

Julie London - Sophisticated Lady (1962)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 23 December 2011 09:22 - Last Updated Sunday, 28 December 2014 19:58

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01. *Sophisticated Lady* [play](#) 02. *Blame It on My Youth* 03. *Make It Another Old-Fashioned, Please* 04. *You're Blase* 05. *Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered* 06. *Spring Can Really Hang You up the Most* 07. *Remind Me* 08. *When She Makes Music* 09. *When the World Was Young* 10. *If I Should Lose You* 11. *Where Am I to Go* 12. *Absent Minded Me* [play](#)

"Sophisticated" is the right word to describe Julie London's cool vocal approach; it can be shoved into the background, but if you listen closely there's a lot of turmoil going on under its seemingly calm surface. Similar to Chet Baker's unruffled way with a lyric, London's self-described "thimble full of a voice" ends up describing how pain hasn't quite iced over all her emotions rather than proving how unfeeling she is. Also like Baker, so many of her best recordings are steeped in the style and mood of laid-back West Coast jazz. "Sophisticated Lady" is one of a string of records London cut in the early '60s with less of a jazz feel than most of her sessions from the '50s, but it's still a worthy album. If it's not exactly an essential session, it is a good one, and the backing orchestra is to blame for the album's shortcomings -- not the vocalist. The charts balance a mellow -- very mellow -- kind of 1940s-era swing feeling (think of Tommy Dorsey or Glenn Miller doing a slow-dance number) with heavy string statements and semi-classical passages. They aren't particularly obtrusive or bad charts, but they are undistinguished, and the arranger for the date doesn't even get a credit on the album sleeve. It's these arrangements, not London's vocal performance, that make this a mediocre, but still worthy, album. (To hear how this approach is done correctly, just listen to Nelson Riddle's beautiful and more jazz-flavored work on Frank Sinatra's exquisite "Nice 'N' Easy" album.) That's not to say it's not a good disc, though, and standout tracks include Cole Porter's witty "booze as a cure for heartache" number "Make It Another Old-Fashioned Please" and three songs by writers associated with cool jazz. The Wolf/Landesman cut "Spring Can Really Hang You up the Most" has deservedly earned its status as a standard, but the neglected "Absent Minded Me" by Bob Merrill and Bobby Troup's "Where Am I to Go" deserve to be rediscovered and more widely recorded. --- Nick Dedina, AMG

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