

CityLife 2nd October 2009

Review: – Ian Shaw: Somewhere Towards Love (Splash Point)

CityLife Rating: **** out of 5

HERE Ian Shaw gets the Billy No Mates treatment: locked in a studio with only a piano, and compelled to lay bare his soul before the key is surrendered (it worked for Liane Carroll, for the same label, Splash Point).

The tactic encourages introspectiveness, which is not Shaw's ordinary mode, as one of the most flamboyant exponents of cabaret jazz.

But how he embraces the confessional candour and emotional intensity - there's a rapturous version of Nick Cave's Into My Arms - and he applies the same searching honesty to standards like Noel Coward's If Love Were All.

The hedonist appears just once, on the waspish Just Having Fun; otherwise it's loneliness, grief and infatuation all the way.

The singer, so absorbed in his private feelings, manages to be the mouthpiece for the dreams and desires of his audience.

It takes a star to do this. Here, Greta Garbo-like, star qualities seem to flourish in solitude. Shaw is no Oscar Peterson, but his piano is competent for his needs.

By Mike Butler

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Reader Rating: ***** out of 5