

2019

“If you’ve heard any of Sue McCreeth’s critically acclaimed albums, such as *Look Back and Love* (2017), you will know that she has a rare talent for moulding the tone of her voice to match the atmosphere and message of a song. Cool and misty, warm and emotional, whatever the song the voice naturally takes on its colouring.

Save the Children Now is a song with a simple but increasingly serious message. The melody is also simple, but memorable. Sue, who studied at the prestigious Berklee Music College in Boston, takes particular care over not only the lyrics and melodies of her songs, but also their underlying harmonies - less obvious but just as important. The total effect, with subtle accompaniment from piano, strings and choir, added to the touch of urgency in Sue’s clear voice, is irresistible.”

Dave Gelly, music critic for The Observer newspaper, on “Save the Children Now”

“You lift up everyone who collaborates with you.”

Joe Mulholland, Professor of Harmony, Berklee College of Music, Boston, USA

2017

“Your work is logical and effective. This seems to come naturally to you.”

Gary Burton, Berklee College of Music, Boston, USA

Jazz Journal June 2017

Look Back and Love

Sue McCreeth comes as a breath of fresh air to a scene where vocal jazz is often represented by the Great American Songbook, attempts to render Dylan, Cohen and Nick Cave as jazz, and more or less harmony-free poeticisms. Well, “fresh air” may be debated since she picks up where the 70s and 80s left off, but refreshing it is to hear again colourful chromatic harmony mixed with modal groove, the kind of thing ejected too soon from the jazz canon by the Marsalis effect.

She says the records that made her hungry for what she calls the “modern post-60s feel” were Wayne Shorter’s *Native Dancer*, Miles Davis’s *Bitches Brew* and *In A Silent Way*, Chick Corea’s work with Flora Purim and Airto Moreiro, and Cassandra Wilson’s *Travelling Miles*.

“Airto Moreiro’s “Lilia” blows my mind still. I also listened a lot to Erykah Badu in the 90s and I heard a lot of Pat Metheny and John Scofield. I had a driving need to tap into this 60s and post 60s kind of jazz, even though I was playing jazz standards in my day job, playing piano and singing in hotels. Recently I have been listening to a lot of Laura Nyro. I go through stages of listening to her songs, and my song “Til I Am In the Wrong Place” is influenced by Billy Childs’ *Map To The Treasure* album which features great contemporary singers and a wonderful jazz line-up including Wayne Shorter.”

Sue was born in North Weald, Essex, in 1960 to an RAF family, emulating in childhood Nancy Sinatra, Lonnie Donegan and Ella Fitzgerald – as so often in youth, whatever came to hand. Then another kind of modernism intervened before she fully engaged with jazz. She apologises (contrasting herself with “the great singers who studied at the University of Life”) for having A level music. Armed with that, she studied Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Boulez and others at the University of Sussex in the late 80s, and while she doesn’t ever sound directly like those stern serialists, one wonders if the darkness which characterises much of her music doesn’t derive in part from the grave moods they generated.

The hotel jobs in the late 90s perhaps contributed to her powerful low register: “I was working my way through a pile of standards and soul repertoire. I was able to put the songs in keys which really created a low level background vibe, with a really low sound in the voice.” This quality is often noticeable in her music, but she spans many other registers too. Despite her modernist slant, she says, “My favourite voice and style is the early Sarah Vaughan. The impossible sweetness and innocence in her voice at that time takes my breath away. The lightness, spice and height in Erykah Badu’s voice, the freedom and abandon of Flora Purim.”

“My voice is called mixed voice. I have a strong low register but also a soprano. I have a particular kind of sound for the mid and break register, where I think about Sheila Ferguson of The Three Degrees, and the young Sarah Vaughan and then a jazzy, soul kind of high voice, where I aim for something a bit like Minnie Riperton. But my main influence has been my amazing vocal coach Joy Mammen, who has worked with my voice to optimise the facility in each register.”

There’s a gap in the discography from 2004 when Sue was diagnosed with mental health difficulties. She points to a fractured family background (evinced on her new album in “Mother Sister Father Brothers My Man Child and His Mama” – “my life story in brief”) and the stress of late-night gigs combined with early morning music teaching.

