

JAZZ SOCIETY OF OREGON

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GEORGE FENDEL & KYLE O'BRIEN,
Reviewers

QUIET JOY

There's something to be said for purity of voice, especially in a jazz world glutted with female vocal talent. Bay Area singer Lee possesses that purity, delivering both swing and bossa with grace and beauty. Her voice is inviting and easygoing, putting the listener at instant ease. This disc starts out with a far too popular tune, "I Hear Music," done as a straight-ahead swinger, just like most everyone else does it. That said, her voice is sophisticated enough to hold the listener through to track 2, the lovely bossa title track written by Lee. She proves an agreeable composer again on the slinky "Music of Your Soul," a bluesy number that allows her to bleed between the notes and show off some real soul. Lee shuffles back and forth between swing and bossa easily, but it might be nice to hear a full disc of bossa so she can focus on the expression of that subtle art form. Her band moves along with her, backing her rather than getting in the way, so her voice is the main focus.

"S'Wonderful" may be my least favorite vocal tune, perhaps because every toothy-grinning high school choir alive does it with annoying joy, but somehow Lee makes it palatable, mixing it into a bossa-samba stew with "Amor Certinho." Lee's voice will keep her a viable jazz artist for years to come, and hopefully she'll find a bigger audience outside of California.

2008, SBE Records, 72:00.

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