

Chris McNulty- Excerpts from CD and Performance Reviews

Whispers the Heart - (Elefant Dreams – ED4549)

“Her liquid phrasing and luminous tone underscoring a voice of serene beauty and striking veracity... compelling emotional fervency...One of the foremost singer-composers on the scene today...”

**** 4 Stars Peter Quinn, *Jazz Wise UK, Jan 2007*

"If McNulty's vocalizing is fearless, then her writing is peerless....her explorations seem to transcend to a free zone between jazz and modern symphonic.... There is so much to commend about the album: above all, the versatile, soothing, swimming voice of Australian-born McNulty; her writing and arranging skills. The musical diversity on display is equally impressive" standards sprinkled throughout; rarities by Jobim, Bernstein, and Thad Jones; a surprise guest appearance by Frank Wess, whose tenor timbre is remarkably similar to McNulty's. This, her 6th album, should not merely be listened to, but carefully digested." *Jazz Times - Harvey Siders, January 2007*

An incredible addition to tracks of [Paul Bolleback's] *Invocation* is the pure voice of Chris McNulty, one of my all time favorite voices in jazz. *Dr. Mike October 29, 2007 – Radioio.com*

Live Performance Reviews

Live – The Back Note, Adelaide, Australia, Sept 5th, 2008

“...She prefers to linger over tunes, exploring and elongating them, reinterpreting, and transfusing well-worn melodies with perfectly creative timing and phrasing, while allowing ample time for soloists. Beautiful exchanges between Mike Stewart's tenor sax and McNulty on “When the World Was Young”, and “On the Street Where You Live.” An absolute showstopper was a duet of guitar and vocal for the Burt Bacharach composition “Make It Easy on Yourself” where, at a slow tempo, McNulty wove a soulful descant on the melody over soft guitar chords to frame the song with a quiet poignant delicacy. It was a showcase of world-class talent and professionalism. *John McBeath, the Advertiser, Adelaide, Australia, September 6th, 2008*

The Melbourne Jazz Festival – May 2007

“...the McNulty gig remained one of the best-kept secrets of the Festival...for me this provided some real Festival highlights over the several nights I heard them... a really strong swinging New York band from note one! **McNulty was in great form out front, using tone and every possible nuance to enhance her expression, while always swinging.** Whether playing Bollenback arrangements of lesser-played standards or McNulty's originals, Bollenback rolled out one brilliant musical solo after another. It is interesting to note that this was the one group which I heard in the Festival (and I heard most of them) which actually delivered such a joyous and irresistible swing that one's foot had to move!" *M. Jackson, Jazz Australia, June 5th, 2007*

“...she's a much more impressive performer than the more celebrated Diana Krall and Jane Monheit, and considerably more the real thing, where jazz is concerned, than Norah Jones. How she isn't better known is a mystery... even when she took frequent liberties with the lines of each song they had musical purpose, and she never lost her sense of engagement with the words. They produced a brilliant, languorous *The Meaning Of The Blues*, an easy, loping *Easy To Love* and *Star Eyes*, a beautifully phrased *It Might As Well Be Spring* and *My Romance*, and a gorgeous, slow *It Never Entered My Mind* that came close to equaling *The Meaning Of*

The Blues as the best of the night. McNulty's willingness to open songs a cappella, or with the minimal support of guitar...time and again, the drawn-out codas offered compelling examples of group interaction...an engrossing demonstration of the art of jazz singing." *Ray Comiskey, The Irish Times, Dublin, January 2005*

"..Beautiful songs. Beautiful voice. Beautiful presence" *Mike Pinfold, Howden Jazz Society, UK, 2002*

"...Chris McNulty enthralled the Shirehall audience with a programmed of unhackneyed songs. A singer of great subtlety, Chris interpreted each lyric in an extremely individual way and with exceptional sensitivity. She is without doubt an inspirational jazz singer. Eloquent, expressive and extremely exciting. The subtle variations she applies to each song aptly illustrate her unflinching commitment to jazz. A consummate artist, her unsentimental approach suggests a certain vulnerability and emphasizes an intimacy few singers can match." - *Mike Pinfold, journalist, writer – UK, Howden Jazz Society, Wakefield Jazz Society, January 2005*

