

VALERIE JOYCE

NEWYORKBLUE



Indulge me for a moment. In my fantasy big screen adaptation of Homer's "The Odyssey," Valerie Joyce would play one of the sirens luring unsuspecting sailors to their doom. She would sit on the rocks with the other sirens and sing in that slow and sensuous manner of hers, bewitching Odysseus and his crew with her plaintive songs and causing them to crash their ship onto the jagged reef.

She certainly cast a spell on me with her beguiling renditions of Lorenz Hart & Richard Rodgers' "Easy To Remember," Bill Evans/Miles Davis' "Blue in Green," Cole Porter's "Every Time We Say Goodbye" and Sammy Cahn & Julie Styne's "I Fall In Love Too Easily" on New York Blue. Valerie's hauntingly beautiful, whispering vocals throughout this followup to 2002's *Reverie* are hopelessly alluring. While the setting here is unmistakably jazzy — courtesy of a crack crew of New Yorkers consisting of pianist-arranger Andy Ezrin, bassists Tim Lefevre and John Hebert, and drummer Gene Jackson — the Seattle-based singer is not bound to the genre, per se. Rather than being earthbound in the manner of an Ella Fitzgerald or Betty Carter, Joyce's angelic voice holds a tranquil, ethereal quality that wafts upward with a lighter-than-air mystique; part Julie London, part Joni Mitchell, part Astrud Gilberto, part Lorelei.

Born in Japan to an American father and Japanese mother, Valerie enrolled in solfege classes at the age of six and began piano lessons at the age of eight. After attending an international school in Yokohama she moved to Tacoma, Washington in 1991 to attend the University of Puget Sound, where she majored in Music Business. She was awarded a classical piano scholarship there and studied piano with Dr. Steven Moore and Dr. Duane Hulbert for four years while also singing in the vocal jazz choir. In her junior and senior



I would like to thank my family and everyone at Chesky Records, all the musicians (Andy Ezrin, Tim Lefevre, Gene Jackson, Lawrence Feldman, Jon Hebert, the engineers and other artists (Janette Beckman, Daniel Martin) who worked on the project.

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years, Valerie played piano in the college jazz band and took jazz improvisation classes during the summer at the University of Washington. At the Port Townsend Workshop she studied with renowned jazz improv vocalist Jay Clayton while also studying jazz voice and piano with Jerome Gray on the weekends.


After graduating, Valerie moved to Seattle, where she worked a day job and freelanced as a musician by night, appearing in solo, duo, trio and quartet situations and also playing piano in Jay Thomas's big band. Reverie introduced her as a vocalist of rare gifts, and she reveals even more layers of her affecting musicality on *New York Blue*.

Along with enchanting interpretations of familiar jazz standards like "It Never Entered My Mind," "Every Time We Say Goodbye" and "Darn That Dream," Valerie breathes new life into pop nuggets like Tracy Chapman's "Baby Can I Hold You Tonight," Jimi Hendrix's melancholic "Little Wing" and the Beatles' somber "Golden Slumbers." Elsewhere, she turns in a smoldering "Fever," soars sensuously over an undulating samba flavored "Blue in Green," and swings serenely on "Weaver of Dreams," which features some robust alto sax work from Lawrence Feldman. She also resurrects her own "Oasis," a lilting waltz-time original from Reverie that has her ethereal voice fairly floating into the stratosphere.

Not since Cassandra Wilson's *Blue Light 'Til Dawn* has a vocalist cast such an entrancing spell as Valerie Joyce does on *New York Blue*.

— Bill Milkowski

Bill Milkowski, named Writer of the Year for 2004 by the Jazz Journalists Association, is a regular contributor to *Jazz Times* and *Jazziz* magazine.



Valerie Joyce
VOCALS

Andy Ezrin
PIANO

Lawrence Feldman
ALTO & TENOR SAXOPHONE

Eugene Jackson
DRUMS

Jon Hebert
ACOUSTIC BASS, TRACKS 4, 8, 9, 10 & 11

Tim Lefevre
ACOUSTIC BASS, TRACKS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 12 & 13

ALL ARRANGEMENTS

Andy Ezrin, Valerie Joyce

PRODUCER
David Chesky

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Norman Chesky

RECORDING, EDITING AND MASTERING ENGINEER
Nicholas Prout

2ND ENGINEER/RECORDING COORDINATOR
Rick Bonaventure Eckerle

SESSION ASSISTANTS
Milton Ruiz, David Abraham

PRODUCT MANAGER
Lisa J. Marks

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
Lisa Hershfield, Matt Epstein, Peter Bussigel

ART DIRECTION
Andrij Borys

PHOTOGRAPHY
Janette Beckman

RECORDED AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH,
CHELSEA, NYC JUNE 28-29, 2005

Baldwin 9 foot grand piano courtesy of
Gibson Baldwin Entertainment, NYC

- 1. It Never Entered My Mind** 6:16
Lorenz Hart & Richard Rodgers Lorenz Hart Publishing Co./ Williamson Music Co [ASCAP]
- 2. Blue In Green** 4:31
Miles Davis Cassandra Wilson (Lyrics) Jazz Horn Music Corporation. Sony/ATV Songs LLC [BMI]
- 3. Baby Can I Hold You** 3:12
Tracey Chapman EMI April Music Inc. c/o EMI Music Publishing [ASCAP]
- 4. Fever** 4:29
Eddie J. Cooley & John Davenport Fortknox Music Inc. & Trio Music Co. [BMI]
- 5. Oasis** 3:26
Valerie Joyce Illman VJI Music [BMI] / Coconut Bay Music [BMI]
- 6. Every Time We Say Goodbye** 5:25
Cole Porter Chappell & Co Inc.
- 7. Moon and Sand** 3:08
William Engvick, Mortimer Palitz, Alec Wilder Ludlow Music INC.,/ Regent Music Corp. [BMI]
- 8. Little Wing** 3:05
Jimi Hendrix Experience Hendrix LLC [ASCAP]
- 9. Weaver Of Dreams** 3:09
John Elliot & Victor Young Popular Chappell & Co INC, /Edwin H. Morris & Co Inc. [ASCAP]
- 10. It's Easy To Remember** 6:10
Lorenz Hart & Richard Rodgers Famous Music Corporation [ASCAP]
- 11. Darn That Dream** 2:56
Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke Famous Music Corp. [ASCAP]
- 12. I Fall In Love Too Easily** 3:38
Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne EMI Feist Catalog INC [ASCAP]
- 13. Golden Slumbers** 2:18
John Lennon and Paul McCartney Sony/ ATV Tunes [ASCAP]

Total Time: 51:44