Part of her return to action has included studies at Berklee College of Music, USA, where Gary Burton endorsed her natural approach. Norma Winstone has said, "I really like your completely unaffected way of singing." She says of herself, "I still have a very young sound in my voice, and there is a certain innocence which I cannot help." Her unaffected pursuit of honest expression through modern harmony is what will particularly appeal in her part-new, part-retrospective album *Look Back and Love* (Tru-Nu 355), released 2 June, and her forthcoming live dates.

Mark Gilbert

Sat Nam, semi-finalist International Songwriting Competition 2003, there were 11,000 entries

She Want Him, semi-finalist International Songwriting Competition 2011, there were 16,000 entries

London Jazz News

May 2017

INTERVIEW: Sue McCreeth (CD *Look Back and Love* – Launch 29 May Pizza Express Dean Street)

Singer SUE McCREETH launches her latest album, *Look Back and Love* at Pizza Express Dean Street on Monday 29th May and plays gigs across the UK over the next few months. Compiled from her five previous albums, *Look Back and Love* finds the singer taking stock – and yet also looking ahead with four new tracks included.

Interview by Rob Adams, LondonJazz News: What made you look back at your career and compile *Look Back and Love* at this stage in your life and career; how do you feel your music's changed over these fifteen years?

Sue McCreeth: I wanted to collect the very best of my writing, recent and less recent. I feel that my music has changed from searching for original sounds, to searching for authentic sounds. I'm developing all of my songs all of the time.

LJN: In selecting the tracks for the album, what were you looking to highlight?

SM: I chose the strongest vocal recordings to feature, and the most diverse compositions. I wanted to make a cd which would be good company on a long drive. I wanted people to experience the sublime beauty that all the musicians featured on this cd have brought to my music.

LJN: When and how did you get into singing jazz; was there one – or 101 – artists who made you think, I want to do that!?

SM: It's closer to 101! It started with a vinyl record called *The Incomparable Ella*, and at the age of 12 I could squeak my way through all 16 tracks, including improvisations. I saw Ella live on my 24th birthday. I love the sounds of Sarah Vaughan and Anita O'Day, and later I found Betty Carter and Shirley Horn. I've seen many American jazz stars in London, including the late Mark Murphy, Rebecca Parris, Shirley Horn and Flora Purim. All these singers have taught me that what matters is finding one's own unique voice.

LJN: When and how did you get into composing?

SM: I was writing songs from the age of 9, singing and playing guitar. After finishing my music degree in composition from University of Sussex I started listening to and emulating some of the approaches of jazz luminaries such as Chick Corea, Miles Davis, Pat Metheny, Laura Nyro, Flora Purim, Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul.

LJN: Can you describe your writing process for us; do you think of lyrics first, melody first or come up with a mood you want to work in and take it from there?

SM: I start with harmony, and then write the melody by picking out the notes I want to hear in the voice within each chord. Finally, I concentrate hard to write the lyrics.

LJN: What impact did studying improvisation with Gary Burton and composition with Joseph Mulholland at Berklee have on your approach to music?

SM: I am now confident about various ways of exploring harmony that I did not use before, and I have many scale choices in my voice for improvisation. I can also express my ideas more confidently in my arrangements. Gary and Joe have given me the highest possible grades for work I have done with them, and Joe has heard and praised all of my previous writing. My songwriting is used within Berklee as teaching material by Joe, and he collaborates with me too. All of this has had a beneficial impact upon my confidence as a composer and improvising musician.

LJN: You were out of action through illness for some time; what part did music play in the healing process?

SM: Music has helped me to feel more real and connected with the world. Invariably I make music with fantastically talented musicians, and rational coherent thought that is involved in writing, soothes the influence of memories, triggers and panic.

LJN: “Sat Nam” and “Ettu Enna” are intriguing tracks; can you tell us a bit about them?

SM: I wrote “Sat Nam” in 2000 whilst working in Dubai as a pianist/vocalist. “Ettu Enna” means, ‘What is this?’ in Tamil. At present I am developing my understanding of and competence with Indian ragas and bringing them into my music more authentically. I study and rehearse with an Indian based colleague over skype.

LJN: Who are you listening to at the moment? Do you have any recent discoveries you’d like to share with London Jazz News readers?