"... Jazz Export brings it all home...McNulty is a superb jazz vocalist with a highly professional delivery that comes from performing consistently with the world's best jazz musicians in the most demanding jazz environment" *Gary Lee, The West Australian, May 4, 2005*

"..... an exceptional Meaning of the Blues... engendered especially beautiful and moving work from all three.....She is also a very natural singer....impeccable microphone technique which is so seamless in controlling dynamics that she is a living textbook of this widely abused art. "
John Shand, The Sydney Morning Herald, May 14th, 2005

"Superb was the only way to describe her.... She was rhythmically breathtaking....a class act....Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire never danced to Cheek to Cheek the way McNulty sang it as she took it uptown..."
Kevin Jones The Australian, Sydney, 1993, Sydney 1993

MORE about Whispers the Heart - (Elefant Dreams – ED4549)

"One of those immense talents deserving wider recognition...She seems so comfortable with her technique - which of course puts an audience right in her comfort zone" *Dick Bogle, The Scanner, Nov, 30th 2006,*
******* 5 Stars**

"..McNulty's intonation and articulation are commanding - and provide a preview for the level of musical excellence and creative artistry with which she leads throughout the album. McNulty scats and she is marvelous. Whether she is singing the lyrics or improvising, McNulty demonstrates a commanding sense of rhythm that is evident in the way she bends the rhythms, syncopating phrases in unexpected ways..."
Clive Griffin, Jazz Improv, October 2006

"..McNulty has proved herself a gifted jazz vocalist. Her voice is nimble, capable of sliding from sultry to sweet to sassy in a second. Pairing her perfect pitch and control with consummate guitarist Bollenback is a class act not to be missed.." *HYPERLINK "<http://blog.oregonlive.com/popmusic/about.html>" The Oregonian, April, 2007*

"...[McNulty's] vocal approach is an evolution of a Peggy Lee or Anita O'Day style and the backings range from impressive solo guitar by Paul Bollenback who wrote the arrangements with McNulty) to a septet with string quartet. McNulty allows space for solos and on Make it Easy on Yourself former Count

Basie tenor saxophonist Frank Wess delivers a luscious chorus, perfectly extending the anguished beauty of McNulty's singing. I Should Care begins in a similar tempo, then lifts a gear to medium groove with a swinging piano solos from Gary Versace, concluding with McNulty's high-flying, powered scat fade-out. This quality album of informed musicality and lyrical understanding showcases the control, fragility, phrasing and talent of an outstanding vocalist. **John McBeath, *The Australian*, October 18th, 2008**

"Long a major jazz singer who has in recent times finally started to gain recognition for her talent McNulty's most rewarding recording thus far, filled with subtle surprises, variety and her inventive jazz singing. It is one of the finest vocal recordings of 2006". **Scott Yanow, *August 2006***

"...God, I got a hot flash after I hard this lady sing...she whispers dynamically...McNulty possesses great taste, she's got it all...control, vocalese, vibrato, et al...nothing routine & unimaginative here...rather sexy, definitive, and alive! McNulty is...capable of injecting emotion, pathos, irony & meaning into her work ..a gift that few singers can lay claim to. **George W. Carroll/*The Musician's Ombudsman*, August 2006**

"...McNulty breathes new life into standards with the greatest of ease!" **Bob Morello, *Boston Post Gazette* - August 25 2006**

"...her interplay with her fellow musicians is a joy...throughout singer and her cohorts play seamlessly. "When Love Was You and Me"...a pin-drop-perfect singer and guitarist duet." **Andrew Velez, *All About Jazz*, October 2006**

"...McNulty is such a distinctive singer that she's often at her best in the barest of settings, like her duet with guitarist Paul Bollenbeck (When Love Was You and Me) and a quintet performance of "Make It Easy On Yourself" with Frank Wess (tenor)..."**Ray Comiskey, *Irish Times*, September 2006**

"If you share the idea that an album, a jazz album, that entertains and moves you is the result of the confluence of heartfelt performances by sensitive and experienced creative artists, a relaxed intensity at all tempos, enlightened solos, compelling compositions, deft arrangements, delightful musical dialogue, all in a superb warm audio recording, thoughtfully mixed – then the twelve tracks on vocalist Chris McNulty's new album, *Whispers the Heart* will provide a wonderful journey.

