

## Mp3 Ellen Johnson - These Days



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A raw, soulful jazz journey using creative, contemporary and lush vocals inspired by the bass of Darek Oles, mixed with moments of guitar drums (Larry Koonse Roy McCurdy) and passionately dedicated to bebop master Sheila Jordan. 12 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Vocals, JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo Details: Ellen Johnsons latest release, *These Days*, brings a fresh face to the plethora of jazz vocalists. Featuring some of the finest musicians in the world, Sheila Jordan, Roy McCurdy (drums), Larry Koonse (guitar), Ana Gazzola (vocal/percussion) and the stunning bass work of Darek Oles whose collaboration contributes to the unique sound. Twelve tracks of exposed emotion that travel through stories composed by a variety of accomplished songwriters and artists, from Mingus to Jackson Browne. Spiced with original songs, lyrics and poetry highlighted by duets with bass mixed with a raw instrumental approach. Ellen Johnson, a jazz singer who has the inspiration to take us to creative territory has succeeded in making music that touches our souls. Her expressive, whimsical and honest approach to each song carries "These Days" into an unforgettable journey. The CD is dedicated to her friend and mentor, Sheila Jordan, who was truly the innovator of bass and voice duets beginning her first duets with the late Charles Mingus. The touching third track on the CD, *The Crossing* is an original composition by Sheila Jordan written with a special message to each one of us about believing in our selves and making it through difficult times in our lives. The song is sung as a trio with Ellen, Sheila and Darek on bass, as a tribute to the woman who gave so much of herself to the music she loves, jazz. Another original song on the CD, *Inspiration*, was recorded after Ellen heard Dareks composition and was taken by its depth and beauty. She felt the song would make a perfect vehicle for a wordless vocal solo and the amazing Larry Koonse added his mastery to the song that Darek likes to call a cross between Chopin and Brazil. To add a touch of authenticity the Brazilian vocalist, Ana Gazzola, plays percussion with groove and accuracy on

both Inspiration and Esperanza Perdida (I Was Just One More For You). In Esperanza Perdida, Ellen once again brings her love of Brazilian music to this project and sings in both Portuguese and English with the sweet arrangement of Kim Richmond. At least half of the tracks on These Days are bass and voice duets starting with the clever standard No Moon At All that flows in and out of swing and bossa feel painting a picture of the dark evening possibilities. The Chris Smither song, I Feel The Same brings a more contemporary vehicle to the duo and they dig into the rhythmic patterns in a soulful salute to love lost as Ellen magically turns her voice into a combination of electric guitar and harmonica for an improvised solo. The dynamic interplay between Darek Oles and Ellen can be heard again in the beautiful standards, If I Should Lose You, You Don't Know What Love Is and an unusual choice Who Knows Where The Time Goes, (written by Sandy Denny) from the folk music days of the 60s. Ellen's passion for Mingus is apparent from her selections, Noddin Ya Head Blues and Nostalgia in Times Square. She cleverly adds lyrics to both songs (with permission of Sue Mingus) and brings a new dimension to the works. The lyric for Noddin Ya Head Blues was influenced by her own feelings about corporate and political crimes oddly enough being written long before the Enron and other corporate scandals. Nostalgia in Times Square has a dual message, one of homage to Charles Mingus and the other a yearning to be in New York City and to experience the excitement of the jazz scene that Mingus helped to create. Nostalgia in Times Square brings the quartet sound to life and features the great Roy McCurdy on drums, a veteran of the NY jazz scene having made his mark with Cannonball Adderly, Sonny Rollins and later Ms Nancy Wilson. The closing piece is a poem written about Sheila Jordan, presented to her during an awards ceremony. The special addition of Ms Jordan's background vocals, improvising her own message to the words is the final touch to this heartfelt journey that is filled with warmth, humor and a myriad of emotions. Ellen sings with every inch of her soul in this enchanting and mesmerizing CD.

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