



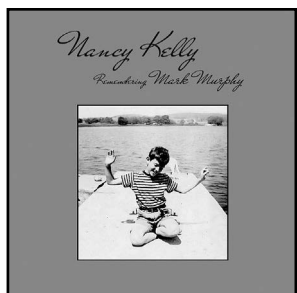
The Things We Did Last Summer
Champion Fulton/Scott Hamilton (Blau)
 by Scott Yanow

The Things We Did Last Summer features a logical matchup. Champion Fulton is a pianist who can emulate Erroll Garner and sometimes uses chord voicings reminiscent of Red Garland, but mostly swings in her own voice. She also has a distinctive vocal style touched at times by Dinah Washington. Tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton, who was a major force in the revival of small-group swing in the '70s, has led over 65 CDs in his career thus far, neither veering from his chosen path of straight-ahead jazz nor putting out a single dud.

For this set, which was recorded live in Spain in 2017, Fulton and Hamilton are supported tastefully by bassist Ignasi Gonzalez and drummer Esteve Pi for eight standards, Fulton singing on five of the numbers. Einar Aaron Swan's "When Your Lover Has Gone" is a solid swinger while Illinois Jacquet-Jimmy Mundy-Al Stillman's "Black Velvet" (also known as "Don't You Go Away Mad") is played as an instrumental. Things really get cooking during an uptempo version of Gus Arnheim-Abe Lyman-Arthur Freed's "I Cried For You", Hamilton sounding a bit explosive. His warm tone and Fulton's attractive chord voicings uplift the title track.

Richard Whiting-Johnny Mercer's "Too Marvelous For Words" has Fulton engaging in some conversational singing/talking reminiscent of Ernestine Anderson and Etta Jones. She never really states the melody in her vocal, nor needs to since Hamilton's playing is pretty melodic. A slow ballad version of the '30s Richard A. Whiting-George Marion Jr. obscurity "My Future Just Passed" (tenor blending in well behind the vocal), uptempo take on Arthur Harrington Gibbs-Joe Grey-Leo Wood's "Runnin' Wild" and laidback reading of Ray Noble's "The Very Thought Of You" conclude the fine set. While there are no real surprises to *The Things We Did Last Summer*, the predictable excellence of Fulton and Hamilton is always worth hearing.

For more information, visit blaurecords.com. Fulton is at Damrosch Park Jul. 3rd with Bria Skonberg. See Calendar.



Remembering Mark Murphy
Nancy Kelly (SubCat)
 by Alex Henderson

When Mark Murphy died at 83 in 2015, he left behind a sizable influence: Kurt Elling and Giacomo Gates are among the many who continue to be inspired by his adventurous vocalese, scat singing and interpretations of lyrics. Nancy Kelly describes him as her "favorite singer", paying homage on *Remembering Mark Murphy*.

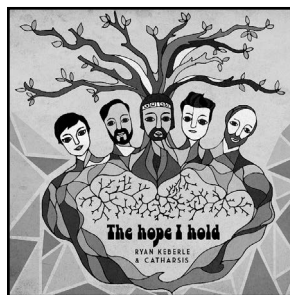
Kelly doesn't allow her own identity to become obscured on this recording, produced and tastefully arranged by pianist John DiMartino. While Murphy was very much a belter, Kelly brings a more subtle and relaxed vocal style to his repertoire. Nonetheless, she

reminds listeners of all the areas in which Murphy excelled: Brazilian music on Milton Nascimento's "Vera Cruz" (a.k.a. "Empty Faces") and Ivan Lins' "Lembra" (a.k.a. "Night Mood"); modal jazz on Oliver Nelson's "Stolen Moments"; and big band on Jimmy Dorsey's ballad "I'm Glad There Is You".

Murphy was famous for adding his own lyrics to jazz standards and Kelly acknowledges his skills as a lyricist with her performances of "Stolen Moments", bassist Sean Smith's "Song for the Geese" and trumpeter Freddie Hubbard's "Red Clay". Murphy featured trumpeter Randy Brecker on his classic 1976 recording of the latter and Brecker reprises his role 41 years later. Kelly acknowledges Murphy's funkier side not only with "Red Clay" but also by incorporating funk and soul elements on Peter Nero's "Sunday in New York" and Lionel Newman's "Again".

In addition to Brecker and DiMartino, musicians backing Kelly include Paul Bollenback (electric guitar), Paul Meyers (acoustic guitar) and Bobby Militello (alto and soprano saxophone and flute). Kelly, not unlike Murphy, isn't shy about giving ample solo space to her band. *Remembering Mark Murphy* is a thoughtful tribute and a skillful demonstration of Kelly's own talents.

