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CD OF THE DAY

Diane Hubka: "I Like it Here - Live in Tokyo" (SSJ) 2008

A very, very classy and charming performance captured live at Tokyo's JZBrat Jazz Club (located in the Shibuya area) on December 5, 2007. Promoted and released by the Sinatra Society of Japan (SSJ), this album showcases Hubka's talents backed by a cohesive acoustic trio of Japanese musicians: Kiyoshi Morita (piano), Masahiko Taniguchi (bass) and Nobuhiko Yamashita (drums). Hubka herself plays guitar on four tracks, something that adds an extra appeal to the set.

The follow-up to her best album to date, "*Diane Hubka Goes to the Movies*", which became a sensation in Japan last year and was elected one of the best jazz vocal albums of 2007 by Jazz Station, "I Like it Here" was produced by Yasuo Sango & Toshio Kobari. Both the level of musicianship and audio quality (courtesy of engineer Kiyoshi Tokiwa) are excellent.

The title track is also the opening one, "I Like it Here", arranged by Pete Malinverni. Three Jobim tunes appear in the program: "Água de Beber", "Dindi" and "One Note Samba". Not coincidentally, all of them recorded by Frank Sinatra on his two albums with Jobim. However, don't expect "covers" of Sinatra's versions. Diane is her own woman and approaches each of the songs with strong personality.

"Dindi", the album highlight, is the most impressive case. Usually treated as a slow "sad" ballad, here the song flies in a perfect tempo, with Hubka's adventurous phrasing exploring all its nuances and revealing the real meaning of Ray Gilbert's beautiful English lyrics. Morita's joyous piano solo is a gem!



While "Dindi" appeared on the first "Sinatra-Jobim" meeting from 1967, "Água de Beber" and "One Note Samba" were recorded by Francis Albert for "Sinatra & Company", in 1969. Hubka plays guitar on "Água de Beber" as well as on two tunes by her guitar teacher, Ron Anthony: "Faces" (co-written by Arthur "Cry me a river" Hamilton) and "It's Always 4 AM", with ingenious lyrics by the great Sammy Cahn, a close friend of Sinatra. Hubka's velvet-like voice fits like a glove in such songs as "You Go To My Head", "Moonlight in Vermont" and "All My Tomorrows". A great combination of art and entertainment.

by: **Arnaldo DeSouteiro**

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