

Mp3 Ruby Fradkin - Circle Of Dreams



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The sophomore song-suite from pianist Ruby Fradkin. A shot of Vince Guaraldi with a dash of Ray Charles. 13 MP3 Songs POP: Piano, BLUES: Piano Blues Details: Ruby Fradkin hit the track running in 2002 with her debut, "Warmin' Up with Ragtime Ruby Fradkin" (recorded when she was 11). That charming collection of standards and originals buoyantly reflected her pre-teen positivity: the stride duets with a tuba-playing Freebo, the catchy boogie-woogies, and the tender readings of Americana went well-beyond her years. The disc endeared her to the critics overnight. But as with all of us (with Peter Pan excepted) there looms the inevitability of growing older. Ruby Fradkin (formerly Ragtime Ruby) now addresses that issue in-the-year 2004 with her sophomore effort: the ambient song suite entitled "Circle of Dreams," recorded when she was 13-years of age. "I was listening to a lot of Vince Guaraldi and Ray Charles at the time," the young musician says, "and mood-wise I needed to expand..." And expand she does. Originally conceived as a sampling of "upbeat" and "introspective" pieces, Fradkin sways the boat to the ambient side of the lake to deliver a singular collection of mature piano/soul, which all but discards the "peppy" stylings of her earlier debut. Of note is Fradkin's arrangement of J.S. Bach's "Polonaise (in G minor)," performed as a chamber ensemble with piano augmented by church organ, harpsichord and oboe. "I'd been playing the Polonaise for a while," Fradkin says, "when my producer [Tracy Bartelle] suggested that I get away from the straight groove I'd been playing and try to 'swing the Bach.' I looked at her like she was nuts, but when I tried it, the darn thing came alive!" And come alive it does. And the Polonaise fits perfectly with its 12 companion pieces (originals and classics) to create a sum much-greater than its parts. While listening to "Circle of Dreams," I was alternately lulled, rocked, and jarred by the intensity of emotions; and in that captive state, completely unaware that the creator of this soundscape was a mere 13-years of age. --F.C. Witherspoon

----- WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT RUBY FRADKIN. . . "A young child with an old spirit." Los Angeles Daily News "A child prodigy...a talent to be reckoned with..." Jack Rummel, KGNU-FM, Boulder, CO "Her songs express a musical sensibility far beyond her years." Robbie Gennet, Keyboard Magazine "Ruby Fradkin, young keyboard wizard." The American Rag "... a musician who 'takes charge.'" L.A. Jazz Scene "An amazing pianist..." Lara Reyes, Concord Records "...she reminds one of Johnnie Johnson." The Toluca Times

----- "Circle Of Dreams" is featured on: KPFK, Los Angeles, CA WETA, Alexandria, VA KVMR, Grass Valley, CA WHOLE WHEAT RADIO, Talkeetna, AK and more! ----- Pasadena Star-News October 24, 2003 Ragtime Ruby is on a roll By Steven D. Harris Correspondent Move over, Scott Joplin. Likewise, Jelly Roll. Make way for Southern California's own extraordinaire of the ivories, Ruby Fradkin, aka Ragtime Ruby. This dainty miss whose keyboard reach is a mere octave can pound out some mean arpeggios and then some. She may be the only gal her age to tackle the art of boogie-woogie, blues, ragtime and stride -- and she's successful at all of the above. In fact, Ruby attacks the keyboard with all the authority and assurance of a major league prodigy. Pretty impressive for one who just turned thirteen. Ruby performs Sunday evening at the Coffee Gallery in Altadena. Alternating on the bill are Savoir Fair (a song and dance trio who specialize in songs from the '30s) and Clay Mitchell. While many new teenagers suffer the turmoil of such awkward years, this eighth-grader is cool and collected in the present. Or maybe she's just too busy to contemplate growing up. Ruby's got an itinerary of bookings almost every week. In the last few years, she's played for music halls, colleges and 400-seat theaters. She was even awarded a Certificate of Honor by the state's governor. Most recently, she wowed an audience of 800 at last month's Sweet Hot Festival in Los Angeles. Her first CD, recorded in September of last year, has received glorious reviews. It's called "Warmin' Up with Ragtime Ruby" and is available through her own web site at ragtimeruby.com. The youthful star talked with U this week from her home in Sherman Oaks: Q. Tell us about your early training and your first public performance at age 9. A. I started playing when I was six. Our neighbors next door were taking classical piano lessons. I hung out with them and wanted to start playing myself. About my second year, my dad showed me a few Christmas carols (arranged for) left hand stride. That was a lot more exciting; I connected more with that than classical. Then I started playing at local nursing homes in the area for the old folks. They loved it, because I played all the old things they

