



Diane Hubka

LOOK NO FURTHER—A-Records, Catalog No. AL73182. A Division of Challenge Record Services BV, website: www.challenge.nl. *Look No Further; Morning; Baltimore Oriole; Dolphin Dance; In Walked John; Photograph; Never Never Land; Small Day Tomorrow; Baby, You Should Know It; In April; August Moon; Better Than Anything.*

PERSONNEL: Diane Hubka, vocals, guitar on track 8; John Hart, guitar; Frank Kimbrough, piano; Dean Johnson, bass; Tony Moreno, drums; Scott Whitfield, trombone.

By William Collins

“...it moves you”

The first thing that hits you in the face about this album is the solidity of the group behind Ms. Hubka. As soon as you hear the opening licks from trombonist Scott Whitfield and guitarist John Hart, you know what follows will be a treat. Then Diane blows in with synchronous vocals and scat that floats on the crest foam of the combo's surging waves. Finally, a first class opener in the title track, “Look No Further.”

“Morning” is a quick bossa nova that keeps things going in the opener's mood, but easier. Then the heat's off with Hoagy Carmichael/Paul Francis Webster's “Baltimore Oriole,” a typically quirky, slow blues. Hubka does some of her best straight vocals here. Hart adds fine lines, as well.

A press release included with the CD submitted for review mentions that Hubka cites Chris Connor as one of her examples. “Dolphin Dance” displays that reference to CC. There's some nice bass and piano by Johnson and Kimbrough. “In Walked John” is probably the best on the disc. In this obvious tribute to John Coltrane, the group does it up right. Diane cuts it with panache. It moves you.

The Jobim/Gilbert “Photograph” gets an Astrud Gilberto treatment—or is the tune so like “The Girl From Ipanema” that the listener is confused? A nice relaxer, however.

“Never, Never Land” is sort of ordinary, but the application is above par. Then there is the gem of lyric and understated melody in “A Small Day Tomorrow.” Diane accompanies herself effectively and the plaintive voice preserves the intent—another favorite.

“Baby You Should Know It” is an easy grooving, real jazz, happy tune that evokes fine solo work from Whitfield and Hart, and flawless support from Kimbrough, Johnson and Moreno.

Diane slips back under the influence of her idols of years gone by with good result “In April.” Once again, Whitfield wails, then Frank answers with some cozy kicks of his own. Hubka returns to ably complete the package.

Soft and delicate is “August Moon”—at times a little too soft. The vocals tend to get smothered. Dean Johnson shows off a bit with the opening and initial comp for Diane. The quick waltz provides a natural venue for Johnson, Moreno, then Hart and Kimbrough. This rapidly develops into a working ensemble. Then it cedes to Hubka's return with a reprise and some trailing scat to close out the disc.

Given the credentials and study listed in the press release, I kinda expected a larger sound from Ms. Hubka. There are periodic, though slight, lapses in pronunciation, also—something that should have been purged by this stage in her career (picky, picky).

Nevertheless, this is a very fine CD, worthy of your notice and investment. The combo is outstanding with very high quality individual efforts, particularly Whitfield and Hart.

Diane's web site is www.dianehubka.com.