SM: Carmen Lundy, Aziza Mustafa Zadeh, Lalah Hathaway, Jill Scott and Sabine Kabongo have influenced me. Also Laura Nyro’s songs as sung on *Map to the Treasure* are incredibly varied, especially in the voices of great singers such as Renee Fleming, Lisa Fischer, Dianne Reeves and Esperanza Spalding. A while ago I was listening to Erykah Badu on my daily journeys into the West End for my piano/vocal gigs. “Only Here” is my song for Erykah.

LJN: What can audiences expect to hear – and feel – on your upcoming concerts?

SM: There will be Indian and Arabic sounds in my own fusion songs, many languages, and also “The Touch of Your Lips” and “Twentieth Century Blues” for the mainstream jazz fans. I hope audiences will feel excited by the energy, variety and exuberance of my music, and my fantastic band. (pp)

LINK: www.suemccreeth.com

Jazzwise
July 2017
Look Back and Love

This sixth album from singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Sue McCreeth presents an eclectic anthology of some of her finest original recordings over the last 15 years, including the rim shot driven “Only Here”, the decidedly trippy “Nut Tree”, and the modal explorations of “Other Times We Fly”. Twice shortlisted for the International Songwriting Competition, there’s also a quartet of new songs, all of which are highlights. “Keep This Love Safe” is a ballad which packs real dramatic heft, while the enigmatically titled “Mother Sister Father Brothers My Man Child and His Mama” documents the pain of not receiving love from within your own family, and the joy of finding it elsewhere. Recorded live at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, “Til I Am In The Wrong Place” is a disquieting, brooding slice of urban angst. By contrast, the outer-spacious “Infinity” casts a warm glow and brings the collection to a beatific close.

Peter Quinn

The Observer
July 2017

Look Back and Love

As a singer-songwriter, Sue McCreeth is highly unusual in two ways. First, she takes as her starting point not a few words or snatch of melody, but a harmonic idea. This comes, perhaps from having studied with Gary Burton and Joe Mulholland at Berklee College of Music, the “jazz university” in Boston, USA. Second, she alters her singing voice quite radically to suit the character of individual songs. As a result, the sheer contrast from one song to another, while very effective, can be a little bewildering until you get used to it. This anthology, drawn from her previous five albums, with a few new pieces added, provides an impressive introduction.

Dave Gelly, The Observer and The Guardian

Wednesday, June 07, 2017
BE-BOP SPOKEN HERE
June 2017
CD Review: Sue McCreeth - *Look Back And Love*

Sue McCreeth (vocal); Paul Harrison, John Horler (piano); Mario Caribe, Andrew Cleynert (bass); Stu Brown (drums); Martin Shaw (trumpet) Many other musicians listed for various tracks, these are the main ones.
(Review by Ann Alex).

You could read this review, or you could go to the website, www.suemccreeth.com and play the video of "Sat Nam", and you'll get a good idea of what this superb singer and her various musicians are all about. Dave Gelly of the Observer writes ...' She sings with warmth and intimacy, and commands a wonderful flexibility (in) her vocal tone'... I couldn't have explained it better.

Ms McCreeth is a singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who has led ensembles down South since 2000 and this is her sixth album, which is an anthology of her songwriting work so far, together with 4 new songs. She studied improvisation and also composition with University of Sussex and Berklee College of Music.

The CD gives us mostly love songs of various moods, beginning with "Sat Nam", wordless vocals with a folky eastern feel, followed by "She Want Him", in which the singer almost becomes one of the instruments in the band. Other notable tracks are the rocky "Nut Tree" (guitar and keys with a regular drum beat and electronic effects); "The Air Is Blue" (atmospheric, cool, blue, guitar sound); "Mother Sister Father Brothers My Man Child & His Mama" (a new song in which is a message to her relatives:

'With my new love

I finally knew love

With my own sweet man child'.

The longest track at 9.28 minutes is "Only Here", a love song which is atmospheric rather than narrative, with constant repetition of 'You and I'.

Most of the songs are with the standard trio of piano, bass and drums, with most solos taken by the piano, and it goes without saying that the musicians are skilled. If you like to hear brass with singers, this CD won't supply that as Martin Shaw only appears on 2 of the tracks. The singer is out on tour this year but the nearest gig to us is Edinburgh on June 18.

