

Vanessa

Rubin

S i n g s



1. Our Love Is Here To Stay 3:37
2. It's Probably Me 5:09
3. Being Green 4:29
4. All For One 4:21
5. My Ship 4:42
6. Seven Days 3:05
7. Once Upon A Summertime 3:33
8. Close Enough For Love 4:09
9. Morning 3:04
10. Unless It's You 2:52
11. Black Coffee 5:24
12. His Eye Is On The Sparrow 3:49



NOVUS



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7.
In A Summertime
3:33

Bob Hurst - bass, Marvin "Smitty"
Thielemans - harmonica

8.
ough For Love
4:09

Oscar Castro-Neves - acoustic gui-
Marvin "Smitty" Smith - drums,
Thielemans -harmonica

9.
ing 3:04

piano, Dave Carpenter - bass,
ms, Steve Turre - conch shells

10.
t's You 2:52

Neves - acoustic guitar

11.
Coffee 5:24

Bob Hurst - bass, Marvin "Smitty"
Steve Turre - trombone

12.
On The Sparrow 3:49

Michael Lang - piano



v a n e s s a r u b i n s i n g s



Q: What do Vanessa Rubin, Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, B

A:

All recorded a song of determination, resignation, making the best of what you're given, identification, pride; a song called *Being Green*. It was originally sung on the PBS television show "Sesame Street" by some-, er, thing called Kermit T. Frog. It's a song that carries a message of self-acceptance, "I am what I am." In fact, it's hardly a song at all, rather a recitative set to music. No rhymes, internal or otherwise, are contained therein. Yet it is simple in its complexity.

Simplicity is the keynote of this latest recording by Vanessa Rubin. It's almost as if there were no one in the studio save she and the mike, caressing it, coaxing it into doing her bidding. She does what she does best, VANESSA RUBIN SINGS.

Vanessa Rubin is trendy in the very best sense of the word. For this, her fourth recording for RCA /Novus, she continues singing lyrics to instrumentals written by musician/composers, such as tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter. This time it's her own lyric to Shorter's *Speak No Evil*, retitled *All For One*. (Shorter's *Black Nile* was on PASTICHE, 1993). Vanessa has also written a lyric to Frank Foster's *Simone* (also on PASTICHE). On other collections there are examples from John Coltrane, Johnny Griffin and Mal Waldron (*Giant Steps*, *When We Were One*, and the title track from SOUL EYES, '92), Charlie Parker, Thad Jones and Lionel Hampton, (*Yardbird Suite*, *A Child Is Born* and *Midnight Sun* from I'M GLAD THERE IS YOU, '94), Tadd Dameron (*Weekend*, PASTICHE) and always Duke Ellington.

By connecting the dots, we find that Ms. Rubin loves the challenge

of ever-widening intervalllic leaps; myriad contortions of harmonic structure, melodic runs that, seemingly, only saxophonists can handle...until she does. Writing of his *Simone* in the PASTICHE liner notes, Foster noted that Vanessa "becomes a fourth horn. She sings a perfect unison with the three horns then doubles the lead with the trumpet in three part harmony." He sums up by exclaiming, "This is a real jazz vocalist."

But musicianship isn't always enough to carry a vocalist through a set of tunes, let alone a recording that needs to attain repeated airplay without being redundant. A vocalist needs to commune with her audience.

Let's take her choice of composers when they aren't fellow musicians. Kurt Weill and his collaborators, Ogden Nash and Ira Gershwin - *Speak Low* from I'M GLAD THERE IS YOU, and *My Ship* on

this recording - evoke the same kind of drama by her as they do when they are in the context of the libretto of their respective Broadway shows ("One Touch of Venus," 1943) and "Lady In The Dark," 1941). Vanessa grasps the lyric and, without being maudlin, re-dramatizes the moment - not unlike the reharmonization of an instrumental - without losing its import.

Vanessa doesn't limit herself to jazz composers, nor to musical genres. As the music she interprets churns within itself, the composers she chooses are as rangy. The Gershwins' *Love Is Here To Stay* is juxtaposed with Sting's *It's Probably Me*. Of the latter, Vanessa said it "expresses [my] desire to stand by a person in a time of real need." She liked the 5/4 meter and the story being told in Sting's *Seven Days*, "It's something we've all experienced in relationships: the idea of having to make a decision about

something we want even when the odds are stacked against us."

While in Los Angeles, she was particularly excited about singing with old friends from New York who had achieved success with the Jay Leno Show band: Kevin Eubanks, guitar, Bob Hurst, bass, and Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums. Vanessa never got to visit with Johnny Mandel, whom she has long admired as a composer/ arranger, to ask him about his songs included herein...so I did! *Close Enough for Love* is one of the most recorded of his tunes (from the film "Agatha") and the accompanying personnel is impeccably tasteful from the Brazilian-inflected Oscar Castro-Neves to the fills by harmonicist Toots Thielemans. Of *Unless It's You*, Mandel said it was a tune that was not written for anything special, just lying around waiting for the right interpretation. Like this one, a duet between Vanessa and Oscar.

