Stacey Kent – Dreamsville (2001)



01. I've Got a Crush On You [0:04:43.52] 02. When Your Lover Has Gone [0:04:35.28] 03. Isn't It a Pity [0:05:34.35] 04. You Are There [0:02:27.27] ` play 05. Under a Blanket of Blue [0:04:03.38] 06. Dreamsville [0:05:35.45] 07. Polka Dots & Moonbeams [0:04:34.42] 08. Hushabye Mountain [0:02:38.35]
play
09. Little Girl Blue [0:05:38.48] 10. You're Looking At Me [0:04:31.65] 11. Violets For Your Furs [0:05:44.50] 12. Thanks For The Memory [0:04:12.52]
Personnel: Stacey Kent (vocals); Jim Tomlinson (tenor saxophone, flute, clarinet); David Newton (piano); Colin Oxley (guitar); Simon Thorpe (bass); Jasper Kviberg (drums).

Vocalist Stacey Kent may or may not be "the greatest ballad singer in half a century," as her PR claims, but her straightforward renditions of these by-request ballads are not at all generic. What makes them consistently delightful is her unique sound and delivery. There's a certain brassiness, a trumpet-like pointedness, in her voice, as well as a host of endearing idiosyncrasies. Listen to her pronounce the word "idea" in George and Ira Gershwin's "Isn't It a Pity?" Or deliver these remarkable lyrics from the same song: "What joys untasted!/You, reading Heine/Me, somewhere in China." And later, "My nights were sour, spent with Schopenhauer." Kent knows how to make every tune fit her own musical persona. Dreamsville includes a number of seldom-heard gems, particularly "You Are There" by Johnny Mandel and Dave Frishberg, "You're Looking at Me" by Bobby Troup, and the ever-stunning title track by Henry Mancini. She also presents perennial favorites like "Polka Dots and Moonbeams" and "Thanks for the Memory" (the latter not exactly a ballad). And although this is Kent's hour all the way, her band provides expert backing and more than a few surprises. The singer's husband, Jim Tomlinson, takes a break from tenor sax to play a sumptuous clarinet solo on "Polka Dots." And in the midst of Rodgers & Hart's "Little Girl Blue," pianist David Newton, bassist Simon Thorpe, and drummer Jasper Kviberg fall away, entering again only after Tomlinson and Colin Oxley perform a hushed tenor/guitar duet chorus. --- David R. Adler, allmusic.com

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