

Bulletin du hcf

Organe musical du Hot Club de France

STEPHANIE TRICK

“LIVE AT THE SHELDON CONCERT HALL”

Self-produced - www.stephanietrick.com

Viper's drag, In the wee small hours of the morning, Liza, Mule walk, Anitra's dance, Blues for Alfie, Handful of keys, Roberto Clemente, Shout for joy, Everything happens to me, Bach up to me, St. Louis blues, Champs-Élysées, I ain't got nobody, Nothin', Echoes of spring, Truckin', Hallelujah, Harlem strut

A lovely disc! With a jazz CD from a classically trained artist at the piano, we're sure to hear great technique, a light touch, and good control of the tone of the instrument. However, we can't help but wonder if the artist understands the “jazz” phrasing, the art of attack and transitions, the right feeling for this music and, of course, the swing. We would expect a clean execution, irreproachable from a certain point of view – pleasant, but not necessarily what a jazz disc should be.

The young Stephanie Trick has made remarkable progress on all the points I noted in a few years. This CD, recorded live in St. Louis, Missouri, in May 2010, is the proof. Nourished by the best sources (Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Albert Ammons, Donald Lambert, Willie Smith), she also knows the major representatives of contemporary jazz piano (Dick Hyman, Ralph Sutton, Bernd Lhotzky, Louis Mazetier): her sensitivity and talent do the rest.

Very quickly, the listener appreciates a nuanced touch, a keyboard that “breathes,” a capacity to bring out the melody (**In the Wee Small Hours**), as well as a firm line without downtime or hesitations, and the swing is right on with smooth and delicate accents (**Shout for Joy**, **Truckin'**, **Harlem Strut**). At the most, we can pick out a very slight instability in the tempo of **Blues for Alfie** or **Handful of Keys**, but it's not at all troublesome.

The pretty ballad **In the Wee Small Hours** is played with great sensitivity – like **Roberto Clemente** – but also shows that she has not yet fully mastered the depth of feeling in jazz; and this wonderful piano playing still lets you feel a bit of the classical spirit, which is not, strictly speaking, a reproach. The two pieces make you think of the music of the American composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869), said to be the “Chopin of America.” The lightness and variety in the



Shout for Joy boogie and in **Everything Happens** has something that reminds you of the Lion. The energy and precision of articulation give life to the next piece [**Bach Up To Me**] and to the last [**Harlem Strut**], where the fast tempo is still comfortable both for the pianist and the listener. You will also notice the beautiful manner in which Stephanie Trick uses the upper register of the keyboard at the end of **I Ain't Got Nobody**, as well as the original treatment of the song by Joe Dassin, **Champs-Élysées**.

Personal interpretation is not lacking. Some pieces, however, are respectful of tradition or excellence, such as **Mule Walk** (James P. Johnson, 1943) or **Handful of Keys** (Fats Waller, 1928), but **Echoes of Spring**, which seems to "paralyze" many pianists, probably because of the perfection and the intensity of the piece, shows a certain contribution from Stephanie Trick: other rubato, intonation, additional notes, etc. – great taste and an undeniable sense of poetry.

Let's hope that this young musician goes even further in this direction: we would love to hear her in an ensemble where the piano has the difficult role of accompaniment. I think that she perfectly captures the instrument, and you should not hesitate to acquire this CD. (D.J.)

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