Daddy Rich...and a frog have in common?

More than the sound of the sea comes out of Steve Turre's conch shells on Clare Fisher's *Morning*.

On his other instrument, trombone, he solos plaintively on *Being Green* and *Black Coffee*. The latter is one of those tunes where the lyric sets a tone of remorse for the hand that was dealt, and with Vanessa, it's empathic.

The spiritual *His Eye Is On The Sparrow* seems an odd choice for a jazz recording. But if it is a given that one of the roots of this music is the church, then gospel and canon are irrevocably intertwined. Ethel Waters sang it a cappella to Julie Harris and Brendon deWilde in "Member of the Wedding," but here its representation is twofold: a prayer for humankind, and what Vanessa Rubin wanted most from this collection: simplicity that reaches the soul.

arnold jay smith
The New School
July 1995

With warmest regards and sincerest of thanks to:

• The Creator for all my blessings. May they continue. • The Rubin family for all their continued support and "grounding." • Willie and Velma Rouse for all their love and support. • My producers, Miles Goodman and Oscar Castro-Neves. Great teamwork! Having the two of you as producers was wonderful. Having you both now as friends is even better. Lunch on me next time at our favorite place. The S.P. (smile) • My engineer, Joel Moss, whose work on the board gives new meaning to the phrase, "It's the next best thing to being there." • Gail Boyd. They don't come any better than you. • The session singers, Morgan Ames, Jim Gilstrap, Clydene Jackson and Darlene Koldenhoven. • The "Snappers," Carrie, Gail, Kathy, Oscar and Miles. Your unwavering dedication and impeccable sense of timing will never be forgotten. By the way, do you do parties?

• Matt Kim. Your personalized assistance would spoil anyone • Vic Givens for your inspiration on *All For One*. You're TOTALLY CRAZY! • Signet Sound. A great studio! • To everyone at BMG who made this project possible. Especially Paul Ramey, Brian Bacchus, Jackie Murphy, Chris Wheat, Peg Davis and Amanda Armstrong.

To the musicians • Robert Hurst, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Kevin Eubanks. Thanks for a touch of home. • Besides being musically awesome, you all have to be some of the funniest musicians I know. Don't stop 'cause I love to laugh. • Mike Lang, Dave Carpenter, Alex Acuna and Paul Jackson Jr., my new-found friends. • No doubt our musical paths will cross again. I'm looking forward to it! • Steve Turre. A phenomenal musician and friend. We "shell" do it again. • Toots Thielemans. Thank you for making this project *extra special*. • Oscar. One of the finest

human beings I know. Your artistry is heavenly!

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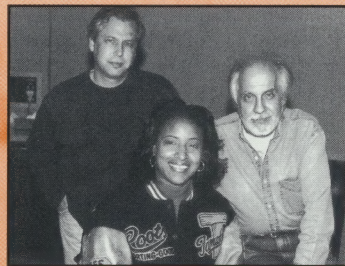
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Art Direction/Design:

Jacqueline Murphy
Photography: Philip Porcella
Hair& Makeup: Tony Marshall
Stylist: Monica Beach

Gail Boyd Artist Management
44 Court Street
Suite 1217
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-935-1800
Fax 718 935-0248



MILES, OSCAR AND ME!

1.

Our Love Is Here To Stay 3:37

Kevin Eubanks - guitar, Bob Hurst
bass, Marvin "Smitty" Smith drums

2.

It's Probably Me 5:09

Kevin Eubanks - guitar, Oscar Castro-Neves -
acoustic guitar, Bob Hurst - bass, Marvin "Smitty"
Smith - drums

3.

Being Green 4:29

Michael Lang - piano, Dave Carpenter - bass, Alex
Acuña - drums, Steve Turre - trombone

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Seven Days 3:05

Paul Jackson, Jr. - guitar, Oscar Castro-Neves -
acoustic guitar, Bob Hurst - bass, Marvin "Smitty"
Smith - drums, Morgan Ames, Clydene Jackson,
Darlene Koldenhoven, Jim Gilstrap - background
vocals



Once Upon

Paul Jackson, Jr. - guitar,
Smith - drums,

Close Em

Paul Jackson, Jr. - guitar,
tar, Bob Hurst - bass,
Toots T

Mori

Michael Lang - piano,
Alex Acuña - drums

Unless

Oscar Castro-Neves

Black

Michael Lang - piano,
Smith - drums

His Eye Is

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