

Choice Cuts

by Cam Miller



Peggy Duquesnel, *Where Is Love?*
MPD Productions; 14 Selections, TT
= 73:34

For every CD sent to this department for review by prominent labels (Telarc, Mosaic, Arbors, etc.) there are probably three

times as many submitted by smaller labels' publicists. And every now and then, it's fun to listen to what some of the bands or singer on their way up (or down) have been doing in the recording studio and then evaluate their performances.

This time around it's a vocalist probably known better to sports fans than the public at large. She is Peggy Duquesnel who until recently was keyboardist for games played at home by the Anaheim Angels at Los Angeles of the American Baseball League and The Ducks of the National Hockey League.

Duquesnel was axed by new owners of the baseball and hockey teams a couple of years ago in a cost-cutting measure, but she has renewed her after-hours performing career and this album is part of that effort to alert the public to her talents, both as a vocalist and pianist.

If this CD sells as well as it should, smooth sailing lies ahead for the teacher at Concordia, a Southern California Christian University. The attractive piano-playing-singer makes for an appealing concert package. And Duquesnel not only is supported by her trio but also by a full orchestra, a can't lose proposition from the standpoint of listeners or Duquesnel.

In sharp contrast to younger singers who think they need to reinvent the melodies of proven songs to gain attention, Duquesnel likes to sing songs the way they were written. And

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for most part, songs that have stood the test of time.

For example, she leads her new CD with by exploring "Spring Will Hang You Up The Most" in a nifty seven-minute outing and comes right back with neatly crafted takes of "It Might As Well Be Spring," and "Every Time We Say Goodbye" both arranged by the immensely gifted Australian pianist, Allan Broadbent. Tenor saxist Gary Foster adds further luster to "Goodbye" with a warm solo.

Foster is a guest performer on the recording that includes a rhythm section made up of Jeff Hamilton and bassist Tom Warrington, two of the best.

After I jokingly said her singing voice reminded me of a dry martini, Duquesnel said she was an alto and enjoyed singing, but couldn't elaborate beyond that description. Whatever the case, she knows her way around a set of lyrics.

Of the splendid array of songs that includes two more springs ("Joy Spring" and "Up Jumped Spring") as well as two songs Duquesnel wrote, there are two that get over-the-top marks: "Where Is Love?" a wistful piece that comes from the Broadway show, "Oliver," and "Jesus Loves Me," a simple but treasured song sung in churches around the world that Duquesnel embraces with her personal love of the Lord.