

The Jazz Box
By Jim Esch

You Inspire Me (VSOJAZ Records) Diane Hubka: Vocalist Hubka really has put together her “dream” disc. Although a guitarist herself, she opted to enlist the aid of seven world-class guitar players for support and inspiration.

I was searching for a way to describe her voice when I heard her version of Hoagy Carmichael’s “Winter Moon,” with guitarist John Hart. It called to mind my favorite recording of the same by saxophonist Art Pepper. “That’s it!” I thought. She sings with the same cool, breathy embouchure of a sax player.

The Stylistic diversity of the Featured guitarists steers her vocalizing down several, diverse paths. The solo guitar of Gene Bertoncini focuses the listener’s attention to the lyrics of “Suddenly” and “The Old New Waltz,” co-written by Bertoncini’s longtime musical partner, bassist Michael Moore.

The aforementioned Hart and Paul Bollenback spur her into a post-modern bop territory with the tricky turns of “Nothing Like You” and “You Inspire Me,” respectively. She demonstrates some fine scat chops on the latter.

Romero Lubambo brought his “Trio da Paz” into the studios for a trio of Brazilian flavored tunes including “Wave” - with a nice bass solo from Nilson Matta - and the introductory “Love,” both up-tempo bossas. Blossom Dearie’s touching “Inside A Silent Tear” swings a bit more slowly, softly and reflectively.

Jack Wilkins is both guitarist and co-composer of “Romance.” Jack’s voicings and Hubka’s voice prove a perfect match on this bittersweet ballad.

Bucky Pizzarelli and Frank Vignola are one of my favorite guitar pairings, and they provide the requisite bounce to “Blue Moon” and “Sunday In New York.” Talk about knowing how to support a soloist!

A final note...In reference to a statement made in the review above, Ms. Hubka’s CD has this month’s rendition of “Nuages.” But do you want to know something? Her interpretation (with excellent lyrics by our friend Frank Forte) really puts a new spin on the old classic. Django masters Pizzarelli and Vignola are the inspiration for this one, as well.



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