

## Helen Merrill - Dream of You (Deluxe Digipack) (2008)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 13 March 2010 11:45 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 November 2014 14:28

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01 - *People Will Say We're In Love* 02:37 02 - *By Myself* 03:26 03 - *Any Place I Hang My Hat Is Home* 04:12 04 - *I've Never Seen* 03:35 05 - *He Was Too Good To Me* 03:04 06 - *A New Town Is A Blue Town* 03:12 07 - *You're Lucky To Me* 03:28 08 - *Where Flamingos Fly* 02:47 09 - *Dream Of You* 02:55 10 - *I'm Fool To Want You* 04:08 11 - *I'm Just A Lucky So And So* 03:10 12 - *Troubled Waters* 03:16 13 - *Soft As Spring* 03:16 14 - *Black Is The Color Of My True Love's Hair* 02:53 15 - *Lazy Afternoon* 03:10 16 - *The Things We Did Last Summer* 03:08 17 - *After You, Who?* 03:05 18 - *If You Go* 03:12 19 - *If I Forget You* 03:22 20 - *If Love Were All* 03:07 21 - *Easy Come Easy Go* 03:44 22 - *I'll Be Around* 02:45 Personnel: Helen Merrill (vocals); Jerome Richardson (alto & tenor saxophones, flute); John LaPorta (alto saxophone, clarinet); Danny Bank (baritone saxophone); Art Farmer, Louis Mucci (trumpets); Joe Bennett, Jimmy Cleveland (trombones); Janet Putnam (harp); Hank Jones (piano); Barry Galbraith (guitar); Oscar Pettiford (bass); Joe Morello (drums).

One thing that set Helen Merrill apart from other '50s jazz singers was her acutely dramatic vocal style. Her earnest phrasing, elongated notes and incandescent tone might even strike the contemporary listener as qualities more appropriate for the Broadway stage than a jazz club. On 1955's *Dream of You*, though, Merrill found reconciliation, sounding both melodramatic and swinging within Gil Evans' darkly spacious, yet economical arrangements. Suitably, torchy ballads are prominent. On the somewhat grandiose side there's "Where Flamingos Fly" and "I'm a Fool to Want You," which find Merrill in a pensive mood amidst a variety of tempo and timbre shifts. More subdued ground is covered on "I've Never Seen" and "He Was Too Good to Me." Briskly swinging numbers like "People Will Say We're In Love," "By Myself," and "You're Lucky to Me" balance the program and feature the demure, yet fluid delivery Merrill favored on fast numbers. What is most impressive on this date is a group of sultry, medium tempo numbers including "Anywhere I Lay My Hat Is Home," "Just a Lucky So and So," and in particular "A New Town Is a Blue Town." The programmatic quality of Merrill's coyly sensual voice and Evans' slightly askew, bubbling reeds and languid rhythm conjure up dramatic, balmy southern scenes à la Tennessee Williams. In the picturesque arrangements one also hears the seeds of Evans' own future collaborations with Miles Davis. In addition to the first 12 tracks that make up the original *Dream of You* album, the CD reissue includes numbers from a 1954 session arranged

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by Johnny Richard which feature ballads in the dramatic Merrill mode like "Alone Together" and "This Is My Night to Cry" in addition to the wistful "How's the World Treating You." If Merrill's distinct combination of June Christy's soaring intensity and Sarah Vaughan's flexibility is something you can not get enough of then indulge in The Complete Helen Merrill on Mercury (1954-1958) which covers her early recording period. If you just want a representative sample of her work at the time then get Dream of You. Even though her collaboration with Clifford Brown is a great recording, this one with Gil Evans shows off more of Merrill's expressive vocal talents due in no small part to the sympathetic and urbane arrangements. ---Stephen Cook, allmusic.com

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