The CD was launched on May 29 at the Pizza Express Jazz Club, London, and was released on June 2 by Discovery Records.

Ann Alex

The Guardian July 2017

Look Back and Love

“Highly original songwriting in wildly contrasting styles.”
Dave Gelly

Musician Magazine Summer 2017

“2016 is witness to Sue fulfilling her considerable promise, ... an impeccable production.” The Musician Magazine on ‘Queer Bird’

Jazz Journal August 2017 ** *Look Back and Love***

Inside the cover of this CD are 11 small photographs of Sue McCreeth that, at first glance, seem to suggest 11 different women. The differences are mainly in hair colour and arrangement but the difference in her music from track to track here is much more marked – perhaps no surprise as this CD anthologises 15 years of work.

Her voice is full and flowing with deep resonances and dark harmonies. She stretches her voice in word and wordless format on “Sat Nam” as the rhythm section provide a pulsing beat. “She Want Him” is full of stretched-out long notes as the backing group slow down the tempi to ballad time; a very different approach to the opening selection. John Horler’s boppish piano provides a familiar jazz hook but the voice is different: probing, searching, stretching for fresh sounds. Although very much in a supporting role throughout, the accompanying musicians make a vital contribution to the end result.

“Keep This Love Safe” is more conventional (slightly) with Sue’s voice tracing a love call against a sturdy ballad backing and Salmon’s guitar injecting a blues call. Electric piano on several tracks gives the illusion of late 70s music but it is only illusion; the voice is new jazz throughout. Every track on this 70+ minute disc is fresh and slightly different to the one before it and Ms McCreeth is offering a new look at jazz singing that is all her own. It’s all original material, and it would be illuminating, I suspect, to hear what she does with a jazz standard. But the original compositions are strong and very personal, as indeed is her voice throughout.

Derek Ansell

2016

**Sleeve Notes for album release *Look Back and Love*
by Dave Gelly**

for Sue McCreeth

Look Back & Love (compilation CD)

Look back and love, and reflect on a remarkable 15 years of creative work by Sue McCreeth, in collaboration with some of Britain's finest musicians. That's what this anthology is about, whilst also four new songs reveal her drawing on new emotional depths of lyrical and vocal expression.

Sue is as fascinated by harmony and musical texture as she is with melody and lyrics, and that is very unusual. So when she listens again to a song such as "The Dancer", recorded in 2004, her first recollection is, "I was digging really deep into sound worlds that interested me". She studied composition at the prestigious Berklee school of music and one of her teachers, Gary Burton, perhaps summed her work up best, as "Logical and effective, this seems to come to you naturally".

"Til I'm In The Wrong Place" is a live performance recording. When she was writing it, Sue talked over some musical ideas with another of her teachers at Berklee - Joe Mulholland, Professor of Harmony. They found that they worked so well together that Joe will be collaborating with Sue on her next album, so far untitled.

Her lyrics communicate on a personal, intimate level. Love songs of tenderness but also of determination are scattered with fascinating hints and possibilities, an edgy uncertainty. The more you listen to "Keep This Love Safe", the more your imagination strays, and you wonder. As well as telling a dramatic tale, "Mother Sister Father Brothers My Man Child and His Mama" could lend support and encouragement to those in the same predicament.

She sings with warmth and intimacy, and commands a wonderful flexibility in her vocal tone, which allows her to match it exactly to the message or atmosphere of any particular piece. Or, as the great Norma Winstone wrote to her, after the release of Sue's most recent album, *Queer Bird* (2016): "I really like your completely unaffected way of singing. I find you believable, which, I think, should be the main aim of a singer."

[Dave Gelly 10/09/2016]

Summer 2015

The Observer

Queer Bird: Elegant Songs of England Born

The merest glance at the titles and composers of these twelve songs should tell you that Sue McCreeth is not your average jazz singer: pieces by popular songwriters (Ray Noble and Noel Coward), jazz composers (Stan Tracey and Alison Rayner), European composers of the early 20th century (Frederick Delius and Ralph Vaughan Williams) – and, of course, by Sue herself. And the remarkable thing about it is that, when she sings them, they all seem to belong together. She sings in a warm, intimate voice and a deceptively simple style. Simple it may be, but it's far from artless. Just listen to the almost uncomfortably low key she chooses for "The Sky Above The Roof", depicting the musings of a prisoner about the world outside. Contrast that with the tone of sophisticated ennui she brings to Coward's "Twentieth Century Blues". The spare but perfectly judged accompaniment of guitar (Pat McCarthy) and bass (Andrew Cleyndert), plus splashes of brilliant tonal colour from the trumpet of Martin Shaw, completes the picture. You'll find a lot more to admire as you listen.

