

Ratings: ★=skip it; ★★=mediocre; ★★★=good; ★★★★=excellent; ★★★★★=classic

Kathy Kosins ★★★  
*To The Ladies Of Cool*  
 Resonance Records

It's tough to dispute the discographies that turned Ella, Billie and Sarah into the reigning queens of jazz, but that has never discounted the contributions of many others, including Chris Connor, Anita O'Day, June Christy and Julie London. Count vocalist Kathy Kosins among their fans since her fifth recording, the terrific *To The Ladies Of Cool*, salutes their music and enduring legacies on an album of seldom heard standards and bubbly tunes en-



Kathy Kosins.

riched by the arrangements of pianist Tamir Hendelman whose sterling accompaniment can't be overstated. With Kosins on top, he leads a fleet band that includes trumpeter Gilbert Castellanos, bassists Kevin Axt and Paul Keller, guitarist Graham Dechter, Steve Wilkerson on reeds and percussionist Bob Leatherbarrow. *Ladies* is a class act with a strong point of view, thanks to Kosins's dedication to the source material—she fastidiously combed through not just CD reissues but loads of obscure material made for radio broadcasts and such to find the perfect mix of tunes. As a singer, her voice is pure pleasure, flecked with warmth and a golden hue that swings to the Oscar Peterson pitch of "Learnin' The Blues" and the easy-going beat under "All I Need Is You." "Free and Easy" has that George Shearing vibe going on, as does "Lullaby In Rhythm," a finger-poppin' highlight that's lifted by Kosins's wordless bebop vocals and succinct band solos. Under the soft lilt of a bossa nova beat, Kosins illuminates the album's closer, "Where Are You" by taking a lyric like "where is the happy ending" and infusing it with equal parts longing and confident independence. But swing is the thing on *Ladies Of Cool*, and the remarkable spin on these chestnuts is something you can raise a glass to. (10 tracks; 50:32 minutes) ■