

Carmen McRae – Carmen Sings Monk (1988)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 15 October 2009 21:31 - Last Updated Saturday, 16 August 2014 15:38

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1. *Get It Straight (a.k.a. Straight, No Chaser) - (live)*
2. *Dear Ruby (a.k.a. Ruby, My Dear)*
3. *It's Over Now (a.k.a. Well, You Needn't)*
4. *Monkery's The Blues (a.k.a. Blue Monk)*
5. *You Know Who (a.k.a. I Mean You)*
6. *Little Butterfly (a.k.a. Pannonica)*
7. *Listen To Monk (a.k.a. Rhythm-A-Ning)*
8. *How I Wish... (a.k.a. Ask Me How)*
9. *Man, That Was A Dream (a.k.a. Monk's Dream)*
10. *Round Midnight*
11. *Still We Dream (a.k.a. Ugly Beauty)*
12. *Suddenly (a.k.a. In Walked Bud) - (live)*
13. *Looking Back (a.k.a. Reflections)*
14. *Suddenly - (previously unreleased, alternate take)*
15. *Get It Straight - (previously unreleased, alternate take)*
16. *Round Midnight - (previously unreleased, alternate take)*
17. *Listen To Monk - (previously unreleased, alternate take)*
18. *Man, That Was A Dream - (previously unreleased, alternate take)*

Carmen McRae (vocals); Clifford Jordan (soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone); Charlie Rouse (tenor saxophone); Eric Gunnison, Larry Willis (piano); George Mraz (bass); Al Foster (drums).

Carmen McRae, a good friend of Thelonious Monk, sang 13 of his songs (two of which are also heard in different live versions) on this memorable project. Half of the lyrics are by Jon Hendricks, while the remainder were written by Abbey Lincoln ("Blue Monk"), Bernie Hanighen, Sally Swisher, or Mike Ferro. On all but the two concert performances, McRae is assisted by tenor saxophonist Clifford Jordan, pianist Eric Gunnison, bassist George Mraz, and drummer Al

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Foster; Mraz's solos are particularly impressive, although everyone is in sensitive form. The live recordings give listeners two more chances to acknowledge the uniqueness of tenor saxophonist Charlie Rouse's tone. As for McRae, her phrasing has rarely sounded better than on this classic set, and it is a particular pleasure to hear her interpret the intelligent lyrics and unusual melodies. "Dear Ruby" ("Ruby, My Dear") and "Listen to Monk" ("Rhythm-A-Ning") are among the high points of the essential and very delightful CD. An inspired idea and one of the best recordings of Carmen McRae's career. ---Scott Yanow

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