

Rebecca Parris – You Don't Know Me (2007)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 28 December 2011 09:40 - Last Updated Monday, 13 April 2015 20:00

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1 *Weaver of Dreams* 2 *I Didn't Know About You* 3 *All of You* [play](#) 4 *You Don't Know Me*
5 *Lush Life* 6 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* 7 *Yesterdays/we'll Be Together Again* 8 *Don't*
Go to Strangers 9 *I Wish I Knew* 10 *My Ship* 11 *Alone Together* 12 *Desafinado*
[play](#)

13 *Too Late Now* 14 *East of the Sun* 15 *Smile*

Personnel: Rebecca Parris: vocals; Brad Hatfield: piano, synthesizer; Peter Kontrimas: bass; Matt Gordy: drums (except 4); Jim Lattini: drums (4); Jerry Bergonzi: tenor saxophone (6,7,9,11,14); Gary Burton: vibes: (3,10,15); Houston Person: tenor saxophone (1,4,8).

How does a singer ensure that there's sufficient variety on a fifteen-song record that the attention of even a passionate jazz vocal fan doesn't wander? *You Don't Know Me*, the tenth recording that Rebecca Parris has appeared on, represents yet another successful response by the revered Boston-area vocalist to this challenge.

The album features two powerfully expressive tenor saxophonists (Houston Person and Jerry Bergonzi) on various tracks. They clearly project the type of strong instrumental voice which is capable of standing up to and complementing Parris' own well known potent delivery. Her pairing here on three tracks with Gary Burton's sparkling vibes, for the first time since 1993's *It's Another Day*, also adds considerable richness and depth.

But the bedrock of most of the tunes, in addition of course to Parris' own resolute honesty, intensity and intelligence, would have to be the well-integrated rhythm section of pianist Brad Hatfield, bassist Peter Kontrimas and drummer Matt Gordy, who consistently demonstrate the benefit of working together as Parris' rhythm section for a number of years.

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The uplifting, mid-tempo opener, "Weaver of Dreams, find Parris swinging and features Houston Person's trademark vigorous sound on a stimulating solo. He also lends effective obbligato support to her on the ballad title track, which projects a strong gospel feel—somewhat ironically, given the country & western origins of the composer, Eddy Arnold. In the last of Person's three appearances, "Don't Go to Strangers, the biggest hit of his late long-time musical partner, Etta Jones, his Ben Webster-like tone fittingly dovetails with Parris' sensitive, soulful reading.

The medley of "Yesterdays and "We'll be Together Again finds her subtly sliding from the former into the latter so seamlessly that they appear to be one song. Perhaps the most insistently and easy-swinging number, "I Wish I Knew, launches smoothly after the beguiling ballad tempo verse. Parris and Jerry Bergonzi create what could serve as an excellent primer for jazz vocal students and their saxophone partners.

The Kurt Weill/Ira Gershwin jewel "My Ship, with a gorgeously crystalline Gary Burton opener, followed by his and bassist Peter Kontrimas' majestic orchestral overtones throughout, provides a stunning background for Parris' interpretation, as much for what it says as all it suggests. The vibes/bass format also supplies appropriately touching, intimate accompaniment to Parris' hopeful take on the closer, "Smile, immortalized by Charlie Chaplin. Both of these numbers, among others, illustrate her impressive ability to sublimate her powerfully explosive chops and intense, natural emotion into the tenderness and nuance such songs call for. ---Tom Pierce, allaboutjazz.com

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