

Halie Loren - Simply Love (2013)

Written by bluesever

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1. For Sentimental Reasons 2. Cuando Bailamos 3. L-O-V-E 4. On The Sunny Side Of The Street 5. I Feel The Earth Move 6. My Funny Valentine 7. I've Got To See You Again 8. Le Premier Bonheur Du Jour 9. Moon River 10. Bare Feet 11. Happy Together 12. Dream A Little Dream Of Me 13. Simply Love Halie Loren – vocals Matt Treder - piano, Rhodes piano, string arrangements Mark Schneider – bass Brian West - drums, percussion Willian Seiji Mars - guitar (1, 2, 4, 5, 10) Daniel Gallo - guitar (13) Sergei Teleshev - button accordion Craig Chee – ukulele Dale Bradley - cello (2, 7, 8) Dave Burham - violin (2, 7, 8) Lisa McWhorter - violin (2, 8) Clark Spencer - viola (2, 8)

Vocalist Halie Loren has never avoided love songs. Her spectacularly engaging *Heart First* (Justin Time, 2012) is actually full of them, but this program one-ups that album in the love department. Loren mixes and matches popular songs from a variety of sources and eras, throws in a few originals for good measure, and lets her warm and seductive voice work its magic on all of them during the easy-to-enjoy *Simply Love*

Loren has always been repertoire savvy, picking music that's familiar enough but fairly malleable. Her song selections are fairly conservative, populist even, but she often takes risks in the way she approaches them. "L-O-V-E," for example, is drained of its testosterone and given a buoyant facelift, "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" gets an upbeat, Jason Mraz-like reading with an emphasis on the upbeats, and "Happy Together" is refashioned with a slick-and-hip veneer. Elsewhere, she puts her multilingual talent(s) to good use, delivers winning originals, from the bossa-based "Cuando Bailamos" to the Jack Johnson-esque "Bare Feet," and gets right to the heart of the matter on numbers like "For Sentimental Reasons."

Pop-inflected jazz like this often gets ignored by American audiences and critics who view it as a resident in an artistic no man's land; it's too jazzy to appeal to the core pop constituency and

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of minor interest to a jazz community which seems to only respect the originators and those breaking new ground today. That's really a shame because Loren has something to say and her voice is as attractive and intoxicating as anything. She's something of a star in Japan, where her albums fly off the shelves, but American audiences have been slow to catch on; maybe this one will do the trick. ---Dan Bilawsky, allaboutjazz.com

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