



**CHERYL FISHER,**  
**JOYRIDE: Life In The Jazz Lane,**  
**CATFISH 10313.**

*In A Mellow Tone / I Csn Dream, Can't I? / J'Adore / Speak Low / I'll Forget You / Joyride / The Girl's Colors / Heart's Desire / Beautiful Love / Lets Get Lost / Dear Bix / I Found Love (Up Jumped Spring) / Girl Talk 53.55.*

**Fisher, vcl, arr; Phillip Strange, p; Neil Swainson, b; Reg Schwager, g; Terry Clarke, d; Eric Allison, ts, as, flt, cl, arr. 2005, Toronto, Canada.**

Cheryl Fisher's fourth CD, her first since earning a master's degree in "Jazz Vocal Performance" at the University of Miami, is truly a gift from Canada, where her talent has already been well and duly recognized. She's a singer with both intelligence and a certain reckless audacity, plus the vocal technique to synthesize her conception of a performance with the execution thereof. Her soprano voice is warm, clear and free of affectation, and her grasp of rhythmic phrasing as confident as it is fluent. There is both textural depth and breadth to her sound. She can be considered, therefore, a natural born Jazz singer, with the requisite instinct for improvisatory adventure. Even though there is some overdubbing of Eric Allison's panoply of horns (as on "Can't I?"), to suggest production pretensions, this is a session on which the singer and her tight bright backing band are, for the most part, sweating happily together.

Cheryl prefaces "Mellow" with a bustling verse of her own devising, backed by Neil Swainson's resonant bass, gears down into the familiar Ellington classic, and demonstrates her vocal control with a deliciously sustained insistence on the phrase, "joy unknown," before she defers to some Farlowish guitar from Reg Schwager. Joy known, I'd say.

The entire band is present for the boppish take on "Can't I?" with our vocalist contributing some horn-like vocalese/scat midway through. "Speak Low," is lifted on the strength of her interpolated digression into an interior song of her own, designed to comment on Ogden Nash's lyrics. This is apparently not an altogether innovative vocal ploy, as it has been utilized by no less a paragon of the vocal arts than Meredith D'Ambrosio, who, according to this CD's notes, has anointed it as the "paraphrase song."

"Forget" is a soaring ballad from the Broadway show, "Scarlet Pimpernel," and "Heart's Desire," a more reflective ballad, both of which receive nicely shaded readings. The latter carries one of Dave Frishberg's more conventional lyrics, wed-in this case--to an Alan Broadbent melodic line. "Bix" returns us to the antic Frishberg we all know and love, even though I came away thinking that here Ms. F. makes a slight miscalculation, in

as much as she treats it as more an earnest plea than the melancholy rumination I've always thought it to be.

Cheryl takes "Beautiful" for a scorching up tempo ride, with bits of wild scat strewn about. Phillip Strange solos effectively. She opens "Lost" with the rarely heard verse, then validates her audacity with more scat and some O'day-ish phrasing. "Joyride" and "J'Adore" are her own tunes, and suggest a somewhat puckish turn of mind, as exemplified by such lines as, "and in my heart I keep you still/part of this against my will." She converts Freddie Hubbard's "Spring" into her own "Found Love," with some relatively less pungent original lyrics, but the arrangement, with unison flute 'n scat, works well, lending the track a certain cheerful vivacity. "Girl Talk" is bossa-fied, with crisp drum breaks from Terry Clarke, as Ms. F. delivers the lyrics and scat with the brazen insouciance one might expect from someone burning rubber "in the Jazz lane."

A strong session from north of the border, one that deserves to be heard on both sides of same. Alan Bargebuhr