The album is a cornucopia of all those abstract elements that identify a great performance, and a consummately musical album. What are those elements? They are what enables the music, that is otherwise nothing more than notes on paper, and a few people that show up with musical instruments to play, and whose names later appear on an album jacket, to tap into a certain energy stream and resonate together in extraordinary ways. That's what happens here on Chris McNulty's *Whispers the Heart*."

Clive Griffin, *Jazz Improv*, October 2006 **Clive Griffin, *Jazz Improv*, October 2006**

That the Australian McNulty is one of the best current singers, we have already made note of in the October, 2005 edition in regard to "Dance Delizioso" (**Top Pick of the month along with Charlie Haden's "Not in My Name"**). The new album reconfirms this judgment. Characteristic of McNulty is the ability to extract new vitality from tunes by now exhausted from overuse, but not in this case. Further confirmed would seem to be the talent of McNulty as a songwriter, already apparent in the preceding album, but here definitely progressed and further supported by interesting choices of arrangements. Fascinating is the closer of the album, the duet with Bollenbeck.

Conti- *Musica Jazz*, Italy – July 200

“With these, Chris McNulty's fifth and sixth CDs, she extends her audience from the strong and dedicated fan base to the encompass many who have missed her considerable skill in the past. “..An inventive and thoroughly engaging jazz singer with an especially attractive touch with ballads... For anyone who has missed hearing her, either in live performance or on record, this CD will be a revelation... This is a singer of considerable character and vast experience who brings to every song she sings an originality often lacking in the work of better-known contemporaries... Definitely a CD to look out for and to savour... this highly recommended CD clearly demonstrates that Chris is a major singing talent for today.” **Bruce Crowther, journalist, writer - UK, July 2005 & September 2006**

Dance Delicioso - (Elefant Dreams – ED4547)

“Jazz singer Chris McNulty gets right to the work of jazz & vocal horn lines with her singular take of the cogent Cole Porter original, 'All Of You.' Chris stretches & soars in & out of the lyric, harmony, & melody, et al. Through it all, the tune emerges whole. This is a girl who can tear a song apart viably in front of your very ears And, what a joyful noise she makes as the musical pieces break off & hit our senses beautifully.” **George W. Carroll/The Musicians' Ombudsman, Jul 09, 2005**

“... True talent is rare, but it's clear that Ms. McNulty has it in spades... along with a joy for singing that communicates to the listener without her having to try (or so it sounds). You won't find an album quite as timeless again this year, I'll bet you... if you love great jazz vocals, you'll HAVE to get this one! This gets a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED from my ears, as well as the "PICK" of this issue for "best female jazz vocals". Cool jazz, but with vigor!” **Dick Metcalf, Improvizazzation Nation, June 2005**

"...she is triply blessed with not only an exquisite instrument and a breezy sense of swing, she is an excellent songwriter as well...her expressive passionate voice shines throughout...it's a wide variety of styles but McNulty proves she has the voice, timing and musical moxie to pull it off." **Robert A. Lindquist, Singer Musician, Oct., 2005**

“...Chris McNulty's new CD, Dance Delicioso is mighty impressive. She's truly a gifted singer with a distinctive mix of slick professionalism and spontaneous ebullience.” **Ken Smith, July 2005**

Chris McNulty is one of the current generation of jazz singers most deserving of a wider audience and greater recognition...” **Bill Donaldson, Jazz Improv, Fall 2005**

“Chris McNulty is definitely not shy to take chances...her voice is powerful and clear, and Ms. McNulty gives the impression she can sing anything she desires. Even when singing music that borders on jazz, Chris McNulty has the spirit of a jazz singer and she is one of today's vocalists who are expanding the definition of the term. Well worth checking out.” **Scott Yannow - LA Jazz Scene November 2005**

