



## THE DREAM IS YOU

Bebop is not known for its romantics, so many fans and aficionados of the era fell silent to the greatest romanticist of the time: Tadd Dameron. Though he was a part of the bebop scene, his warm, rich harmonies and romantic melodies were more akin to the world of big band, to which he was born, and modern jazz. It takes a gentle soul to understand the ups and downs of life and love and Dameron was one such soul. This is the realm of music from which this vocalist of equal romantic acumen has selected charts. But be clear, this is just a peek into the extensive vault of compositions left by Mr. Dameron.

To plagiarize a line from the visionary 1966 television show Star Trek, Vanessa Rubin has boldly gone where no woman has gone before, exploring and giving new life to the tapped and untapped compositions of Dameron. So, to merely call this woman a singer does her a great injustice because Ms. Rubin just doesn't sing a song, she embodies empathy and emotes the lyric. This is an attribute that only a vocalist of her stature can gift an audience. There are no vocal gymnastics to showcase her ego, just an honest and humble purveyance enabling the audience to reminisce personal memories.

Rubin kicks off this swinging set with the Stanley Cornfield lyrics to the sixteen bar *Lady Bird*, one of the most performed in modern jazz. The first line "*we fit together like two birds of a feather*" foretells just how deep in the

groove Dameron and Rubin are, as well as what the arrangers have done for the lyricist and vocalist, thus giving one an idea of where this small compendium of music is going to take us.

The equally swinging *Kitchenette Across The Hall* characterizes a chance encounter of those two birds that leads to romance which culminates in marriage and the eventual combining of homes. *If You Could See Me Now* drops down to ballad tempo and Rubin delivers an honest baring of her own soul in the attempt to recapture lost love. Written in 1946 especially for Sarah Vaughan, with lyrics penned by Carl Sigman, it became one of Vaughan's signature songs.

We've all had those fabulous escapes or little departures from life's routine and *Weekend* exalts the memories of a snowy fun-filled Maine getaway. Not prolonged with verbose lyrics but exacting the unabashed pleasures two people spent. The Georgie Fame lyrics swing lightly once again *On A Misty Night* extolling the beauty and bliss of fleeting love in the night. The easy going *Never Been In Love* is a mid-tempo lament that every stalwart individual has felt at one time or another in their life, and then, love happens and completely changes the view.

With *Next Time Around* (Soultrane) she speaks to the end of a love affair, questioning how to move on living with the consequences of yesterday's choices and hoping to find the answers the next time love happens along. If you're tempting fate, then there is only one simple piece of advice offered, use *Good Bait* to catch the object of your desire. *Reveries Do Come True* (The Dream Is You) is an homage to a woman who has taken hold of his heart. *Whatever Possessed Me* is another Dameron ballad that confirms the magic of love and all the things that become evident in its unfolding.

*You're A Joy* is a simple easy going statement sans flair in which Vanessa expounds the pleasure of being in love. The flute solo is lyrical and inviting

the listener into the relationship. *I Think I'll Go Away* reminisces the mixed emotions of a lover who realizes the joyful torment her heart undergoes.

I would be remiss if I did not give tribute to Dameron's contemporaries enlisted by Ms. Rubin who majestically arranged ten of the twelve compositions. They were a part of the bebop era, Frank Foster, Benny Golson, Jimmy Heath, and Willie Smith all knew the man and his sensibilities. And though Bobby Watson came along after Tadd passed away, he comes with an arrangement that clearly understands the sentiment of the man. As usual, in her inimitable style, we are once again graced to witness Vanessa's lyrical chops as she pens the words to *Reveries Do Come True*, a topic she knows all too well.

For those of us who are familiar with Ms. Rubin's catalogue of work there is no surprise in her innate ability to turn a lyric into an emotional surprise. She never ceases to impress me with her facility with each tune, singing with mastery, melody and always with her audience in mind. This is suggestive of the shifting moods and tempos of the composer's music, thus, there is never a dull moment. While other singers venture into realms and genres of music to stretch themselves, just like the robin the harbinger of springtime, Ms. Rubin stays true to her craft by discovering for the enthusiast unheard gems of jazz. She brings a fresh approach to Mr. Dameron by her choices of his songs to cover, creating a dreamworld for the listener. She weaves a tapestry of love with its many facets of pleasure and suffering, *The Dream Is You* is less a tribute to Tadd Dameron and more a testament to a loving relationship between vocalist and composer.

*carl anthony  
notorious jazz  
march 26, 2019*