



Lucid Blue Music

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CD Reviews - Mariah Picot & Bill Peterson Trio - "Notes on the Bridge..."

The Musicians' Ombudsman *By George W. Carroll*

Review received online from reviewer 9/23/04 and posted at ejazznews.com, jazzreview.com & jazzpromo.com

It is a wonderful rumination to ponder what God & spirituality can spawn for such an animated jazz project. Vocalist Picot & her trio under the tutelage of Bill Peterson, deliver "the goods". This is a group that constructs their music in a controlled, deliberate manner. Picot offers her vocalize with an exciting logic, embracing her music & interpretations with wit, perception, and contemplation. She has the joyful luck (a little writer's editorializing) to lilt on the platform of great jazz piano which Bill Peterson has created for the project. Peterson and his trio add a rich coloration plus some inventive & cohesive improvisational lines to the combined effort. It's warming to know the group lives & performs in Florida (as I do). It was a pleasure to get to "know" these fine artists through my review.

New Sounds - February 2005, jazznow.com *By Ferdinand Maylin*

This is a debut album for Mariah Picot; she wrote all the lyrics and music for eight of the thirteen tracks; Bill Peterson wrote the music for the other five. They describe the album as "Jazz influenced Art Songs with a Spiritual Perspective". The music is Jazz orientated, pianist Bill Peterson, a professor of Jazz Studies at FSU, has a light, inventive flowing style; he can cut loose when required, he flashes the keys briefly on "Pearl Diver". There are a lot of words in the songs, and they need to be listened to. The group members are sensitive to each other, an absolute necessity for this kind of involvement. The bass and drums never overstate. "Lucid Blue" has a very slight involvement from the Unity of Panama City Choir, it seems a pity to go to all the trouble and not develop it further. There is some fine interplay between Picot and Peterson on "Stay Awake", an unusually upbeat number. A proud, heroic and prayerful finish with "Until Then" ends the CD with just the right feeling. Picot and Peterson create a poetical tapestry that often loosens itself from any grounding in the tonic; one is left suspended as a child might be in a different world that does not require bringing to earth. This is an album put together with care, love and considered observation; perfect for the connoisseur.

Jazz Improv Magazine Vol5No4 - Fall 2005 *By Jim Santella*

With the Bill Peterson Trio, Mariah Picot offers original vocal impressions that take their roots from various aspects of our daily lives. By its very nature, improvised music comes from the heart and remains fresh and alive in performance. Picot has written lyrics that follow her intentions, but their delivery maintains a genuine spontaneity in translation. The piano trio gives her an intense driving force that exudes a loose, swinging rhythm alongside her vocal interpretations. Possessing a clear soprano voice, Picot glides fluidly with unexpected intervallic leaps, heightening the spontaneous nature of her performance.

"Notes on the Bridge," the album's title track, features an extended piano interlude that drives the piece forcefully. At both ends of the composition, however, Picot and the trio meander loosely, employing rubato phrases here and there. The personal nature of the piece instills spiritual fervor. She's at her best when working alone with bassist Jeff Denson. Together, they introduce several pieces with a bass and vocal conversation that caresses the melody succinctly. Elsewhere, the ensemble works together in a cohesive affair that sparkles with swinging forces and driven passion. While Picot's lyrics are included in the album's liner booklet, their clear understanding is hampered by the over-powering music. In places the singer attempts to put too many words into a single phrase, making it difficult to comprehend. While the music takes over, it also lends a creative force to the program's spontaneous quality. Thus, the audience is able to enjoy listening to the music, but must resort to reading the lyrics for the booklet. As the two aspects come together, one overpowers the other.

"Afternoon Cocoon" provides a lilting waltz time adventure, while "Suddenly Sane" jogs convulsively with an up-tempo samba texture. Peterson and Denson solo frequently, and drummer Ronen Itzik provides a solid foundation. The Unity of Panama City Choir joins them briefly for a portion of "Lucid Blue", which moves lightly with a languorous bossa nova quality. Picot's spacious ballad "What if Truth Could Tell" lingers in the heart with deep meaning. Performed as a piano-vocal duo, the piece explores relationships on both a personal and universal level. "Stay Awake" drives with a decidedly bebop texture. While "Fine Tuning" explores a feverish blues stroll. Both represent the mainstream well, while providing a showcase for Picot's deep lyrics. The album closes with "Until Then", which offers a timeless prayer of hope and patience for all in their daily endeavors. Picot's album represents a love letter that she's graciously surrounded with the sounds of enthralling mainstream jazz.