Dave Gelly

Jazz Views

and BBC Radio Presenter

SUE McCREETH

Queer Bird, Elegant Songs of England Born

Tru-nu Records TNCD354

Sue McCreeth (vcl) Martin Shaw (tpt, flg h) Pat McCarthy (gtr) Andrew Cleyndert (bs) Andres Ticino (perc)

This is the fifth recording for the Lanarkshire based vocalist who emerged from the dance band scene of her teenage years, to the world of small group jazz. Highly influenced by the star American singers of the golden age, she possesses a unique voice and for this recording an uncanny ability to select quality songs from outside the genre that really work fully reflecting the album's sub-title *Elegant songs of England born*. The composers for the project are far ranging and include such diverse masters as Fredrick Delius, Ray Noble, Noel Coward and Norma Winstone.

The multi talented musical genius Ray Noble contributes three of his classics. "The Touch Of Your Lips" from 1936 carries an off beat vocal approach and highlights the fine choice of Pat McCarthy on guitar. "The Very Thought Of You" brought to the public's attention by Doris Day in the nineteen fifties film Young Man With A Horn, features a low tempo vocal delivery. "I hadn't

Anyone 'till You" finds the vocalist in impressive subdued and understated mode capturing the sensibilities of the song perfectly. At the other end of the scale there is fine trumpet and wordless vocal on the title track. This was composed by the renegade female music co-operative Blow The Fuse member Alison Raynor, who many will remember as the bass player with The Guest Stars way back in the eighties. Noel Coward's work has only on the rarest of occasions been brought into the jazz world. Here there is a light airy vocal with great guitar licks applied to "Mad About The Boy", alongside "20th Century Blues" an easy paced swinger finding Martin Shaw on top form behind the well delivered lyric.

Most of the current generation of female jazz singers have developed a talent for songwriting themselves. On this recording we find three originals with very well crafted lyrics, strategically placed on the album, holding their own in both composition and delivery. "Milk Wood Sky" from Stan Tracey's impeccable album Under Milk Wood, with words by Norma Winstone give things a modernistic approach with "The Sky Above The Roof" taken from Ralph Vaughan Williams post romantic period of the early nineteen hundreds adding to the diversity. There are many highlights to this fifty three minute set but "Nuages" developed from the Fredrick Delius piece of 1893 just about takes the honours with the burnished sound of flugelhorn in total harmony with the controlled vocal approach.

In summary, there is much to commend this album that reveals more of it's qualities with every listen. (see also www.suemccreeth.com)
Jim Burlong

Jazz London Radio Summer 2015

Queer Bird – Elegant Songs of England Born

"Sue McCreeth's new CD *Queer Bird* is a cracking album, with a stellar line-up and wonderful tunes." Chris Hodgkins, Jazz London Radio, on 'Queer Bird'

2014

Dave Gelly, The Observer, May 2014 *No Evil*

Until now, she has mainly recorded her own songs, but one couldn't help noticing that, whenever Sue McCreeth chose something else, it would be Herbie Hancock or maybe Wayne Shorter. In other words, she doesn't go for the easy option. This is her first all-standards album, and in impeccable company, too – guitarist Jim Mullen, trumpeter Steve Waterman and bassist Andrew Cleynert. It's not singer plus accompaniment so much as four musicians working together, and the result is a dozen intimate and nicely

judged performances. The subdued volume brings out the best in McCreeth's voice, especially her whispery low register.
Dave Gelly

Jazz UK May 2014

No Evil

Album number five from Sue McCreeth is something of a departure for the singer, as she approaches the standards that make up the bulk of the disc's tracks in a rather more straight-ahead fashion that she has done on previous recordings. Sue shows herself to be a skilful and faithful interpreter of the repertoire on offer, and *No Evil* is a very pleasant and well-executed recording that features some lovely solos, particularly from guitarist Jim Mullen on a sweet rendition of "God Bless The Child". The minimal line-up of Mullen, Steve Waterman on trumpet and Andrew Cleyndert on double bass lends itself to the gentle pacing and ambience at play here. A fine album by any standard(s).

