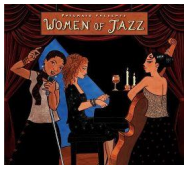
Putumayo Presents: Women of Jazz (2008)



1. Melody Cardot – Goodnite (3:07) 2. Madeleine Peyroux – Dance me to the End of Love (3:57) 3. Cassandra Wilson – Lover Come Back to Me (4:16) 4. Sophie Milman – Lonely in New York (3:16) 5. Hope Waits – I?ll be Satisfied (2:56) 6. Kate Paradise – Mean to Me (4:29) 7. Jennifer Hartswick – Lover Man (3:11) 8. Stacey Kent – Shall We Dance (3:42) 9. Della Griffin – It Could Happen To You (4:12) 10. Etta Jones – Since I Fell for You (6:04)

As Putumayo builds its genre base to include a little more than its initial world pop, jazz appears to be one of the first targets on their continued march. Hearkening back to some of their older releases focusing on women, here the label collects a series of female jazz performers. Luckily for the listener, the stereotypical torch singing is kept to a minimum. These women indeed lean heavily toward the vocal-only end of affairs, but there's enough innovation in their styles to keep the album afloat and out of sheer torch territory. The album opens with a stylish, slinky piece from Melody Gardot, immediately followed by Madeleine Peyroux, who turns an old Leonard Cohen piece into something of a torch song with a breathy delivery -- the piano keeps the song intriguing, but this is verging on the stereotypical in terms of female vocal form. Cassandra Wilson updates "Lover Come Back to Me" with some noteworthy speed, and Sophie Milman contributes a fairly classic style on her original number, the real star being her voice. Hope Waits tosses in a heavily Southern-inflected version of an old Jackie Wilson number, Kate Paradise adds a bit of simple scatting to an otherwise standard delivery of a songbook piece, and Jennifer Hartswick (perhaps best known for working with Trey Anastasio) gives "Lover Man" a nice workover with a highly capable delivery, though her trumpet unfortunately never comes out for this album. A young upstart gives a kittenish performance of the old show tune "Shall We Dance" that seems to take equal influence for its delivery from Eartha Kitt and Van Morrison's "Moondance." The album finishes with a pair of longtime performers, Della Griffin's gruff nightclub vocals preceding Etta Jones' blues-born remake of an old classic of hers in "Since I Fell for You." The album as a whole tends toward the predictable in many ways -- there are some grand dames of the nightclub scene, some songbook-heavy torch singers, some straightforward singers with beautiful voices but little else. However, Putumayo has found a few twists to throw in, handpicking some vocalists with extraordinary sounds, with intriguing twists to their composition styles, with a stylish nature that's missing from the multitude of female jazz

vocalists out there. Not that it would have hurt to have a female instrumentalist or two represented (Marian McPartland is never a bad addition), but for vocal jazz, this one has a nice mix of possibilities. ---Adam Greenberg, Rovi

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