



Because You Loved Me | Raneé Lee

The art of the cover is almost always overlooked because listeners, fans or newbies, want to get to the music. Those who consider themselves aficionados of the old school, take album art seriously. We are from the era where we would take stock of the cover, the song titles on the back and peruse the liner notes, I take time to envision the story that is conveyed. My initial reaction to the red circle produced a sense of ecumenical reverence, a narrative arising out of childhood lessons, while also noting the trinity of red. A more adult conversation is reflective of its fullness symbolizing a rare blood moon, coupled with the title, instilled a much calmer narrative, a serene calling of wisdom from the ancestors.

Having cemented herself in the coterie of jazz interpreters **Raneé Lee** proffers her latest project ***Because You Loved Me*** for our next rendezvous. Recognizable titles from different genres took me on an imaginable journey through a looking glass of emotion, struggle, recovery and the glory of life. There is an inherent enchantment to pondering the titles, their placement and their connection to understanding the mastery of her storytelling.

Lee opens with ***My Heart Will Go On*** followed by ***I'm Alive***, both of which are powerful statements in their own right. ***Tale As Old As Time*** is not only the Beauty and the Beast classic theme but representative of every relationship where change and surprise comes when one or both learn to give and receive love. The upbeat arrangement of the standard ***All By Myself*** is refreshing and a perspective we've all had to deal with at one time or another. The combination of the Alan Price tune ***House Of The Rising Sun*** with the Goldman/Benzi ***Je Crois Toi***, the former made famous by The Animals and the latter by Celine Dion, are

perfectly paired blues inspired jazz arrangements that accent their despair, fear and belief. **Nature Boy's** message is clear to love and be loved in return and the strings contribute an old world feel to her delivery.

Giving space for songs by female composers is important to the canon and is often overlooked in jazz. Here Ranee has selected two compositions by women to be a part of this recording session, Diane Warren, who penned the title track **Because You Loved Me** as her tribute to her father but is a respectful assignation for any person who guides, encourages and protects a loved one. Blues guitar sets up the bed for this Mary Susan Applegate/Jennifer Rush composition, **The Power Of Love**. The solos throughout set the tone, each taking us to a different memory. These two songs are not unfamiliar, having heard these songs before, yet once again, Ranee works her magic. Closing the final chapter is the Carol Bayer-Seger/David Foster tune **The Prayer**. Lee leaves us with a higher power in mind, a proper closing to this journey that has guided us with grace to a safe place.

Bringing to life classic songs in different ways is an arduous task for even the most gifted. Fortunately, arranger Taurey Butler had the vision to expertly reinvent them in the jazz idiom. The energy these musicians put into this project is one of love for self and the world, which is why music is made. If you listen closely you will hear that conversation between the ten musicians comprising this little big band. To the standard rhythm section, she enlisted guitar, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, violin and cello. Their interaction is flawless as they weave this musical tale in nine chapters.

To characterize Ranee Lee as merely a singer does a disservice to her overwhelming interpretive range. I hold her in high regard for her ability to transport the listener to their own destinations and anticipate the discovery of emotions and memories she will draw upon in the future.

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