

Allen Pollock's CD Roundup

Featuring the UK's unique jazz vocalist/pianist/drummer in performance at the 2006 Brecon Jazz Festival, **LIANE LIVE (Splash Point Records SPR007DVD)** refers, of course, to **Liane Carroll** who, in tremendous form, enriched a new audience with her powerfully emotional style. Batting THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC, PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, CARAVAN, ORANGE COLOURED SKY and BYE, BYE BLACKBIRD as up-front standards, the difference is in the way she reinvents them. After all, this is not your ordinary singer – this is Liane Carroll! Adding self-composed DUBLIN MORNING plus other contemporaneous numbers by Tom Waits etc; Ian Shaw joins Liane for a sensational duet YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND. Supported by bass player husband Roger Carey and drummer Mark Fletcher, this is the concert originally shown on BBC4 television and introduced by Julian Joseph. A bonus treat is Helen Mayhew's interview with Liane in her home town of Hastings with a performance of THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND.

Also multi-tasking as singer/jazz trumpeter/songwriter and presumably housewife, **Sue Richardson's EMERGENCE (Splash Point SPR006CD)** utilises her first three talents to utmost capacity with all but two included standards (IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU and DEARLY BELOVED) bravely and innovatively given over to her own songs which reflect her experiences of visits to Havana and New Orleans. Such vast uncharted territory naturally demands many plays but I particularly enjoyed the Latin jazz beat of I JUST CAN'T HELP MYSELF, the energised STUCK IN THE MIDDLE and instrumentally the lonely atmospheric flugelhorn mood of WINTER plus the trumpet warmth of A LA MODE. Both Sue and Splash Point deserve praise for taking this risky path which is a rewarding entry to the jazz field.

Celebrating Liverpool's 2008 choice as "European Capital of Culture" **THE MERSEY SOUND – 30 FAB ORIGINAL MERSEYSIDE HITS 1963-74 (EMI 50999 5 19574 2)** covers the popular music trends of the '60s when the city's pop artistes recorded songs which ruled the world. These include Gerry and the Pacemakers (FERRY CROSS THE MERSEY), Cilla Black (ANYONE WHO HAD A HEART), Billy J. Kramer (FROM A WINDOW), The Swinging Blue Jeans (GOOD LOVIN'), The Scaffold (LIVERPOOL LOU) and others are all represented but presumably contractual restrictions precluded anything by those mop-heads, The Beatles, even though notes and graphics allude to their impact. Therefore, although this tribute collection of thirty songs delivers the toe-tapping sound and popular artists of the time, it must be viewed as flawed on account of this inexcusable exclusion.