

Jazz Society of Oregon

July 2008

Review by Kyle O'Brien

Retta Christie with David Evans and Dave Frishberg, self titled.

There is something absolutely charming about Christie's straightforward, sweet delivery. She'll never win any "biggest voice" awards, and that's absolutely fine, since her style is simple and melodic. Christie loves a good melody and a jaunty beat, especially those from the early days of jazz and western swing. In this pared down format, she keeps perfect company with woodwind player Evans and master stride pianist Frishberg, who holds down the bass and chords as Christie sings such sweet and approachable melodies like the delightful "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?" with Evans doing melodious clarinet. Frishberg's 40-plus year-old tune, "Wallflower Lonely, Cornflower Blue," a perfect fit for Christie's light two step, makes a welcome appearance here, a western-style jazz number that has Frishberg's usual smart wordplay. Christie even gives her cohorts a chance to shine on their own on "The Thrill is Gone," and on a song from the stage show, "George White's Scandals of 1931," a minor-keyed ballad where Evans does his breathy best and Frishberg stretches they chords a bit. All three do a lovely job of channeling the past, being retro while being in the here and now. Christie is more jazz here than country, but her finale, "Ridin' Down the Canyon," assures us there's still plenty of country in this girl. A lovely and cheery album by three musicians perfectly in their realm.