



Keeping My Composure Charley Harrison

Charley Harrison – composer/arranger/
conductor/guitarist

Chicago Jazz Orchestra

Kurt Elling – vocals

Frieda Lee – vocals

Freddy Cole – vocals

Sara Gazarek – vocals

Dan Trudell – Hammond B-3

Brian Sjoerdinga – tenor sax

Cedar Walton – piano

Bobby Broom – guitar

Even at first glance, you know some albums are going to be great. Maybe it's the cover, maybe it's the choice of tunes, maybe it's the players. Now while the idea of Charley Harrison lounging in a tuxedo doesn't do anything for me, great tunes and great artists most certainly do. And when you see that Cedar Walton, Bobby Broom, Kurt Elling, Frieda Lee and Freddy Cole are all gathered on the same disc, you *know* that you're in for a treat.

Well, ***Keeping My Composure*** doesn't disappoint. Jeff Lindberg's Chicago Jazz Orchestra is worth its weight in gold, and shines here. The list of players in this band is a veritable Who's Who of the local jazz scene. And any chance to hear the criminally under-recorded Ron Perrillo in action is cause for celebration on its own.

Duke Pearson's "*Jeannine*" is given the Kurt Elling treatment to kick things off. Interestingly, Kurt toys with the melody constantly, giving it a playful



feel and making an old warhorse sound fresh and new. While Elling is certainly no stranger to vocalese, he's always stayed close to his melodies, and here, cutting loose on a well known favorite, he's recorded one of his best gems of the last couple of years.

The emerging star of this record, however, is newcomer Sara Gazarek. She put out an album last year called *Yours*, and it was a killer. Her performances on two of Harrison's originals, "*Recipe for Romance*" and "*If You Were Mine*." Are nothing short of fantastic.

Cedar Walton's turn on the ballad "*Lori's Dream*" is wonderful, Frieda Lee finds herself in fine form on her features as well. The final tune on the album features Freddy Cole on vocals and local treasure Art Hoyle on trumpet, and they both sound great.

All in all, this is a wonderful album from first track to last. All involved should be quite proud of their efforts on this excellent disc.

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