

THE TUNES

WHEN SUNNY GETS BLUE

I don't know about you, but for me certain memories of musical moments never fade. One memory is sitting in with a pianist on this tune for the first time together. A frustrated CPA for years, he'd finally quit to go on the road playing jazz in his 40s. If that were not sufficiently inspiring, his gifts included knowing a gazillion songs and playing them so beautifully and sensitively and in any key. I can still hear and feel the incredible chord he brought me in with on "Sunny" a year before I'd even begun to sing professionally. Never topped, the memory still informs my feelings when singing this tune.

DINDI

"Dindi" means "little jewel" in Brazil, home of its composer Antonio Carlos Jobim. I'd dropped out of singing (not in the shower, not even "Happy Birthday") for 15 years when a tiny Yorkie puppy, whose coat would mature to a ginger color, entered my world. I went through the typical names: Cinnamon, Pumpkin, Honey, Ginger ... Gingie, "Dindi"! Of course! My long-time favorite, this tune was introduced to me in my home by a Brazilian vocalist in 1965, even before it was imported to the US in English. Singing it to that two-pound bundle helped get me back to my music. Thanks to Harry for his brilliant suggestion to do it as a ballad and to Mags for the sweetness he brought to it.

HEY THERE

In the fall of 1954, sung by Rosemary Clooney, from the smash *Pajama Game* (the character sings it looking in a mirror), this song hit Number-1. For years it was my "audition" and sit-in song. No longer being typical, I dug it out for Harry to try out and it swung, but was never included in prior versions of this project. With Patrick at the helm, Jim and I had a blast recording this duet.

ONE NOTE SAMBA

A sucker for a Bossa Nova, I have always had this tune on my A-list and I have to tell a story about it. A fan from my neighborhood accosted me after seeing my first show following my 15-year hiatus, raving about my gig and how much he loved my voice. Then

he said, "But there's one thing I have to tell you..." I couldn't have guessed what was next when he said, "I'm" (Ready Joe?) "tone deaf" (dah-dum-bum!). After I recovered, I said, "That goes in the act: Bossa Nova for me and 'One Note Samba' for my tone-deaf friend!"

DON'T BLAME ME

This is one tune I never paid much attention to until my twice-weekly two-year immersion in the vocal workshops of Barry Harris, jazz pianist and guru to so many in New York and world-wide. Because he has such great respect for it, I included this song here in homage to Barry, "the keeper of the bebop flame." I also had the good fortune to sing this song many times with pianist David

Lahm, who, a fine player in his own right, is also the son of its lyricist, Dorothy Fields.

WOULDN'T IT BE LOVERLY?

I first heard this *My Fair Lady* classic swung slowly by a trumpet player sitting in with Harry one Sunday as we were getting ready to record. That feel floated my cork and I began playing with it; I have yet to hear another version with this approach.

ALMOST LIKE BEING IN LOVE

This track is from the first take of our first session in April 1999. Captive in a tiny make-shift vocal booth, peering at the band through a small window, with moving-van quilts and coats hung around me for soundproofing, Harry's solo made me grin, then giggle, then weep! Making a record had been my dream for,

at that time, 59 years, and I was doing it!!! Dubbing the vocal duet with Jim made it even more fun! Thanks go to Jim and to Harry for that particular solo that day - and all it will always mean to me.

IMAGINATION

David's tender collaboration made recording this song exceptional. We initially taped three takes of it at One Soul to make use of remaining studio time and "have it in the can." When Jim heard it, he said it should definitely be included on the earlier version of the CD on which we were working. It was and here it still is. May you imagine and magnetize to you your most precious dreams.

LOVE IS HERE TO STAY

This is a tune I love to sing and always find the jazz waltz

feel adds spice to a set and a twinkle to the eyes of the players. Re-recording the duet with Jim brought to the track a whole new flavor which never fails to make me grin.

THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME

Someone dear to me wears hats, sips tea and sometimes sings off-key. Those and more associations with the lyric give me a lot to play off with this tune. A swinging, humorous well-loved song from the Great American Songbook, it's a pleasure to include it in any set and on this CD.

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU

This is a tune from June Christy's first solo album when she left Stan Kenton. I loved singing my arrangement with this quartet

and trading fours with Mags. An earlier vocal version can be found playing over the opening credits of a feature film with the chorus of fours playing later during a party in the film.

I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU

I've always loved this tune and it's no surprise that it climbed even higher on my list after singing it many times as a duet with Jim. Over many years we have also gathered several inside jokes about the lyrics.

SOMETHING COOL

When I was 17, my family abruptly moved from Manhattan to Cape Cod — seven miles from anything and me without a driver's license! As an independent NYC high-school senior, now in the sticks, I had to rely on the kindness of others for

any mobility. A kindred spirit (with her license) shared my love of Christy's first solo album, *Something Cool*. After school, we'd listen endlessly to it, inhaling the beautiful but desperate story of failure and delusion in the title tune, each of us dreaming of performing it. Well, it's never too late! Here it is, title tune on my first record *Something STILL Cool*. Thanks to David for his lovely and sensitive accompaniment on my most personal and heartfelt selection.

We all loved doing these songs for you and hope you enjoy them.

—Elli Fordyce

ELLI FORDYCE



PHOTO: MARIN ANGELO

While listening to the music on this CD, which consists of thoughtful renditions of 13 standards, two questions come immediately to mind. How can the singer possibly be 70 when her voice can pass for 40? And where has she been all of this time?

The second question is easier to answer than the first. After an early start as a singer, Elli Fordyce took time off to have a family before returning for 10 years of touring and performing all over the United States and the nearby area in a countless number of settings. A serious car accident contributed to her decision to stop singing for a long period of time, but now she is back and in prime form.

Elli has a very attractive style, putting a lot of feeling into the lyrics she interprets while always

swinging; her phrasing is quite infectious. Joined by some of her favorite musicians (including the tasteful pianist Harry Whitaker and occasional contributions from Joe Magnarelli on flugelhorn) and five charming vocal duets with Jim Malloy, she has finally made her recording debut with *Something STILL Cool*. Her versions of such songs as "When Sunny Gets Blue," "Don't Blame Me," "It Could Happen To You," a touching "Something Cool" and her duet with Malloy on "Almost Like Being In Love" are among the highlights but every selection has much to offer. Although I can hear a bit of Anita O'Day in spots, Elli has her own sound and approach, making each song sound like her own.

As for the initial question, the only answer I can come up with is that this CD is evidence that jazz keeps one young.

—Scott Yanow

Author of nine books on jazz including *Jazz On Film*, *Jazz On Record 1917-76* and *Trumpet Kings*

SOMETHING COOL

still
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Elli Fordyce
with Jim Malloy

