Dee Dee Bridgewater - To Billie With Love (2010)



01. Lady Sings The Blues [03:32]
02. All Of Me [03:01]
03. Good Morning Heartache [05:10]
04. Lover Man [04:43] play
05. You've Changed [05:10]
06. Miss Brown To You [02:13]
07. Don't Explain [06:14] play
08. Fine And Mellow[04:55]
09. Mother's Son-in-Law [02:47]
10. God Bless The Child [05:13]
11. Foggy Day [04:33]
12. Strange Fruit [04:16]

Personnel:
Dee Dee Bridgewater - vocals
Edsel Gomez - piano
James Carter - saxophones
Christian McBride - bass
Lewis Nash – drums

Dee Dee Bridgewater, właściwie Denise Eileen Garrett (ur. 27 maja 1950 w Memphis w stanie Tennessee w USA), amerykańska aktorka, wokalistka jazzowa i prowadząca audycję JazzSet with Dee Dee Bridgewater w National Public Radio, zdobywczyni dwóch nagród Grammy (1998) i nagrody Tony (1975). We wczesnych latach 70. dołączyła jako wokalistka do Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. To był początek jej kariery jazzowej. W tym czasie grała koncerty z takimi muzykami jak Sonny Rollins, Dizzy Gillespie, Dexter Gordon czy Max Roach. W 1973 roku wystąpiła na Festiwalu Jazzowym w Monterey. To była przepustka do sukcesu. Rok później wydała swój pierwszy solowy albym Afro Blue i wystąpiła na Broadwayu w

musicalu The Wiz. 6 lutego 2010 r. Dee Dee wystąpiła z koncertem na festiwalu Zadymka Jazzowa w Bielsku-Białej, gdzie otrzymała statuetkę Anioła Jazzowego. Występując z kwartetem pod kierunkiem aranżera Edsela Gomeza, zaprezentowała utwory składające się na nowy album "To Billie With Love: A Celebration of LADY DAY".

Over the course of a multifaceted career that has spanned four decades, Dee Dee Bridgewater has risen to the top tier of today's jazz vocalists, putting her own unique spin on standards as well as taking intrepid leaps of faith in re-envisioning jazz classics. For her latest recording, Eleanora Fagan (1915-1959): To Billie With Love From Dee Dee, Bridgewater honors an iconic jazz figure, Billie Holiday, who died tragically at the age of 44 a half-century ago. "This album is my way of paying my respect to a vocalist who made it possible for singers like me to carve out a career for ourselves," says Bridgewater, who performed the role of Holiday in the triumphant theatrical production, Lady Day—based on the singer's autobiography, Lady Sings the Blues—staged in Paris and London in 1986 and 1987. "I wanted Eleanora Fagan to be something different: more modern and a celebration, not a [recording] that goes dark and sullen and maudlin. I wanted the album to be joyful."

Bridgewater adds that Eleanora Fagan goes far deeper than being a tribute album of retreaded Holiday tunes. "Billie deserves to have her music heard in another light," she says, "and I definitely didn't set out to imitate her." Key to the fresh approach is pianist Edsel Gomez, Bridgewater's longtime band mate who wrote new arrangements for the 12 songs on the album, including the African polyrhythmic-charged interpretation of "Lady Sings the Blues, " a reharmonized version of "All of Me" and the gospel-tinged "God Bless the Child." Says Bridgewater: "Edsel is an extremely gifted, talented arranger with very modern ideas. Edsel has the ability to be modern and work in a tasteful fashion."

Gomez took on the daunting challenge of bringing new life to the music with enthusiasm. "I listened to everything Billie Holiday ever recorded," he says. "I let her music speak to me." He also kept in mind the personalities of the all-star band Bridgewater had assembled for the recording: dynamic reeds player James Carter, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash. "This was my dream band," says Bridgewater. "I got to work with these musicians who I'd been dying to play with. I thought, I can't miss. With this band I can have a hard-swinging, touching celebration of Billie's music."

Bridgewater sings into the nuances of such songs as “Good Morning Heartache,” “Lover Man” and “Fine and Mellow” with an allure that’s equal parts sexy, spunky and sublime. “This was the first time when I wasn’t concerned about having a particular sound of voice,” Bridgewater says. “I was just singing from my gut. It was all so swinging and so soulful.” Other highlights include the haunting “You’ve Changed” with Carter blowing smoky soul to complement Bridgewater’s moving vocals, the spunky “Mother’s Son-in-Law” with McBride dueting with the coquettish singer, and the uptempo “Miss Brown to You” featuring Nash’s drumming prowess.

Over the course of her career, Bridgewater has paid homage to monumental figures of the music world, recording albums dedicated to Ella Fitzgerald (the Grammy Award-winning Dear Ella, 1997), Horace Silver (Love and Peace: A Tribute to Horace Silver, 1995) and Kurt Weill (This Is New, 2002). But with Eleanora Fagan—the follow-up to 2007’s brilliant Red Earth: A Malian Journey that melded the music of Mali with jazz—Bridgewater delivers one of the most remarkable recording performances of her career. “Dee Dee is a spirited dynamo and a soulful balladeer,” says liner note writer Dan Ouellette. “She sings with a razor-edged voice; she scats with abandon; she makes you cry. She even chokes up herself upon descending into the ghoulish drama of ‘Strange Fruit,’ which serves as the album’s poignant finale. She gives a moving read with a sparse arrangement supporting her.”

Instead of playing it safe and recreating her performance in Lady Day, on Eleanora Fagan, Bridgewater reacquaints herself with Holiday, shining a new ray of love on the often-misunderstood jazz icon. “I wanted the record to be a collection that would not be like the music of the show,” she says. That philosophy is in keeping with Bridgewater’s approach to all of her projects: “I want to move forward, just as I’ve done with each of my albums. To not go backwards, but progress. Constantly.”

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