

Mp3 Simone Kopmajer - Romance



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Classic standards and ballads from the Great American Songbook, in classy, sultry interpretations by Simone Kopmajer, and produced by the legendary Todd Barkan. 12 MP3 Songs EASY LISTENING: Crooners/Vocals, JAZZ: Jazz Vocals Details: There's a lot to be said for simplicity. You'd be surprised how hard it is to take a great song and sing it simply and meaningfully. But when it's done well, it's the most rewarding thing there is. Likewise, simplicity is an essential ingredient in romance. The singer Simone Kopmajer [pronounced "Cope- myer"] clearly realizes that job one is to let emotion drive the whole works. The idea to begin with and keep that old horse before the cart, then romance can't help but emerge naturally from the great love songs. Simone's singing also testifies to the validity of an idea I've heard expressed independently by two male singers, one very experienced, Tony Bennett, and the other comparatively young, Allan Harris. Namely, that women are able to express their emotions in a more direct and honest way at a much earlier age than men, and that a 23-year-old female singer can open herself up in a way that a male performer with more experience can't. Daughter of a family of Austrian musicians, Simone began singing with her father's band and studying piano and voice at age twelve. Over the last ten years, she rose up through the various systems of support for jazz in Europe - talent competitions, officially-subsized orchestras and festivals that are pretty much unknown in the land of the music's birth. She studied formally in Graz, Austria, where two of the foremost jazz vocal educators, Mark Murphy and Sheila Jordan, have long-term teaching residencies, made her US debut in 2000, and has worked all over the world. So too have her New York-based accompanists, starting with another European, the Czech-born bassist George Mraz, the prolific and prodigious drummer Tim Horner, and John DiMartino, who is fast emerging in my estimation as one of the major pianist-musical directors to watch around town. Eric Alexander is a still very young tenorist who has already developed a big

imposing sound, and he has already ranked in Down Beat's December 2004 Annual Readers' Poll as one of the top 10 tenor saxophonists in the world. Todd Barkan, who always gets consistently outstanding results from both new and legendary jazz singers, sat in the producer's chair. In keeping with the European backgrounds of Simone and Mraz, it seems fitting to begin with the work of the most famous of all living French composers, Michel Legrand's "How Do You Keep The Music Playing?" It's a daunting song for a young, foreign-born female singer to attempt, since the song is traditionally the province of older males, especially Bennett and Sinatra - who sing the Alan and Marilyn Bergman lyrics with more than musical know-how but life experience that someone of Simone's tender years can't possibly have. She does it meaningfully by reminding us that Legrand and the Bergmans have not written a statement but a question, and it seems inherent in her low-key, partly rubato account that she's admitting throughout that she knows she's only asking, that she doesn't try to come off as someone who claims to have all the answers. However, she shows that she knows a lot about music in her choice of "A Blossom Fell," a song known only to Nat King Cole fans, which she modernizes with a slight hint of latin rhythm. Her interpretation draws upon the fanciful metaphor of the lyric, identifying the concept of lips as the nexus of all kinds of symbolic activities - singing, kissing, touching falling blossoms. "We Kiss In A Shadow" introduces Eric Alexander's robust tenor, and though the tempo is somewhat faster, Simone's tenderness and sensitivity seem influenced by Sinatra's classic 1951 recording. Two songs suggested from producer Todd Barkan come from composers generally characterized as R&B writers. Both of these tunes offer more opportunities for understated interpretation, Bob Telson's "Calling You" (done by Patti Austin, Natalie Cole and others), and "Whatever Happens," by Bill Withers, best known for "Ain't No Sunshine" and "Just The Two Of Us". While not sacrificing their blues strengths, Simone relocates them firmly in the jazz vocal tradition. On "Calling You", Eric Alexander eloquently elaborates over the fresh harmonic interpolations created by pianist/ arranger John di Martino. DiMartino's intro to "Exactly Like You" is extremely witty and totally out of left field, opening a the 3/4 bass vamp that, we assume, will point the way into Miles Davis's "All Blues." Instead, we get the 1930 standard associated with Davis's own idol, Louis Armstrong. I can't think of another singer of her generation or experience who can make the words sound inviting but not coy or self conscious. "Someone To Light Up My Life" is another import, but though it uses the verse and Gene Lees's English lyric, is otherwise slower than the classic Sinatra-Jobim reading. "A Time For Love" is pure, breathy romance - Tony Bennett's girlfriend used to have this song on

her answering machine. It says something about Simone's communication skills that she can put the listener in mind of this intention in an audio-only medium, without the visual aid of her in-person persona - although she does have the aid of John D's sensitive piano and Mraz's arco work. Her "Where Or When" makes me realize anew that Rodgers and Hart were, in a sense, writing about the difference between the emotional and the intellectual approaches to love. Duke Ellington's "Just Squeeze Me" (not to be confused with Fats Waller's "Squeeze Me") commences with Mr Mraz squeezing his bass strings, and Simone cashing in some of her credit, as they say these days, with the only piece on the set that's unabashedly sexy - eleven songs in, she's more than earned the right. Along with a different treatment of "Whatever Happens," "Romance" also includes a swinging, romping uptempo on "The Way You Look Tonight." Does an uptempo track belong on a ballad album? Not to worry. Simone could sing "One Meat Ball" still get us all in the mood for love. Will Friedwald Produced by Todd Barkan. Recorded by David Darlington at Avatar Studios in New York, on April 13 and 14, 2004. Mixed by David Darlington and Todd Barkan at Bass Hit Recording in New York. Mastered by Alan Silverman, ARF! Productions. Photography : John Abbott. Package design: 3 and Co., New York. threeandco.com. Executive producer of ZOHO release: Joachim Becker. Please visit Simone's Kopmajer's website at simonekopmajerBookings : Heidi Deleuil. Tel 321 783 0477 ededeuil@aol.com, and Todd Barkan. Tel 718 732 1737 mootsyone@myway.com

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