



Barbara Lusch has raised the bar! I'm happy to report that her new CD "Surprisingly Good For You" is, not surprisingly... great! Ms. Lusch's second release reveals a first-class vocalist at the top of her game. Her song choices on this offering are inspired. Her interpretations of a couple of infrequently performed Peggy Lee compositions, "Baby Come Home" and "Please Don't Rush Me" are sung with a subtle passion and conviction. Other selections on this CD include "Sentimental Journey", "Why Don't You Do Right" and a wonderful version of "For All We Know." Barbara Lusch is one fine singer. Discover the "Lusch Factor", check out "Surprisingly Good For You", because... it really is! ★★★★★

Phil Stout

JazzRadio Berlin

Music Choice Singers & Standards

Not Surprising, Just Good

The Oregonian, A&E, November 17 2006

Barbara Lusch has strengths that would be the envy of any singer. And on her second CD, "Surprisingly Good for You," they're showcased beautifully in a set of American Songbook standards and show tunes brilliantly arranged by Bobby Torres with marvelous accompaniment by Portland-based jazz players Dan Gaynor, Reinhardt Melz, Scott Steed and Torres.

Credit the production, too, because Lusch's clear, limpid voice always remains central, coming across with warmth and intimacy, deliberately exposed. The strategy works well because her articulation is precise, her intonation on target.

Lusch puts her experience in acting and musical theater to good use on material such as "I Won't Dance" and Peggy Lee's "Please Don't Rush Me." While these evoke comparisons to Lee, Lusch comes from a less rhythm-oriented line of singers that includes Julie London and Rosemary Clooney. When she sings "Ooooh, Daddy, I want a brand-new car, champagne and caviar," the former member of Pepe and the Bottle Blondes has just the right tone, her delivery perfectly in character yet distanced, too. On several tunes, Lusch seems to sing against the swinging arrangement, phrasing the ballad "Crazy" straight, for instance, against a bossa nova beat. Her choice of Andrew Lloyd Webber's title tune (from the musical "Evita"), and the ballad "For All We Know," also call for straight rather than syncopated interpretations, which seem to suit the singer's talents best. Her dreamy, plaintive approach to the bluesy "Why Don't You Do Right," also works, but there are limits: Eric Burdon's 1960s hit, "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," doesn't.

It's no accident that Lusch is one of the area's busiest vocalists. The appeal of her animated interpretations of this material remains popular 50 years after it first appeared.

- Lynn Darroch

Not surprising, just good

By LYNN DARROCH
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

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BARBARA LUSCH

Surprisingly Good for You

northwest CD

Artist: Barbara Lusch
Grade: B+
Label: Blush Records
Coming up: 8 p.m. (all ages) and 10:30 p.m. Saturday, Jimmy Mak's, 221 N.W. 10th Ave.; 503-295-6542; \$8
Web site: www.barbaralusch.com

