

Carmen McRae – Bittersweet (1964)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 15 October 2009 21:30 - Last Updated Sunday, 10 August 2014 09:18

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01. *When Sunny Gets Blue* 02. *How Did He Look* 03. *Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry*
04. *The Meaning Of The Blues* 05. *If You Could Love Me* 06. *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*
07. *Second Chance* 08. *If You Could See Me Now* 09. *Here's That Rainy Day*
10. *I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out Of My Life* 11. *Ghost Of Yesterday* 12. *I'm Lost* 13. *Come Sunday*
Curtis Boyd - Drums Mundell Lowe - Guitar Carmen McRae - Piano, Vocals
Norman Simmons - Piano Victor Sproles - Bass

Carmen McRae made many worthwhile albums during her long career, but this session of mostly melancholy ballads never received the exposure it deserved, possibly because it was done for Mort Fega's small independent label, Focus. But the singer, who is in top form throughout the date, responds beautifully to pianist Norman Simmons' well-crafted charts; the rest of the cast includes drummer Curtis Boyd; bassist Victor Sproles; and a last minute but valuable substitute, guitarist Mundell Lowe. Her dramatic lagging behind the beat in "The Meaning of the Blues" adds to its appeal. "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most" is the only extended piece and was already a regular part of her repertoire by the time of this recording, so her effortless take is no surprise. McRae was an excellent pianist and accompanies herself on the defiant "I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out of My Life." Duke Ellington's meditative "Come Sunday" provides a ray of hope among the otherwise bittersweet songs on this CD. Fortunately, Koch had the wisdom to reissue this lost treasure, and it easily ranks among Carmen McRae's best recordings. ---Ken Dryden, Rovi

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