March 2014

No Evil

Live studio recording reviewed by Alan Musson of Jazz Kaleidoscope

Hidden deep in the Lincolnshire countryside along a leafy lane is Chapel Studios. There are three parties to this marriage of music and song. The vocalist, the instrumentalists and the studio. The studio environment is often overlooked, yet this is an important factor in the success of this recording. For Sue McCreeth it is essential that she finds the right environment to perform. Having found the studio, the next step is to find sympathetic musicians who will be able to showcase the vocals. For this, her third jazz recording, Sue takes the bold step of enlisting the support of just two core musicians, guitarist Jim Mullen and bassist Andrew Clyndert. This supportive duo is aided and abetted on some tracks by Steve Waterman on trumpet and flugelhorn.

Sue came to the studio with a clear idea of what she wanted to achieve. The songs have been part of her repertoire for some time. The arrangements are by Sue. But this is a real group effort, with all of the musicians contributing suggestions as the recording sessions progressed. Most of the songs are first or second takes. On every track, Jim and Andy provide a sumptuous cushion upon which Sue is able to lay bare her emotions. Much of the material will be familiar to listeners, taken as it is, from what is commonly referred to as the "Great American Songbook". However, several unexpected gems have been included. "Speak No Evil" is one and there are contributions from two contrasting jazz pianists. Horace Silver provides "Pretty Eyes" and from the pen of Bill Evans comes "Very Early".

On “Honeysuckle Rose” and there is a clear element of vulnerability in her timbre. Wistful on “Come Rain or Come Shine” and “The Man I Love”, Sue turns up the passion, becoming almost anguished in her delivery on “God Bless the Child” and “Stormy Weather”. Steve Waterman adds just the right mellow soulfulness to “Without A Song”, a nicely measured solo on “Weaver of Dreams” and a lovely flugelhorn solo on “Very Early”.

The overarching feeling is quality late night jazz vocals with Jim Mullen providing relaxed yet bluesy accompaniment throughout. An album to treasure and to share with friends at your next classy dinner party.

Jazzwise
No Evil
April 2014

A more mainstream jazz session but nevertheless another high quality recording from this ultra-flexible, well-regarded vocalist, singing from the “Great American” and “Modern Jazz Songbook” with a quartet including Jim Mullen.

No Evil
Jazz Views
June 2014

Having review Sue’s album *500 Miles High* back in 2004 the singer seemed to disappear off my radar so it is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to reacquaint myself with her work some ten years later on this latest album.

Having built a reputation for mostly performing original material, with a scattering of covers, this is the first recording McCreeth has made where all the material are standards, and in doing so demonstrates just how versatile a performer she is.

Working with a paired down line up, sans drums, was an inspired choice and presents some of these well-known and well-loved songs in a less familiar setting than with the more conventional piano, bass, drums and horns. The repertoire suits McCreeth well, allowing the expressiveness in her voice to shine through, and there is no weak or second rate offering on the disc.

McCreeth has a distinctive edge to her voice that adds a further freshness to the material and her phrasing and delivery of the lyrics is never less than captivating, as if hanging on to her every word. Nice to hear as well a gently swinging “Honeysuckle Rose” that is taken at a nigh on perfect tempo, and the singer proves her worth with material from “Great American Songbook”

tackling Harold Arlen's "Stormy Weather" and "Come Rain Or Come Shine" with panache. More contemporary tunes come from the writing talents of Wayne Shorter and Horace Silver on "Speak No Evil" and "Pretty Eyes" respectively; and the band swing hard on a stellar reading of "Devil May Care".

Guitarist Mullen and Andy Cleyndert on bass provide the ideal support, unobtrusive but highly effective in accompaniment, and stepping up to the mark with some great solos. Trumpeter Steve Waterman is not heard on every track but makes his presence felt when he does put the horn to his lips as on the aforementioned "Speak No Evil" and the ballads "Weaver of Dreams" and "Very Early".

