

theWholeNote

29 August 2016

With the release of *This I Know*, elegant and engaging chanteuse, June Garber has gifted us with a cornucopia of rich, emotionally fecund, rarely trodden compositions as well as assembling a stellar cast of collaborators, including producer/arrangers George Koller on bass and Mark Kieswetter keyboards, as well as shining standouts Ted Quinlan on guitar, Alison Young on sax and Guido Basso on flugelhorn and trumpet. South African-born Garber wears a couple of hats here – not only as a sublime vocal communicator, but also as a composer and arranger. This fine project marks the return of Garber following a personal tragedy, and she has deftly transmuted her own challenging journey into a profound musical statement of loss, survival, healing and the power of love.

Garber is a skilled and versatile vocalist/entertainer, and although she approaches her work with a classic sensibility, she is also fearless in her embracing of contemporary material – including a take on Adele's *Rumour Has It* and two well-crafted original tunes, the South African inspired *Underneath the Jacaranda Tree* and the heartrending *Unbroken*.

A true stunner is *Live for Life*, Francis Lai's memorable theme from *A Man and a Woman*. Garber glides on a simple melodic line here, and effortlessly imbues it with a heady remoulade of romance and magic. Trumpeter Bruce Cassidy's sumptuous arrangement of Adam Salim's *Malaika* is nothing short of breath-taking, and features Garber on stirring Swahili vocals. Her bluesy side is in full throttle on Hoagy Carmichael's *Baltimore Oriole* and on a fresh, guitar-infused arrangement of Peter Allen and Carole Bayer Sager's *Don't Cry Out Loud*, Garber captivates with her understatement.

- Lesley Mitchell-Clarke