

Irene Atman's New York Rendezvous

Album: New York Rendezvous / Irene Atman / Jazz Standards - Vocals

Reviewed by Joe Montague Publisher and Senior Editor for Riveting Riffs Magazine



Meeting Irene Atman in person, you are immediately impressed by her poise, charm, sophistication and the grace with which she conducts herself, without any air of Divahood, so it should come as no surprise to the listener that Ms. Atman projects those same qualities through her music on her new album *New York Rendezvous* which she debuted April 16th in her hometown Toronto. Backed by a superb ensemble consisting of longtime friend Frank Kimbrough on piano, upright bassist Jay Anderson, drummer Matt Wilson and saxophonist Joel Frahm, whose star continues to rise on the jazz scene, Ms. Atman and Mr. Kimbrough have co-produced an album which creates an intimate mood for the listener.

Irene Atman's book of poetry set to music, opens with Henry Mancini's "Two For The Road," (with lyrics by Leslie Bricusse), a song which Mancini wrote as the theme for the movie of the same name, starring Albert Finney and Audrey Hepburn, although in the film we hear just the music sans the words. Ms. Atman sets the stage for romance, with her exquisite phrasing of, "*If you're feeling fancy free / come wander through the world with me / and any place we chance to be / will be a rendezvous.*" First pianist Frank Kimbrough gently

serenades her and then it is Joel Frahm's turn to woo Ms. Atman with his luxurious saxophone vibes.

Ms. Atman's upbeat vocals for Vernon Duke / Ted Fetter and John Latouche's 1940 standard "Taking a Chance on Love," are built upon the strong pizzicato bass of Jay Anderson, before Frank Kimbrough slides into an inspiring piano solo. The song is from *Cabin in the Sky*, the first Broadway musical to feature an all African American cast, which was subsequently, followed by once again an all African American cast in the film, both of which starred legendary actress and singer Ethel Waters. Although the song "Taking a Chance on Love," was popularized by the Benny Goodman Band and singer Helen Forrest in 1943 when it went all the way to # 1 on the music charts, in listening to Irene Atman's rendition on *New York Rendezvous* she brings far more joy and projects an authentic sense of a woman in love than did Helen Forrest.

Americans of a certain vintage, may be familiar with the song "It's Impossible," sung by Perry Como, which was translated from the Spanish original "Somos Novios," written by Mexican composer Armando Manzanero Canché. Ms. Atman, singing in Spanish and again elegantly accompanied by Mr. Kimbrough's piano and Jay Anderson's subtle bass, beautifully portrays a woman deeply in love as she sings this pretty bolero.

The romantic standards continue with “Time After Time,” featuring a lengthy and spritely piano solo and some upbeat bass grooves, as we hear a little bit more of Irene Atman’s bigger voice. The sixth track “I’m A Fool To Want You,” laments a love that she cannot do without, even though she knows this would be the best path to follow, as Joel Frahm’s saxophone tries to comfort the singer.

Drummer Matt Wilson’s snare drum introduces the song “Charade,” a relationship song about going through the motions, a tune which features a sensitive sax solo. The song “Alfie,” from the 1966 film starring Michael Caine and Shelley Winters poses the question to the tragic figure of Alfie Elkins (Michael Caine) what have your adulterous ways accomplished and where is your life heading? Irene Atman’s performance allows the listener to close his or her eyes and imagine that she is on a Broadway stage. Ms. Atman brings transparency to her vocals and she is always “in the moment.”

This storybook of romance closes out fittingly with “The Glory of Love.” Irene Atman’s *New York Rendezvous* belongs in the collection of anyone who truly considers that they are jazz connoisseurs.

To listen to the music of Irene Atman please visit her website **www.ireneatman.com**

Reviewed April 2010

All written, photographic and graphic content contained on www.rivetingriffs.com remains the property of Riveting Riffs, and the contributing writers, artists and photographers. The content on this site is protected by copyright and all rights are reserved. The content may not be reproduced in print, appear on other websites or be transmitted electronically without the written permission of Riveting Riffs Ltd. ©