

Ken Franckling's Jazz Notes

June 23rd, 2016

Happiness, joy, grief, melancholy and sadness are all part of the adult experience. June Garber has experienced them all – and on this CD, the Toronto-based singer shares them in a cathartic way. It no doubt helped her move beyond the sudden loss of her husband, Bob Doherty, nearly three years ago. Some of the joy comes out on tunes from or inspired by her childhood in South Africa – “Underneath the Jacaranda Tree” and “Meadowlands.” Other treats include her poignant take on Hoagy Carmichael’s classic “Baltimore Oriole” and a clever medley pairing Adele’s “Rumour Has It” with the Peggy Lee-associated torch anthem “Fever.”

Her core band – pianist Mark Kieswetter, bassist George Koller and drummer Ben Wittman – is joined by a variety of special guests on various tracks. This project also finds Garber in a slightly different musical role. She co-wrote two of the tunes – “Underneath the Jacaranda Tree” and “Unbroken” – and she took a subtler approach to vocals, meshing herself into the band rather than riding roughshod over the instrumentals as too many vocalists do. This fresh approach serves her well.

- Ken Franckling