



I'm Curious
Jinjoo Yoo (Gut String)
 by Tom Greenland

Fresh out of the Masters program at Queens College, Korean pianist Jinjoo Yoo sounds wise beyond her experience when she sits down to play. *I'm Curious*, her debut EP, shows her breadth as a straightahead stylist and though there are strong allusions to key elements and players of the mainstream tradition, she doesn't exactly sound like anyone else. A short (about 30 minutes) sampler, the disc contains all original tracks played by her trio with bassist Neal Miner and drummer Jimmy Wormworth.

"Blullaby" both opens and closes the set, each version kicked off by an ambulatory, lushly chorded piano soliloquy before bass and drums enter with urgent two-beat swing, becoming a minor blues that sounds like something that Horace Silver would have done with "St. James Infirmary" at a medium-up tempo. Here and elsewhere, the listener is instantly attracted to Yoo's light but firm touch on the keys, like a Broadway dancer springing across the floor. The alternate take seems a bit more relaxed, in a Vince Guaraldi vein, with light clustered accents and a fine solo built on carefully crafted figures.

"Dizzy Blossom" has an arpeggiated theme that

could almost be ragtime, Yoo accenting select chords with a fast roll akin to a drummer's ruff, her solo lines, mostly single notes, crisp and clean like a trumpet. The title track has a blues-based melody à la (again) Silver but transitions to a decidedly Ellington-ian bridge with stabbing chords and rolling arpeggios.

"And I Call It Home" adapts a "Killer Joe" vamp to Phrygian mode while "To Barry with Love" features Yoo's beautiful ballad style, picking up the tempo for some pseudo-stride, ending with delicate poise. Miner enjoys solo space on most tracks but typically he and Wormworth leave a lioness' share of the musical moves to Yoo.

For more information, visit gutstringrecords.com. Yoo is at 1986 Est. Wine Bar & Lounge Thursdays-Fridays. See Calendar.



The Second Time Around
Judith Lorick (JLJ International)
 by Alex Henderson

Many of jazz' great vocalists have made a point of demonstrating their ability to excel at different tempos while others are best remembered as torch singers (Shirley Horn and Johnny Hartman, for example). Judith Lorick focuses on the latter tradition on *The Second Time Around*, appropriately titled because

even though she has been performing since the '60s, it is only her second studio album (the first one, *Songs for My Mother*, was released in 1998).

One hears Sarah Vaughan in her phrasing but also a strong Horn influence as well. With pianist Eric Reed handling the arrangements, Lorick maintains a smoky ambiance whether embracing Michael Leonard's "Why Did I Choose You", Tadd Dameron's "If You Could See Me Now" or Cy Coleman's "I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out of My Life". Helping Lorick maintain that mood along with Reed are trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, tenor saxophonist Chris Lewis, bassist Kiyoshi Kitagawa and drummer McClenty Hunter.

During its 73-year history, "If You Could See Me Now" has often been heard as a bop instrumental but Lorick embraces the lyrics that Carl Sigman wrote for the melancholy ballad, recalling Vaughan's famous 1946 version. A bilingual interpretation of the Marguerite Monnot-Edith Piaf standard "Hymne à l'Amour", a.k.a. "If You Love Me (Really Love Me)", is one of the album's pleasant surprises. Lorick opens in French (she lived in Europe for 28 years) before switching to Geoffrey Parsons' English lyrics, singing convincingly in both languages. She is no less expressive on Leslie Bricusse's "When I Look in Your Eyes" and a bossa nova arrangement of Dimitri Tiomkin's haunting "Wild Is the Wind". The latter was made famous in the late '50s by a young Johnny Mathis in a lavish orchestral version; Lorick, in contrast, favors an intimate bossa nova arrangement.

The Second Time Around doesn't claim to be groundbreaking, but it's a satisfying effort and demonstrates that this underexposed vocalist is well deserving of a wider audience.

For more information, visit judithlorick.com

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