

CD Review – Cadence Magazine, July 2013.
MIMI FOX

STANDARDS, OLD & NEW

Origin 82631

This Land is Your Land / 500 Miles High / I Can't Get Started / Have You Met Miss Jones / She's Out of My Life / She's Leaving Home / Cry Me a River / Moonlight in Vermont/Smoke Gets in Your Eyes / Four on Six / Blowin' in the Wind. 50:23.

Fox (g). September 2012, San Francisco, CA.

This terrific, unpretentious solo recording bears some comparison with fellow guitarist Eric Hofbauer's recent solo reading of Americana. But Fox's bright, uncluttered, unvarnished archtop playing is more clearly in the lineage of Jim Hall and Joe Pass. She marries this approach with a number of familiar and unexpected pieces, brought together by her assured and impassioned playing in a concise and rewarding set. The Guthrie tune starts out with mid-tempo, bluesy strut, then races into a vigorous double-time section that really shows of Fox's technique and imagination. These elegant, spirited transitions are (along with keen dynamic sensitivity and a tasteful technique) characteristic of the album as a whole. And with the unexpected romp through the Corea tune, Fox also shows her affinity for interesting variations in tempo, tasty Blues flourishes, and judicious chordal work (and yeah, for those interested she can also spool out some really fantastic runs too). Dazzling as that is, it's hard not to be won over by the obviously affectionate reading of "I Can't Get Started" (where she engages in some of her densest harmonic work here). Similarly beautiful are "She's Out of My Life" - with some bright, jewel-like asides - and Fox's patient, loving reading of the Beatles tune. A thorough-going traditionalist in some ways, Fox never superimposes a formulaically "jazzy" aesthetic on the non-idiomatic tunes; nor is she flatly reverential (even when dealing out some tasty walking lines, as on "Miss Jones"). Instead, she makes of her influences something deeply personal, and plays with such assurance that there's a real looseness and exploratory quality here (probably most evident on "Cry Me a River"). Even the Wes tune is nicely transformed, as Fox states the theme in free time to begin with, then cycles through various tempos and timbres that free "Four on Six" from its distinctive rhythmic associations even as the tune is consistently bright and recognizable. And the Dylan closer is different entirely, abstracted to the point where the theme is often obscured. Truly fine stuff here.

Jason Bivins