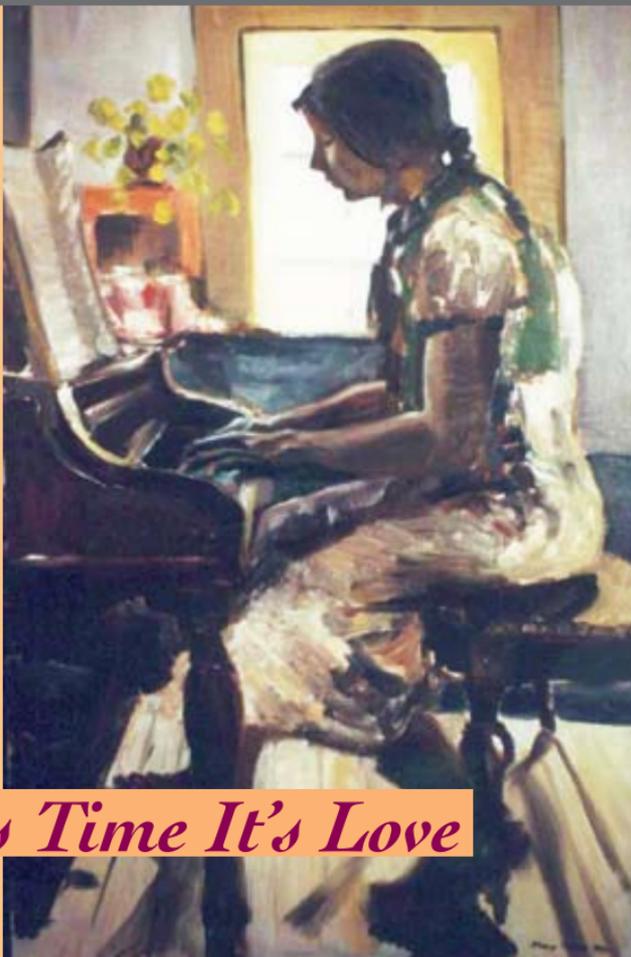


PATTY CARPENTER



This Time It's Love

epiphany



IN THIS, HER FIRST CD, Patty Carpenter shows off her versatility—singing jazz, blues, rock, a gospel, ballads, and a Brazilian classic—all with the lyrical sophistication and the funky, sultry swing that has made her a favorite among lovers of jazz. Patty’s first recording, *Memories of Love’s Refrain* (available on cassette), featured some of the standards she sings at her day gig—entertaining senior citizens throughout New England. On *This Time It’s Love*, her choice of tunes—typical of what she sings at clubs and concerts—is more eclectic. Patty knows the canon! Here she demonstrates her comfort with all the wonderfully diverse forms of American music, North and Sul.

Patty grew up playing the piano during the 1950s in Rochester, NY. She sometimes drove her grandfather to a senior day center where she often performed—playing the piano and singing old standards. She also listened to folk (and played bottleneck guitar at local coffeehouses,) rock and jazz, with Joan Baez, Janis Joplin, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Carmen McRae among her favorite singers.

At the University of Massachusetts she studied in the jazz program under such master musicians and teachers as Max Roach, Archie Shepp, Billy Taylor and Reggie Workman. It was Workman who advised, “if you want to sing the music, learn the history.” This CD is evidence that she has.

The album leads with *This Time*, a sultry contemporary ballad composed by Jule Styne that was suggested to Patty by drummer Doug Raneri. As he does on many of the tunes, tenor saxophonist Scott Shetler weaves in and out of Patty’s singing. Shetler and Carpenter have, what I suppose can be called, “history” together. They lived together when both were in their late-teens and early twenties. Their daughter, Melissa Shetler, often sings with her mother. Whenever I hear Scottie noodling behind Patty’s singing,

I'm reminded of the great tenorman Lester Young playing softly behind Billie Holiday. Aficionados of "Prez" and "Lady Day" will know of what I write. But everyone will be moved by Shetler and Carpenter playing together.

Lover Man is a nod to Billie Holiday and the many other jazz musicians (including most women vocalists) who have played it. It's a jazz standard (composed by pianist Ram Rameriz) that here gets an admirable treatment.

Across the Square was composed by Patty herself in memory of her friend Fritz Hewitt, who died of AIDS in 1993. The Square here is Greenwich Village's Washington Square as listeners who have "hung" there on a weekend afternoon will recognize. The song is based on a moment remembered that was shared by Patty, Scott, and Fritz. Shetler plays clarinet here and Tom McClung takes a fine piano solo with Dave Shapiro's walking bass behind him.

