



SHE & HIM Classics

Columbia 88875 01599 2 (CD). 2014. M. Ward, prod.; Pierre de Reeder, Tom Schick, engs. AAD.? TT: 39:13

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

In their other lives, Zooey Deschanel and M. Ward are, respectively, a renowned TV and film actress, and a postmodern singer-songwriter-guitarist whose solo albums and side project Monsters of Folk have won him plenty of popular and critical accolades. Together the two sound charming, almost like vintage Linda Ronstadt and Tom Waits at their most unassuming.

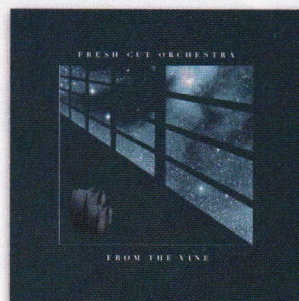
Following three albums of mostly original Deschanel material and a 2011 Christmas album, *She & Him* take a nostalgic turn and do the en vogue turning-back-the-musical-clock thing. On *Classics*, they tackle a baker's dozen songs from yesteryear, by writers ranging from Charles Aznavour and Burt Bacharach to Carole King.

Beginning with the oft-recorded, mid-1930s jazz nugget "Stars Fell on Alabama," an understated reverence blankets *Classics*; there's nothing kitschy here. Deschanel, who thankfully doesn't resort to vibrato to sound authentic, sounds absolutely gorgeous in the 1964 R&B smash "Oh No, Not My Baby," which features sparkling accompaniment by drummer Jim Keltner, who's all over this album. Trombone Shorty appears on several tracks, adding his signature sultry elegance to the 1957 pop chestnut "It's Not for Me to Say."

Only "Unchained Melody," featuring the Chapin Sisters, bogs down, straying into dirge-land. But throughout, as in Deschanel's fresh update of Dusty Springfield's "Stay Awhile," and in the duo's seductive vocal interplay on the Sammy Cahn-Jule Styne classic "Time After Time," the mood is intimate, inviting, and sonically soothing.

—David Sokol

JAZZ



FRESH CUT ORCHESTRA From the Vine

Mike Cempola, alto/tenor saxophones, bass clarinet, flute; Mark Allen, baritone/soprano saxophones, bass clarinet, flute; Josh Lawrence, trumpet; Brent White, trombone; Matt Davis, guitar; Tim Conley, laptop, guitar; Brian Marsella, piano, Rhodes, keyboards; Jason Fraticelli, double bass; Anwar Marshall, drums; François Zayas, bongos, percussion
Ropeadope RAD-265 (CD). 2014. Jason Fraticelli, Josh Lawrence, Anwar Marshall, prods.; Glenn Barratt, eng. DDD. TT: 46:05

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

Three distinct compositional voices emerge on *From the Vine*, a stunning debut by the 10-piece Fresh Cut Orchestra, out of Philadelphia. Bassist Jason Fraticelli leads off with his six-movement "The Mothers' Suite," a groove-heavy electro-acoustic work full of harmonic depth, sonic surprise, and melodic power, thanks to the band's four beautifully voiced horns. Trumpeter Josh Lawrence weighs in with "Uptown Romance," a ballad with hints of Ellington and Mingus that shows the group's bona-fide acoustic chops. Drummer Anwar Marshall offers the closing "Sanguine," alive with jittery electronic percussion, paired bass clarinets, and gorgeously layered Rhodes and guitar textures courtesy Brian Marsella and Matt Davis, respectively.

Along with their virtuosity and adventurous ears, Fresh Cut's three co-leaders—Fraticelli, Lawrence, and Marshall—approach sound in a refreshing way. Marsella's piano, Tim Conley's atmospheric laptop and shred guitar paired with Davis's cleaner singing tone, François Zayas's alert bongos cutting through the mix at the right moments: all the elements are in balance.

Fraticelli's bass tone is round and fat, more saturated than is typical in today's jazz. His solo interlude, "Elegy for a Mom," leads into the almost Nyroesque balladry of "The Funeral," with subtle electronic pulses, plaintive guitar lines, and delicate flutes. —David R. Adler



RED GARLAND TRIO Swingin' on the Korner: Live at Keystone Korner

Red Garland, piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums
Elemental 5990426 (2 CDs). 2014. Todd Barkan, Zev Feldman, prods.; unidentified eng. ADD? TT: 2:09:30

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

Red Garland died in 1984. Inevitably, awareness of his greatness is fading into the shadows of history. But we Garland fans who remain are hard-core. We can't get enough of him. Guess how we feel about suddenly acquiring two hours of previously unknown Garland.

The recordings comes from a week-long engagement at Keystone Korner, in San Francisco, in 1977. It was the first and last time that Garland, Leroy Vinnegar, and Philly Joe Jones played together. It's all here: Garland's deep blues feeling; his bulletproof swing; his suave, almost casual sense of style. Unmistakable, rich block chords (including beautiful wrong notes) become tinkly, silvery, single-note melodies. With effortless, life-affirming sprightliness, Garland rides the groove.

There are headlong swingers like "Billy Boy" (harder, looser, and longer than Ahmad Jamal's famous version) and a killer "Love for Sale." There are tender, elegant ballads like "It's Impossible" and "Never Let Me Go." Some tunes are burners and ballads, like "On a Clear Day."

The recording comes from cassette board tapes. The sound is flat and airless and leaves out Keystone Korner. The booklet is brilliant, with newly unearthed gig photos and 40 pages of heartfelt remembrances from Garland authorities: Nat Hentoff, Ira Gitler, etc.

Perhaps Red Garland's enduring appeal is that he was the last major jazz pianist of the pre-modern era, after which the world became relativist and permanently off-center. His music is confident in a way that is no longer possible. —Thomas Conrad