience groan. No, they were not groaning, not those who appreciated the poetic quality of Dylan's songs. Planet's intriguing Dylan interpretations included her rendition of "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry," an effective arrangement with Ross Pederson's drums providing an undercurrent sound of a traveling train. After Planet's gripping gospel somberness to Dylan's "I Shall Be Released," she mentioned she was communicating it from the point of view of any man or woman who has been abused.

She has a sustained vocal line that can melt into a single silky fluent sound with her musicians, Tom Theabo on guitar and Daniel Loomis on bass, with the aforementioned Ross Pederson's soft drum. Singing "My One and Only Love," starting with only Loomis's bass accompaniment before the rest of the trio came in, Planet's long notes dipped and faded, almost disappearing. Yet, with microphone savvy, she can also choose to vocally dominate the song, articulately exploring and interpreting the shadows as well as sliding along the surface of a song.

Her song list was eclectic, including a speeding "Gary, Indiana" (Meredith Willson) with a twist: no lips. That's right, she sang part of the song without moving her lips. Why? Why not? Any show benefits from a quick shot of humor. Other favorites were Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz's jaunty "Rhode Island Is Famous for You" and "Hey, John," a Blossom Dearie tune with Jim Council lyrics written for one of Dearie's fans, John Lennon.

Jazz singers are inevitably drawn to Brazilian rhythms, and eventually they are tempted to sing in Portuguese, as did Planet, delivering the original lyrics of "O Pato" ("The Duck"), by Jayme Silva & Neuza Teixeira. She chose to sing Antonio Carlos Jobim's "The Waters of March" in English, nuanced with diverse accents and sophisticated rhythms. Another treat was a special guest, jazz guitarist Gene Bertoncini, who accompanied Planet in an affecting "The Shining Sea" (Johnny Mandel and Peggy Lee).

Now a word about her name. Unlike her music, the name is not exactly the real deal. It was a nickname when she was a teenager, and eventually "Janet Planet" became her business name and her domain name, JanetPlanet.com. When another Janet, the one named Jackson, later wanted it for her own domain name, Jackson had to settle for JanetPlanet.net. So when you decide to check on what the jazz singer is up to now—and you will—go to the source, JanetPlanet.com. She's the one who understands the music she is performing, and the one with the voice and imagination to make it her own.

Critical Praise for Janet Planet

“Planet defies expectation...anything she graces with her vocal chords benefits.”

— Cadence Magazine

“The voice of the New Jazz Culture... amazingly powerful, with seemingly limitless expression.”

— Jazziz Magazine

“The venerable Planet carves a jaunty path from east to west. Long-familiar destinations sound fresh and new...delightful.” — JazzTimes

“Janet Planet’s “Of Thee I Sing,” is a very hip trip.” — TriTone Jazz

“Janet’s exquisite interpretations bring new life to treasures that long to be heard.”

— Gene Bertoncini

“A lovely collection of songs about America...filled with various hopes and dreams...what a sweet dedication to our beautiful country. — Karrin Allyson, 3-Time Grammy Nominee

“If there's a better jazz singer . . . show me. Wisconsin remains Janet's planet, and hooray for that.” — Mike Drew, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

“The effervescent and supremely talented Ms. Planet can stylishly sing anything she chooses.”

— Isobel Neuberger, Rochester Public Radio

“Many cabaret performers call themselves jazz singers but Janet Planet is the real deal.”

— Elizabeth Ahlfors

“When anyone has asked me, as they often do, what singer have I seen lately who really impressed me, I have one answer. And, it rhymes. Janet Planet.” — Rob Lester