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Dee Dee McNeil

Julia Karosi - "Hidden Roots"

Dot Time Records

In the linear notes by David Linx about this very intriguing Hungarian jazz record I read, "*...The African-American experience has blessed the whole world with the language of jazz. We all have learned to master, speak and transmit properly by way of diverse cultural expressions. Now we can include Julia Karosi and her wonderful musicians from Hungary in this experience. Each song on this album is a delicious short story that gives a new angle and insight by means of Hungarian lyrics ... showing usany language can work in jazz music.*"

I was eager to listen to what Mr. Linx expressed in his linear notes.

From the very first note, I knew that this young lady could sing. I was captivated by her scat tones on "The Miraculous Deer," a song she composed. The next cut was a traditional song of Hungary that Karosi arranged called, "Edesanyam Rozsafaja". I found it hauntingly beautiful. Most of the songs on this album are composed by the artist, Karosi. I commend her composing abilities. As a jazz reviewer, I hear such a plethora of vocalists who are popping out albums like corn kernels at a movie theater, many that are bland as unsalted butter. It's so wonderful to hear a fresh voice that is full bodied, melodic and not nasal, and one that is composing and arranging her own music. Bravo! I don't have to understand the language to feel Karosi's spirit and her music moved me. "Noah's Ark" is harmonically sound as she adds her voice to the horn lines like another instrument. This CD is a joyous experience full of surprises, creativity and an exceptionally strong band composed of Aron Talas on piano, Adam Bogothy on bass, Bendeguz Barga on drums and Tobias Meinhart on tenor saxophone. They prepared a beautiful palate for Julia Karosi to paint her vocal expressions. The title tune of this recording is challenging, uptempo and showcases the vocalist's full range and timing. "Hidden Roots" is a showstopper.

Someone quoted Charles McPherson on this album cover as saying: "Jazz happened in the States!" Although I must concur with Mr. McPherson, I am excited that so many countries and cultures have embraced our unique American art form. They've studied it, listened to it and loved it enough to pursue jazz as an expression of art and freedom worldwide. You see the results of our influence and creativity in Karosi's album. Beautiful work!