

Mp3 Mila Drumke - Hip To Hip: A Collection Of Standards

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"Offering that same buzz you get from introducing two friends from different spheres of your life to one another for the first time and finding out they get on famously, Hip to Hip vaporises generation gaps and fills the heart with its generosity. 11 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Jazz Vocals, ROCK: Americana Details: Review of Hip to Hip: A Collection of Standards from Hearsay Magazine The third album from Mila Drumke's in-house recording enterprise finds her living the lush life and choosing to follow up the unique and astounding Illinois album with a playful selection of standards and gems. The timing is perfect. Jazz vocal seems to be enjoying a resurgence of interest of late; if it's not exactly a mass market, the unflappably cool record buyers have a variety of new talents (and old songs) to savour. It's cheering to witness the success of bright young things Lisa Ekdahl, Katharine Whalen and Stacey Kent. Meanwhile all sorts of exhilarating old-new fusions can be found on recent albums like last year's Red Hot and Rhapsody (a magnificent tribute to George and Ira Gershwin) and Midnight In the Garden of Good and Evil (a riotously curated homage to Johnny Mercer), both of which I unreservedly recommend if you like this kind of thing. Drumke's release fits happily alongside those in the way it so meticulously balances respectfulness with revisionism. Her rich and insistent voice (perhaps how Paula Cole might sound if she had a sense of humour?) is a velvet-padded box in which these gems sit perfectly. The arrangements are respectful, sometimes modernist but never unnecessarily ironic. For every song performed in Eastman Color, there's another delivered in crisp black and white. There are quite a lot of players and singers lining up on here but the sound is never over-egged: Drumke understands how much these songs demand a core band so Adam Ben-David's effusive piano, Mat Fieldes's assertive double bass and Charlie Porter's sashaying trumpet are usually what one registers most. Like Kate Bush and Jane Siberry, Drumke produces her own records and does so with such vision and brio that even if the decision is based in economics, it's hard to believe T-Bone Burnett or Larry Klein could have done a better job. Moreover, it's probably hard to go wrong with songs like these. I mean, everyone likes this kind of music, don't they? You'd have to be emotionally and musically illiterate not to have all these tunes and their sentiments already inscribed in your brain somewhere. A cursory scan through the track listing reveals nothing obscure here - Drumke's

selections are all known universally, much like the emotions they convey for that matter. Take the deadly serious reading of "How Deep Is The Ocean," for instance, probably the standout track in a superior selection. The almost unbearably candid melody takes second-place to the words which are delivered with the solemnity of marriage vows and the deep rhetoric of Renaissance-era wisdom in which each question is answered with another. "How many times a day do I think of you? How many roses are sprinkled with dew? How far would I travel to be where you are? How near is the journey from here to a star?" If you can't identify with that from personal experience, you probably just wish you could. The lyrics to all these songs are a constant delight (as you'd expect with gentlemen like Lorenz Hart and Ira Gershwin on the case). No one would dare write lines like "When you kissed me I felt the season turn from winter to spring" these days and our world is poorer for it. Rodgers and Hart's "My Funny Valentine," which staggers to the fore, propped up by wearied bass is very Weimar Republic (that song can't be done any other way, can it?), not to mention very "Strange Weather." "Moonglow" by contrast is blithe and percussive. Meanwhile the optimism at the heart of "Someone To Watch Over Me" is kept afloat by some languorous, cushioned arrangements. I note with amusement that Mila ducks right out of the convoluted "man some/ handsome" couplet which has defeated numerous singers since 1926! Later, hearing Drumke 'do' "Cheek To Cheek," I'm struck suddenly by what a challenge it must be to the performer to make these songs new. If every new piece of literature subconsciously addresses all that's ever been written before and every painting includes inflections of all previous artistic movements (as some critics have argued) then you can apply that to interpretative singing, too. Every version of "Cheek To Cheek" contains traces of all the recordings which predate it; everybody will have particular memories triggered. For some it will be Astaire, for others Fitzgerald. When hearing a contemporary reworking, the listener is initially as aware of who isn't singing as who is! It takes unflinching conviction to lay claim to a song like this, and when Drumke slips in a scrawly, low-fi bridge section in the midst of an otherwise respectful arrangement we know we're listening to someone in complete control of her talents. Several of the tracks here are duets and the cheeky interplay of voices mirrors the songs' wit. In fact the set kicks off with an inspired conjunction of "Until I Met You" (sung by Mila) with "Satin Doll" (sung by Jake Stigers), not so much a medley as a symbiotic melody in the best tradition of jazz sampling. Meanwhile, the fusion of Drumke's filtered vocals on "How Sweet It Is To Be In Love" with those of co-vocalist Erik Della Penna is delicious; like an inebriated duet between PJ Harvey and Mandy Patinkin. "Baby It's Cold Outside" is

beautifully unfazed, each part sung as if in split-screen; they sound more like dreamy internal monologues. "My sister will be suspicious/Gosh, your lips look delicious." It's heartwarming, and almost as a side effect, it helps exorcise the memory of that truly shocking, drunken version recently inflicted on the UK charts by Tom Jones and Cerys Matthews. The eternally ingenuous "Moon River" pops up at the end in a roughly similar arrangement to the one adopted by Mila's pals The Innocence Mission for a recent EP, and we exit to the strains of a wiggly reworking of the title track from Mila's previous record. Offering that same buzz you get from introducing two friends from different spheres of your life to one another for the first time and finding out they get on famously, Hip to Hip vaporises generation gaps and fills the heart with its generosity in the process. S'wonderful, in fact. by Neil Parkinson

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