grew up with like "Baby Face" and "A Bicycle Built For Two." I even got some tips. I once played at a retirement home where, every time I played a certain note, it would stick and wouldn't come up. My dad helped by lifting the key every time I would play the note. Q. You're also a composer. How many tunes have you written to date? A. About four boogies and some blues. I tend to play or compose a lot of stuff in C because there's no sharps or flats. But the rags I have to learn are sometimes in E flat or D flat. I don't transpose a lot, but for the "Maple Leaf Rag," I end it by reprising part of the first section. But it comes from the third section, so it's in a different key. (At this point, Ruby sits at her piano to demonstrate.) Q. Of all the styles you incorporate, do you have a preference? A. I like all of them in different ways. The blues and boogies I write are a lot of fun. It's like if you're in the groove, you don't need to get every note perfect. You play whatever comes. With ragtime, it's more challenging 'cause it's a lot more work. You have to keep it up with practicing. Q. How did you discover the old-fashioned music that you've grown to love? A. I got into ragtime by going to the Rose Leaf Ragtime Club in Pasadena. They take place the last Sunday of every month and all the ragtime players get up and play a few songs each. That's where I first heard the music and then I got into the blues. Q. Have you any interest in the historical aspect of the music? A. I know some history but not as much as I would like. I haven't listened to that many players. One of my favorite blues artists is Johnnie Johnson who played with Chuck Berry for years. In fact, I wrote a boogie in his style as a tribute to him. A more contemporary rag time favorite is Morton Gunnar Larsen from Norway. I also enjoy Count Basie. Q. How do you balance music and school? A. I did rags in the talent show last year and also the talent show in elementary school. But I'm not in the school band or anything. Actually the choir teacher at my school has been showing me some licks and coaching me; he's a really good piano player. Q. Do you get stage fright? A. Audiences don't scare me; I'm pretty comfortable. I can get a little shaky but not too much. Once I get on stage and the audience is supportive, it becomes fun, even easy. Like at the Coffee Gallery; it's a great crowd every time I play there. Q. You appeared in YM magazine. How does it feel to be picked among YM's "20 Coolest Girls in America"? A. It's so exciting! I found out about it the day after it came out. I walked into my first class at school and everyone was saying my name and showing me the magazine. It was really hard to focus at school for the rest of the day. Q. How many hours do you spend practicing? A. It just depends. I don't spend hours everyday since I have homework and other chores. It's preparing for the next gig usually, or doing exercises to get my fingers in a good place for a certain song I might perform. Q. From all reports, you

were one of the highlights at the recent Sweet Hot festival. A. It was my first festival ever. I was a guest artist, so I didn't have a featured spot, but I played every day. I asked all the leaders of the different bands if I could sit in to play some blues. That's how I met Herb Jeffries. I introduced myself and said, "I wanted to know if I could sit in with your bass and drum player." He said, "I don't know. I'm just the singer; I'll have to check." So it didn't sound like I would get the chance. So I went upstairs and found someone to play with. After a few minutes, some people came looking for me saying, "Herb has introduced you three times already! Where have you been?" So I rushed downstairs and played "Over the Rainbow." Q. Herb is indeed a 92-year-old institution. Did you realize how famous he was at the time? A. I didn't know who he was. Afterwards, I thanked him in the lobby. Herb told me that when he was real young, he had asked Louis Armstrong if he could sit in with his band. Louis said yes, so that's why Herb said yes to me. After the festival, I researched him on line and found out everything about him. I talked to him over the phone a few days later and he invited me down to Oceanside for a retrospective on his life and I played a few songs with him. Q. What would you like to do in the future? A. I'm not exactly sure. Wherever life leads me is what I'd say. I don't want to force any thing on, I just want to go where I'm meant to go. One of my dream gigs would be to perform a duet with Norah Jones. It would feel really good to know I've gotten that far. -----

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