For more information, visit nancykelly.com. This project is at Birdland Theater Jul. 4th-6th. See Calendar.



The Hope I Hold
Ryan Keberle & Catharsis (Greenleaf Music)
 by George Kanzler

Trombonist Ryan Keberle formed Catharsis as a quintet of trumpet, bass and drums seven years ago. Two years later he added Camila Meza, using her voice mostly as another instrument, singing wordlessly. Meza has since folded her guitar playing and vocal lyric lines into the group. In 2016 Keberle received a grant from Chamber Music America's Jazz Works program. This spurred him to write *The Hope I Hold* suite using the possibilities of studio multi-tracking to create a more sweeping, orchestral sound with the latest configuration of Catharsis, which replaces trumpet with Scott Robinson, who plays only tenor saxophone: Keberle is additionally on piano and various electronic keyboards, plus vocals; bassist Jorge Roeder also sings; and both he and Meza add occasional effects to their instruments. Catharsis is featured on six of the ten tracks here, with the Catharsis Trio (Keberle, Meza and Roeder) on the other four.

The suite, inspired by and using excerpts from Langston Hughes' poem "Let America Be America Again" is the first four tracks. The first three find Meza singing lines from Hughes' poem, words that sound relevant as responses to Trump Administration policies. Their relatively spare use tantalizes one to seek out the whole poem. Keberle sticks to piano and keyboards on the billowing opener "Tangled in the Ancient Chain", fleshed out by tenor and electric guitar solos, alone and in tandem. "Despite the Dream" introduces trombone over spare guitar chords, wordless vocals and tenor obbligati in suspended time before a light Brazilian rhythm kicks in behind Hughes' words and a tuneful trombone solo. "America Will Be" develops as a snowballing dirge skimming discord as rock-like guitar duels with horns and wordless chanting before a fade down to lyrics. The racing tropical rhythms of "Fooled and Pushed Apart" end the suite in pared-down orchestral splendor with the horns, acoustic guitar and

wordless vocals weaving patterns with bass and drums.

Korg Minilogue adds loopy sci-fi synth flourishes to the Latin-y "Campinhas" before the more lyrical, intimate trio takes over for four tracks, one from each member as well as an Argentine folk song, "Zamba de Lozano", imbued with melancholy by Meza and richly timbred trombone. Keberle's "Become the Water", lyrics by Mantsa Miro, has an insistent, sing-along refrain from both Meza and Keberle, who features Wurlitzer keyboard on the track. A short quintet track, "Epilogue/Make America Great" closes with "a musical prayer for peace".

For more information, visit greenleafmusic.com. This project is at Jazz Standard Jul. 17th. See Calendar.

UNEARTHED GEM

BETTY CARTER

THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS

The Music Never Stops

Betty Carter (Blue Engine)

by George Grella

This archival recording of a 1992 concert by Betty Carter at Jazz at Lincoln Center has something of a gimmick to it. In the performance, Carter switched between several backing groups: three trios; a string ensemble; and a big band. With that out of the way, this is a wonderful addition to Carter's discography and beyond the sheer thrill of discovering a previously unheard Carter recording it stands on its own as a fine jazz album. There is a seamlessness that belies both the live setting and logistics of the stage presentation. Other than applause and Carter introducing musicians and songs, this would pass as a studio recording (well-registered for the most part, with a nice resonance, though there are some moments of thin, crackling piano) with the conceptual shrink-wrap of some producer shimmering on top.

After a short instrumental introduction, "Ms. B.C.", written by Pamela Watson and arranged by Bobby Watson, Carter sings continuously for near 90 minutes and there's nary a falter nor a dull moment. Her voice is full and smooth throughout and this is a vintage performance, her trademark transformations of standards and originals like "Tight - Mr. Gentleman" have an expressive depth that exceeds even her classic live set, *The Audience with Betty Carter*.

The music in smaller configurations is as serpentine and mesmerizing as ever and the musicians include some of the most notable alumni of her informal "Academy": Cyrus Chestnut, Geri Allen, John Hicks and Kenny Washington. She sings "If I Should Lose You" in a languid, hushed duet with Allen and backed by Chestnut, bassist Ari Roland and drummer Greg Hutchinson, she sings a medley of "Why Him?/Where or When/What's New" that covers the narrative and emotional territory of a great novel and finishes with an incredible major key vamp that somehow makes the final song both more comforting and more tragic.

There's odd balance to the big band material. Even with arrangements from Watson, Melba Liston and others, the riffs, obbligati and solos sound clichéd. But that may be Carter's fault—she made the familiar extraordinary and few could match the context of her artistry.

For more information, visit jazz.org/blueengine