This is a strong album from Sue McCreeth, and I for one will be making every effort to ensure that she does not disappear off my radar again anytime soon.
Nick Lea

2012

Terry Seabrook

AUGUST 2012

***Infinite Sunday* by Infinite Sunday feat. Sue McCreeth**

Infinite Sunday **** a brand new CD from Sue McCreeth, Mike Varty (keys) and Ian Salmon (guitar). This new album is a delightful exploration of new territory - jazz meets electronic dance. The vocals are blended beautifully with well-produced accompaniment of electronic grooves alongside live keys and guitar playing from Mike and Ian. My particular favourites are "Sunday" (with a nice harmonic structure) and "Cara" which has a moody improvised vibe. Sue's vocals are heavenly and she has also contributed lyrics, guitar and piano.

Jazz UK

10/10/2012

***Infinite Sunday* by Infinite Sunday feat.**

Sue McCreeth

"A fine collection of original trip-hop/jazz fusion performed with incredible high energy and featuring the vocals of jazz songstress Sue McCreeth".

JAZZ UK, October 2012

Jazz Kaleidoscope

08/10/2012

Infinite Sunday by Infinite Sunday feat. Sue McCreeth

"A wonderful cd, *Infinite Sunday* is the brainchild of Sue McCreeth with Ian Salmon and Mike Varty. Sit back and enjoy this, its something rather different featuring the lovely vocals of Sue McCreeth. An absolute gem."

2005

The Observer

March 2005

Just for Luxury

Sue McCreeth's gentle, almost vibrato-less voice sounds almost too fragile for the difficult tasks she sets it. Tunes such as Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage" and Wayne Shorter's "Speak No Evil" were conceived as instrumental pieces and they make great demands of a singer, especially in terms of pitch. But she manages them with simple grace. That is where the charm of her style lies, in the clear modest simplicity with which she brings off quite daunting musical feats. "The Dancer" and "Black Swan" add an element of ethereal calm. It is significant that her pianist, and co-composer in one instance, should be John Horler, that most subtle and allusive of accompanists. With Mark Fletcher, Tristan Mailliot and Matt Home sharing the drums part, and Dave Green and Andy Cleyndert alternating on bass, it adds up to a charming and exquisitely performed set.

Dave Gelly

The Guardian

JOHN FORDHAM

Live performance at Pizza on the Park, London

A gently unconventional performer who guarantees a quietly compelling momentum... a rich mid-register, falsettos and deep purrs, payoffs on barely audible murmurs... calmly inventive... boldly ambitious... she has imagination and heart... McCreeth applies her plush mid-range and rhythmic flexibility... boldly punctuated and inventive... sultry... hip.

Sue McCreeth - *Just For Luxury* Ian Mann 2006-06-

Sassy, sensual, reflective and rueful - her voice purrs and whispers. The latest release from singer Sue McCreeth makes a refreshing change. It is good to hear a female vocalist who is not aiming for the Radio 2 and Michael Parkinson market with an album of glossy over-familiar standards. Instead McCreeth takes musical risks and brings a genuine jazz sensibility to her singing. Her album contains an eclectic choice of material performed with inspired collaborators who are the cream of Britain's jazz crop. It is a proper jazz album and a genuine musical statement rather than a shallow attempt to copy current musical fashions.

McCreeth operates in a quartet setting fronting a piano/bass/drums line-up. The pianist on all tracks is the criminally underrated John Horler, surely one of Britain's most accomplished players. His playing is a major factor in the album's success and he also co-wrote one number, "Babe's Blue" with McCreeth. The majority of the bass duties are undertaken by the dependable Andrew Cleyndert who is also the regular bassist for the great Stan Tracey. Dave Green replaces Cleyndert on two pieces. Mark Fletcher, Matt Home and Tristan Mailliot share the drummer's role. Fletcher appears on six tracks, Home and Mailliot on two each.

The material includes a number of McCreeth originals plus adaptations of two modern jazz classics Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage" and Wayne Shorter's "Speak No Evil". These adaptations are fine examples of the art of "vocalese" or adding voice and lyrics to established instrumental pieces. The great American vocalist Dianne Reeves wrote the words to "Maiden Voyage" with Vanessa Rubin providing the lyrics for "Speak No Evil".

