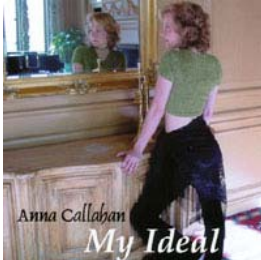


My Ideal

Anna Callahan | Angharad



Track Listing: My Ideal * I've Never Been In Love Before * I Knew * Say It Isn't So * When Snow Falls * The Moon Looks Down & Laughs * O Woe Is Me * Triste * So Long Ago * My Romance * Adieu

Personnel:

Anna Callahan, vocals, trumpet, flugelhorn
Karen Hammack, piano
Barry Zweig, guitar
Rick Shaw, bass
Jamey Tate, drums.

To a jazz writer (or any jazz fan) there is little as exciting as discovering fresh unheralded talent. Which brings me to a favorite hyphenate, singer-trumpeter-composer-arranger Anna Callahan. Her debut CD, *My Ideal*, is not just good, it is surprisingly excellent.

Perhaps, like me, you often wonder when you will, once again, experience what jazz critic Whitney Balliett calls the "sound of surprise," that electric sensation upon discovering a new exciting jazz artist. Well, on Callahan's debut, you will be surprised at the strength of her "originals," such as the melancholy and masterful "O Woe Is Me." or "So Long Ago" which has lyrics by Anna's brother, Timothy Callahan. And you will be surprised at her unexpected approaches to noted standards, such as Frank Loesser's "I've Never Been In Love Before" or the Richard Whiting title track, "My Ideal." The unrecalled and undiscovered are also included, such as a charming song, titled "The Moon Looks Down and Laughs," recorded by Billie Holiday back in 1938. Callahan has impeccable taste in tunes and her eleven selections are nicely balanced between noted standards, well-written originals and the arcane. Callahan smartly closed the CD with her own song, "Adieu," which has "future standard" written all over it. This sad ballad is exceptional both musically and lyrically ("so careful with my countenance/so careless with my friends/so easy to say nothing/so hard to make amends") Karen Hammack's piano playing on this reflective piece is achingly beautiful. Other singers have already expressed an interest in performing this wonderful new song.

Callahan is very much a jazz singer and performer but, fortunately for all of us who love language, she does not forget the lyrics. Her phrasing is conversational, sometimes sassy or sometimes sad, as each song requires. But she is also a master of time and an impressive scatter, improvising horn-like solos that are the mirror of her trumpet playing. However, like an experienced lover, she takes her time on ballads. For example, her easy, patient way with Irving Berlin's "Say It Isn't So?" is downright ecstatic (and sexy).

You can tell a lot about a performer by the accompanists that she keeps and Callahan has the very best on her debut CD. On piano is the aforementioned Karen Hammack, who plays Callahan's originals as if they were noted standards (which they may become). Hammack's music has wings: luscious and tensile, disciplined and nuanced. I don't know of a better accompanist. On

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educator. The bassist and drummer are one half of Callahan's quartet that she formed in the fall of 2000, Rick Shaw at the upright bass and Jamey Tate at the drum set. Their familiarity with Callahan's songs and approaches is most evident. These four musicians are more than accompanists; they are equal partners in the making of a superior jazz CD.

Anna Callahan is a unique combination of talents, singer, trumpeter, arranger and composer and I highly recommend *My Ideal*. Information on Callahan and the purchase of this superior CD can be obtained at her website, <http://www.annacallahan.com>.

The discovery of exciting new artists and songs is the most stimulating part of reviewing music. I'm already looking forward to Callahan's next CD. [Roger Crane](#)

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