

KATHY KOSINS

TO THE LADIES OF COOL (Resonance)



Anita O'Day, June Christy and Chris Connor are often treated as interchangeable because they followed one another in the Stan Kenton band and

because their shared predilection for minimal vibrato resulted in their being forever clustered as A-plus graduates of the “cool school.” Truth is, each had a very distinct style and each carved out a very singular career. In choosing to salute all three (along with Julie London who, though equally cool, matriculated from an entirely different school), Kathy Kosins wisely appreciates both their similarities and their differences. The album is neither a tribute—Kosins steers clear of their signature tunes—nor an attempt at imitation. Instead, as she suggests in the liner notes, it is a collective “toast” to their sterling musicianship.

Digging deep into their songbooks, Kosins unearths such obscurities as “November Twilight,” from London’s *Calendar Girl* of 1959; the gossamer “Free and Easy,” written by London’s husband Bobby Troup in a rare union with Henry Mancini; Charles DeForest’s gorgeous kiss-off “Don’t Wait Up for Me” (recorded by Connor in 1954); and Billy Strayhorn’s spirited perspective on infidelity, “Kissing Bug,” from Christy’s ’59 gem *Ballads for Night People*.

On the ballads, Kosins inches close to London’s libidinous languor. On the more upbeat numbers, there is strong suggestion of Diana Krall—no stranger herself to the influence of the honorees. But it is pianist Tamir Hendelman’s arrangements—smoke-filled and mink-wrapped—that most genuinely capture the zeitgeist of these ladies’ incomparably cool salad days.