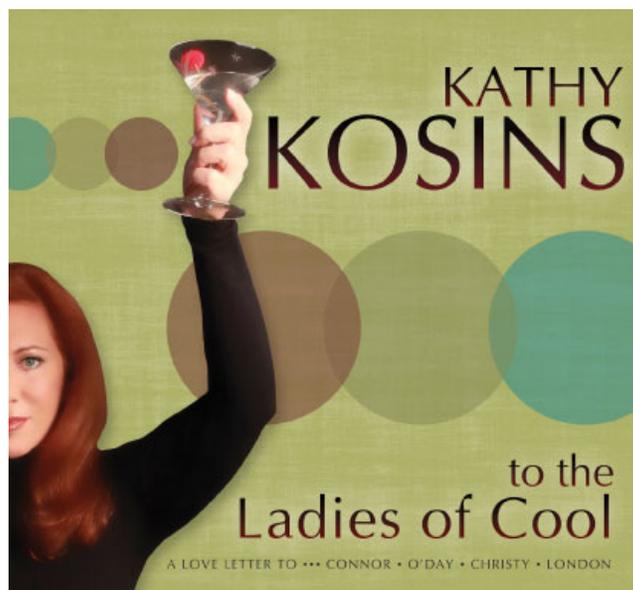


I DIG JAZZ

A jazz reporter's notebook...

SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2012

KATHY KOSINS TOASTS LADIES OF WEST COAST COOL



On jazz singers Kathy Kosins's new album "the Ladies of Cool," her lovely, soft, and soothing voice made me want to curl up in her lap, and listen to her sing every song on the album over and over. "to the Ladies of Cool" is her first album for Resonance Records, and it's due out March 13th.

The album appears to be a tribute album on the surface, but it isn't although Kosins performs songs jazz singers Anita O'Day, June Christy, Chris Connor, and Julie London made hip. Kosins gives a spit-shine to "Learnin' the Blues," "Free and Easy" and "November Twilight" ..

Before Kosins became a big time jazz singer, she made her bones on Detroit's music scene. One of her first jobs was arranging and singing background for music producer Don Was of Was/Not Was.

Kosins built up her jazz and swing acumen in the JC Heard and Nelson Riddle Orchestra. Not long after that job ended she struck out on her own. Over time, she put out five albums, and racked up accolades by the mother-lode.

Days, after I listened “to the Ladies of Cool,” I shot Kosins some questions about the album's conception, and about her admiration of those West Coast darlings, which she gladly answered.

What inspired the making of "to the Ladies of Cool"?

The West Coast Cool movement of the 1950's and 60's inspired me. This was an extension of my previous disc “Mid-Century Modern,” where I cover a lot of material from the West Coast Cool school.

Although you're toasting Anita O'Day, June Christy, Chris Connor and Julie London, "to the Ladies of Cool," doesn't feel like a tribute album.

This is not a tribute disc. It is a contemporary exploration of the West Coast Cool movement that celebrates the artistry of those iconic vocalists, and the relationships the women had with the composers and arrangers who defined West Coast Cool.

What do you admire about those singers?

I loved their true sense of lyricism and understatement.

Were there obstacles making the album?

There were no obstacles for this project. It was almost as if I had a green light, and blessings from the spirits of the artists. They seemed to be with me on my journey from finding the songs, to hiring the arranger, to recording and mixing, and to designing the cover.

Was selecting the songs for “the ladies of cool” difficult?

It was a long process and I chose over 20 songs before honing in on the nine and writing the 10th to Johnny Mandel's instrumental of “Hershey Bar”, which is now titled “Hershey's Kisses”.

Did O'Day, Christy, Connor and London have a big influence on your style?

These women did not influence my singing. Miles Davis, Charlie Parker and many of the jazz instrumentalists from the 40's and 50's did. But I grew up listening to those women

on my mother's stereo. I found I connected with each one on some fundamental level each for a different reason. I won't give the reasons. The list is too long.