There are also a couple of standards but one suspects that these have been included just because the band love them rather than for overtly commercial reasons. In any event the album closer "You Don't Know What Love Is" has been radically rearranged whilst the more straightforward "Moonglow" showcases the sublime pianistic skills of Horler and the singing, swinging bass of Green.

Horler even sounds good on electric piano making it sound perfectly natural on McCreeth's "Black Swan" and "Ettu Enna". Their collaboration "Babe's Blue" lives up to its name, a bouncy, swinging enjoyable blues.

McCreeth's other songs range from the sensual "She Want Him" and "The Dancer" to the reflective "Trains On Lines" and the ethereal "Black Swan". It is a pity that the lyrics are not reproduced on the CD insert as this would enhance one's enjoyment of the material.

McCreeth's singing covers an impressive range of styles and emotions from the sassy and sensual, to the reflective and rueful. Her voice purrs and whispers. She really gets inside a song and allows it to breathe and is helped greatly in this process by the imaginative and adventurous instrumental arrangements. Quality vocal jazz.

Jazz Review 2004 tour

“Emotional and intense, nothing is superficial or wasted ... her technique and control do all ... changes that only the most technically astute would even attempt ... far from the usual standards vocalist.”

Derek Gorman, Jazz Review

Live review 2004 Live at Preston

‘Terrific! ... an innate feel for jazz, very good with the audience and a wee bit out of the ordinary’

Jazz Review, Live at Preston

2002

Jazz UK

500 miles high the air is blue

“A beautiful piece of work ... a voice simultaneously almost ethereal, sensuous, torchy and blues-inflected ... a small gem of creativity.”

Brian Blain

Musician Magazine 2002

500 miles high the air is blue

“A highly original disc, these are terrific songs, something beautiful... Enchanting.”

Herbie Flowers

The Observer

October 2002

500 miles high the air is blue

For reasons no one can fathom, the world is suddenly full of new female jazz singers. The drawback is that some will inevitably get lost in the crowd, a fate I sincerely hope does not befall Sue McCreeth. She has a cool misty kind of voice and a style which invites rather than insists on attention. The programme is half and half originals and standards, with her own “Only Here” and Chick Corea’s “500 Miles High” outstanding.

Dave Gelly

The Guardian
John Fordham
January 2002
Live Review Pizza on the Park, London

The young Lincolnshire born vocalist Sue McCreeth may be just edging a toe on to the UK jazz circuit's first rung, but she arrived at the Pizza on the Park with anything but a beginner's selection of accompanists. McCreeth, a gently unconventional performer who echoes a little of Cassandra Wilson and Norma Winstone, was assisted at this gig by an excellent trio: pianist John Donaldson, bassist Andy Cleynert and Guy Barker's drummer, Sebastian de Krom. They guaranteed a quietly compelling momentum in a variety of originals and standards.

McCreeth's strengths are a willingness to tackle familiar materials the hard way, a rich mid-register, and a knowledgeable fan's grasp of jazz evolution, though she still has some ground to cover in extending her technique to embrace the sounds she clearly hears in her head. At times the development of her variations cling to a pattern (straight theme delivery, extension into falsettos and deep purrs, payoffs on barely audible murmurs) and her announcements could have benefited from an edit or two, but McCreeth was calmly inventive on "East of the Sun, West of the Moon", and boldly ambitious alongside guest Paul Nieman's trombone on "Moon Dreams".

The former piece emphasised the drive of the rhythm section, unfolding over de Krom's deft brushwork and Cleynert's walking patterns. A yearning McCreeth original, "She Want Him", strongly hinted at a potentially bigger and bolder voice inside this singer. It also gave the underrated John Donaldson space for his distinctive take on contemporary jazz piano – a bit like McCoy Tyner with the volume and temperature turned down.

A mixture of McCreeth's and Cassandra Wilson's words to "Blue in Green" was deviously spliced into a demanding reshuffle and acceleration of the original dreamy melody, though the narrative impetus of the song seemed to peter out at the close.

"You Go to My Head" was delivered in a confessional whisper, with Donaldson's piano curling smoke rings around Cleynert's liquid bass sounds. McCreeth sounded tentative, but she has imagination and heart, and is certainly keeping the right company.

John Fordham