My favorite number on the album is the theme from the 1959 Brazilian movie *Black Orpheus*. The haunting, unforgettable melody, written by Luiz Bonfá and played in the movie by Antonio Carlos Jobim, introduced American audiences to bossa nova. The song is usually played with a soft, understated, tropical Brazilian beat. Patty takes it at a faster, more jazz-like swinging tempo. It surprised me the first time I heard it—and completely won me over. Her energy and enthusiasm create a wonderful tension against the laid-back and restrained bossa nova rhythm.

Miles Davis' *All Blues* (a perfect and somber contrast to *Black Orpheus'* carnival spirit) is from his classic Kind of Blue session. Words have been added, but Patty and the band treat it as a jazz performance.

Ain't Got Nothin' But the Blues is a great Duke Ellington riff that Patty and the band play in a very funky groove, with tenor, piano and guitar all play-

ing cutting solos. Patty closes with a chorus of scat, not brauva like Ella, but soft and sensuous like Carmen McRae.

With the Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Mercer standard, *I Thought About You* Patty enters Sinatra territory, but, she says, it's not "Old Blue Eyes" but Diana Schurr and Carmen McRae who have inspired this performance.

5-10-15 is a honking, driving rhythm and blues by Rudy Toombs in which Patty sounds as if she's singing in some Kansas City nightclub in the late 1940's. Patty's not a blues shouter, the excitement is the way she delivers the words and the way her voice embraces the tune. The band plays background and Tom McClung plays a biting organ solo; the first time, I'm told, he ever played the organ on a recording.

McClung gets another chance on *I Wish I Knew How it Feels to be Free*, a civil rights hymn by Billy Taylor that was recorded by Nina Simone and recently featured in Rob Reiner's feature film *Ghosts of Mississippi*. Patty sings it as a fast paced gospel number and the band catches the spirit with real down-home excitement.

A word about the musicians, all of whom, except drummer Doug Raneri and bassist Dave Shapiro, have plenty of room to solo on this record.

Raneri, a multi-faceted rhythm player contributes to all the different song genres. He lives in the Connecticut River Valley and plays in the popular group Stash, and the Latin inflected Quetzal.

Before settling in Vermont in 1987, Dave Shapiro was a busy New York freelancer, playing regularly with such jazz legends as Woody Herman, Chet Baker, Lee Konitz, Howard McGee, and singers Anita O'Day, Chris Connor, Jackie Cain and Roy Kral. He proved his versatility as a member of the house band at Eddie Condon's (where Dixieland reigned) and the aptly-named Metropolitan Bopera House.

Guitarist Draa Hobbs teaches, at among other places, the Vermont Jazz Center founded by the late guitarist Attila Zoller. He's played with Zoller, master guitarist Tal Farlow, pianists Don Friedman and Howard Danko and bassist George Mraz.

Scott Shetler is one of Boston's busiest jazz saxophonists. I've been listening to him since the late 1960's when he was a teenage rock musician. Scott's got jive in his soul as his playing behind Patty and as a soloist bears out. He's played with Gene Pitney, Johnny Adams, and Walter "Wolfman" Washington.

Tom McClung was the most sought after jazz pianist in Western Massachusetts before he moved to Paris, playing solo piano, accompanying Patty and other singers, and performing with numerous jazz bands up and down the Connecticut River Valley.

Bob Hamilton, a gifted pianist, is a New York session musician who recently relocated to Peterboro, NH. He's played with Gladys Knight & the Pips and a large number of bands.

Patty Carpenter has a busy schedule singing at venues throughout New England. She performs solo, as well as with the Patty Carpenter Jazz & Blues Band, Patty & the Cakes (a popular and versatile band for weddings, parties, and bar mitzvahs), and The Radio Swing Orchestra, a swing big band. —*Marty Jezer*

Marty Jezer, who spent the best part of his youth sipping cokes at such jazz joints as Birdland, the Half Note, and the Five Spot in New York City, is author of *The Dark Ages: Life in the USA, 1945-1960* (South End Press); *Rachel Carson: Biologist & Author* (American Women of Achievement Series); *Abbie Hoffman: American Rebel* (Rutgers University Press); and *Stuttering: A Life Bound Up in Words* (Basic Books).

