

Veronica Mortensen

Presents Passed

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Veronica Mortensen is a treasured vocalist and talented songwriter. In 2013 she received an honorary award from the Danish composers' association DPA for her songwriting. This was after the release of her previous album *Catching Waves*, on which most tracks bore her signature. Her new album, *Presents Passed*, is the first of five releases with no songwriting contributions from her hand. The repertoire on *Presents Passed* exclusively features jazz standards. It is a necessary release, says Veronica. "There are so many great songs, and it would irk me if I never took the opportunity in my career to record a few of them. I could never have written these songs myself, so it feels like a privilege to sing them. I think of them as small jewels – presents if you will – passed down from another time. Thus the album title, *Presents Passed*". She deliberately avoided the most well known standards that have been interpreted so many times before. She chose songs that have made a deep impression on her – the lyrics, the tunes. The new album features songs by composers like Thad Jones, Michel Legrand, Mel Tormé and others. Veronica passes them gently and lovingly on to us, so we may feel them too. More than anything, Veronica is an interpreter. She tells a story with extreme presence, blending almost humbly with the music and the great musicians surrounding her. "I wanted to record an album with a subdued atmosphere, an album you feel like listening to an evening when you light a few candles and pour a glass of wine. I feel we have succeeded. The fine musicians on the recording had a good feel for the mood I was looking for", she says. And it is wonderful!

Listen – and if you haven't already lit the candles, do so now. It is the kind of album – though no other comparison intended – that touches you in somewhat the same way that Monica Zetterlund touched many of us when she released *Waltz for Debby* in 1964. A handful of handpicked songs are given a new, rich life performed by a talented vocalist with such affinity for her material. Veronica says of the musicians:

"As on my previous releases, the trumpet is predominant. I love that instrument. This time, it is played by Thomas Fryland, who also joined me on my very first album, *Pieces In A Puzzle*. He wrote the fine arrangements that keep within the simple framework that I wanted. I have known bassist Jesper Bodilsen since my days at the conservatory in Aarhus in the early '90s.

We have played many concerts together over the years, and I have enjoyed his solo albums immensely, so it was a pleasure to have him with us for this recording. He also helped out a lot with the sound production. This is my first recording with a guitar – it is a new texture for me. Per Møllehøj is a great and very talented guitarist, and it felt like we had played together forever.

Mads Søndergaard (piano) and Andreas Fryland (drums) were new and very positive acquaintances. Despite his young age, Andreas plays with great maturity and intensity. One of Mads' many qualities is a rare capacity for accompanying vocals in rubato – what a pleasure to sing with his support! I had been dubious about using guitar and piano together, but Mads and Per supplement each other eminently."

Thomas Fryland (tr), Per Møllehøj (g), Mads Søndergaard (p), Jesper Bodilsen (b), Andreas Fryland (dr)

Born To Be Blue (R.Wells/M.Tormé) / They Say It's Spring (B.Haymes/M.Clarke) / He Was Too Good To Me (R.Rodgers/L.Hart) / Everybody's Song But My Own (K.Wheeler/J.White) / Lies Of Handsome Men (F.Blumenthal) / Watch What Happens (M.Legrand/N.Gimbel) / Hearts Desire (D.Frisher/A.Broadbent) / We'll Be Together Again (C.Fischer/E.Laine) / A Child Is Born (T.Jones/A.Wilder) / May I Come In? (M.Fisher/J.Segal) / Lazy Afternoon (J.Moross/J.Latouche) / Thanks For You (B.Hanighen/M.Wright).

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