GirlSingers.org

Doug Boynton **August 24th, 2008**

Retta Christie - With David Evans and Dave Frishberg (Retta Records)
Released: June, 2008

Retta Christie is an Oregon songstress who stands in that complicated intersection of country music (the western swing school) and jazz - in much the same way as Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. In fact, if you told me that she's the reincarnation of the Playboys' girl singer, I'd believe it.

Her bio says she was an "Oregon farm kid who learned to square dance and to accompany family members and her own singing with her guitar. She loves…Western swing, good Dixieland, cowboy movie music and clever song-stories…" You might overlook this gem, if you're looking for textbook sophistication. And that would be a shame, because I'd argue that there's plenty of sophistication built in to the simplicity of this disc, thanks to Mr. Frishberg on piano, and Mr. Evans on reeds - two old pros who both perfectly frame Ms. Christie's voice, with her straight ahead, no-tricks sweetness that defies pigeonholes.

"Yearning Just For You" is one of my favorite Bob Wills tunes, and for that reason, it's one of my favorites on this disc, too. So is "I'll String Along With You," along with "Someday, You'll Want Me To Want You," and Frishberg's "Wallflower Lonely, Cornflower Blue.

Mr. Frishberg and Mr. Evans get two tracks of their own to show off as instrumentals - "The Thrill is Gone," and "Louise." Sublime.

Off the beaten path, musically? You bet. But it's a side trip you should take every now and then. Because if all you know is Norah and Diana, you're missing a lot of really good music.

This disc is highly recommended.