

SINGER'S SINGERS

by Dan Singer

Dan Singer from New York City turns the spotlight on some overlooked Singers of the past and some bright newcomers, all of which are Singer's Singers

SHARON PAGE: BURKE BEAUTIFUL Harbinger 3215 www.Naxos.com

Thankfully the standards are still very much alive. Sharon Page's 16-song CD chock full of the familiar and the unfamiliar songs of lyricist Johnny Burke is proof of that. There are two songs from the 1930s, eleven from the 1940s, two from the 1950s, and one from the 1960s. Polished pianist, producer and arranger Keith Ingham has performed a tremendous work of art here. Singer Sharon Page comes up with some startling vocalizing throughout. As with most every Harbinger/Musical Theater Project the information both in sound and in print can't be bested. Each song's history is explained in detailed photographic liner notes.

The opener, "Aren't You Glad You're You" (Van Heusen) from 1945 is so up tempo and uplifting you will want to dance around the floor. "Sleighride In July" (Van Heusen) from 1944 film 'Belle of the Yukon' contains the verse. It features the superb alto saxophone playing of Bobby Porcelli in a fast solo. "Swinging On A Star" (Van Heusen) from 1944 is amazing. There is a Bing Crosby tale regarding this song and Bing's children that you won't want to miss reading. "One Two Button Your Shoe" (Johnston) has swing written all over it. There is Arnie Weiss' drum solo kicking things off at the start joined by Mr. Porcelli's alto sax, ending in an ideal piano solo by Mr. Ingham. Everyone is certainly aboard here with the divine Ms. Paige vocal throughout.

"What's New" (Haggart) from 1939 began life like the song "Stardust" (Carmichael/ Parish). Lyrics were added years after its first popularity under the title "I'm Free" by the Bob Crosby Orchestra's bass player Bob Haggart featuring the trumpet of Billy Butterfield. Sharon Paige delivers an excellent vocal rendition. "Like Someone In Love" (Van Heusen) from 1944 has her singing the verse midway. All this while Bobby Porcelli's flute, Ron McClure's bass, and Arnie Wise's drums swing the daylights out of this song. Finally from Broadway's 1961 "Donnybrook" failure (because of a newspaper strike) there is "He Makes Me Feel I'm Lovely". It is simply gorgeous. It's a great way to conclude this very reverential tribute to Mr. Burke.

BOB DOROUGH: LIVE AT THE DEER HEAD INN Deer Head 008 www.dearheadinn.com

Bob just never lets up on this wild most entertaining performance of ten songs which receive the usual thorough Dorough going over style. As a pianist he's remarkable. As a singer he's most appealing. As a composer, well he additionally is one of our best. There is a learned well researched six-page carefully written booklet of liner notes by Patrick Dorian who really made it all the more easy for me to write about this amazingly perfect CD.

"The Touch Of Your Lips" (Noble) was actually written in 1936. Bob is only incredible here in his updated sugarcoated vocal. He even scats a chorus doing the almost musically impossible. His daughter Aralee opens for him with a remarkable flute solo on the song "Flamingo" (Grouya/Anderson). No use comparing Mr. Dorough to Herb Jeffries who in 1941 had the hit recording. Bob, in his very original style, does this song proudly. You'll love his vocal of "Alfie" (Bacharach/David). It was such a super surprise to hear him on a once through take. Another standard new to Bob was "The Sweetest Sounds" (Rodgers) from Broadway's 1962 hit show "No Strings". Finally he serenades us with "Devil May Care" (Dorough/Kirk) his famous song which just rocks the place to the rafters. Everyone here just seems to be having a great grand time. Mr. Dorough -- he's 94 years old -- has an impressive jazz background. He can charm the life out

of you with his rich and rewarding way when he performs. I am certain that there were many curtain calls for Bob and his wonderful collective quartet: Steve Berger on guitar, Pat O'Leary on bass, Aralee Dorough on flute, and Larry Fink on harmonica.

NANCY VALENTINE: LOVESOME

Jazz Garden Records The Rose Collection self-produced www.nancyvalentinejazz.com

Nancy Valentine is someone who thankfully continues to have a musical love affair with Billy Strayhorn. She is now at work on a second CD of the music of Sweet Pea. In this first 12-song collection there are six songs that the centennial legend Lena Horne recorded. They seem to sound like he wrote them just for Lena.

"You Better Know It" (Ellington) begins the CD in a fine exciting fashion as she brings it to a knock down and out conclusion. Her musical assist comes from pianist John di Martino, Boris Koslov on bass, Victor Jones on drums, and the blazing duo of Harry Allen on tenor, and trumpeter Joe Magnarelli. What great company Ms. Valentine keeps. "You're The One" has her singing just like an instrumentalist in a wordless scat prelude. Her band led by the exciting pianist Tamir Hendelman really outperforms here.

Ms. Valentine exhibits a warm heartwarming vocal on "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing" It's so deep it actually becomes rather gentle. Her "Something To Live For" (Ellington) has the rarely heard verse. Nancy has a great deal of obvious musical power. "Maybe" opens with Nancy vocalizing along with her drummer Victor Jones. It's a most difficult drum duet vocal. The super result should have your feet tapping throughout the high note conclusion with Nancy and Harry Allen's tenor solo. The scales really get a workout here.

Finally there is "Thank You For Everything" (Anderson) complete with a narration by Ms. Valentine. Her simple single slow chorus features her trio of piano, bass, and drums. The song was originally called "Lotus Blossom" until the sorely missed Edmund Anderson put words to it. Listening to these sophisticated songs composed over half a century ago makes me wonder why such superior material sounds like they were just written.

MARSHA BARTENETTI: IT'S TIME Disk Eyes no # www.lentriolla.com

Marsha Bartenetti is thoroughly enchanting on her 2013 program of ten songs. Starting with "Good Morning Heartache" (Drake/Higginbotham) with a seven piece string section plus an additional cello and viola. She's truly a fine singer to marvel at. In a bittersweet rendition "Someone To Watch Over Me" (Gershwin) features the delightful verse. I really appreciated hearing the addition of Ove Hanson's shining English horn solo. Marsha continues with a thoughtful and outstanding vocal on "When I Fall In Love" (Heyman/Young). Ms. Bartenetti with her dramatic reading of "Over The Rainbow" (Arlen/Harburg) was a delight. Eugene Ben, her pianist, and Jerry Cortez, electric guitar, are marvelously showcased throughout. "As Time Goes By" (Hupfield) has a sensational seven piece violin string section along with 3 additional cellos backing her up superbly. The combination is a bright and shining example of just what wonderful special care can do for this all too familiar song. On it Marsha sounds most appealing and fresh. "Baby It's Cold Outside" (Loesser) is presented as an unusual slow duet with Teddy Jo Politzer and featuring Marsha's fine trio.