“.... the recipe is simple: start with equal parts originals and standards, sprinkle great musicians liberally and top with McNulty's rich vocals. Voila.. a fine vocal jazz creation that stands out even in a relatively competitive era for such recordings...a truly enchanting rendering of the traditional Celtic ballad, "He Moves Thru the Fair". With Dance Delicioso she presents listeners with a fine and well-balanced offering.” **Edward Kane, Jazz Review, UK, Sep, 2005**

“...Meaning of the Blues, a take on a tune that contains a bunch of exquisite moments, like Sonny Barbato's sweet accordion work, with a gorgeous little solo in front of the whisper of Paul Bollenback's acoustic guitar... those exquisite moments... apply to every song here, with some surprises... the McNulty-penned title tune tells a handful of life-affirming stories, with some lush background harmonies, and listen to her voice as it rises from womanly to girlish as she tells a young girl's tale... A beautiful, original, polished effort.”

Dan McClenaghan, All About Jazz, July 2005

"...A soulful vocalist with a soaring, sensuous quality, a sly, seasoned delivery and natural sense of swing, Chris McNulty imparts her own unique magic interpreting jazz standards, as she showcased so confidently on last year's I Remember You.... McNulty distinguishes herself as one of the elite jazz singers on the scene..."
Bill Milkowski, Dance Delicioso, April 2005

"The terrific thing about chameleons is that, by definition, they offer something for just about everybody. On "All of You" ...stylish sophistication. On Bobby Troup's "Meaning of the Blues," stretched to nine gently bruised minutes...haunted beauty. And "Only the Silence," one of the discs five McNulty originals hints at a hipper Streisand...marvelous legerdemain." ***Christopher Loudon, Jazz Times, November 2005***

"Female singers keep popping up all over... Chris McNulty is one worth the time and ear to hear...she takes a great but nearly forgotten oldie, "Star Eyes", adds a freshness and turns it into a ballad for the ages....Her own "Only the Silence" could be an ode to the Iraq war...with a gospel like conclusion punctuating McNulty's fervent close. She employs great sideman too, Mulgrew Miller, Gary Bartz, Ugonna Okegwo, Billy Hart, a formidable group which helps the star create her magic." * * * * ***4 Stars, The Scanner, Arts and Entertainment, Dick Bogle, September 2005***

"Very inventive, a great balance of tunes, instrumentations and colors, outstanding production... Chris's sound, style and musicianship are all wonderful and beautifully wrapped up with blatant honesty. The whole CD is clearly a statement from the heart...an impeccable musician." --***Anita Brown, composer/arranger, 2006***

I Remember You – (Elefant Dreams – ED4546)

"...a rich and expressive voice..soaked in swing and blues..and an ability to improvise that's straight from the heart" ***Robert A. Lindquist, Singer Magazine, May-June 2005 Issue***

"...Stellar, swinging... A House is Not a Home is magnificent in it's spirited swing groove. McNulty is relaxed, and her fine intonation and apparent ease of phrasing, make this a compelling performance... wonderfully expressive, demonstrating soaring confidence.... her broad range of dynamics and deft vocal skills shine..." ***I Remember You, Winthrop Bedford, Jazz Improv, October 2005***

"...she is a musician whose voice is her instrument....she can handle the harmonies and intricacies of the compositions she chooses so well and flawlessly.....an exquisite instrument, along the lines of a Sarah Vaughan or Ella Fitzgerald...." "This is what a "jazz" voice recording should be shooting for. Here is a real "jazz" vocalist" ***Gary Bartz, Liner Notes, I Remember You, 2004***

".... this seasoned pro never gives less than her all. With a crack crew behind her on every step, this set crackles with the kind of feeling you thought you had to go back to old records to find. A real treat throughout." ***Chris Spector, Midwest Record Recap, August, 2004 Review of I Remember You, 2004***

Waltz for Debby – (DISCOVERY – 1991)

She glides, swoops, changes key, accelerates smoothly going from zero to sixty in bop time, stops on a dime, switches gear right from the reinforced toes in her pantyhose. She sings jazz...Pleas folks lets jump this album and " ***Alan Burgebuhr, Cadence Magazine, 1990, Review of Waltz for Debby, Discovery, 1990***