



Stephanie Trick – New CD

The title of my article "Rising star of stride piano" (JDS No. 64) was adopted by the American press, and Stephanie has fully justified the rise by participating in numerous festivals such as "West Coast Ragtime Festival," the Arbors "Jazz Party", the "Traditional Jazz Festival" in Connecticut, the "San Diego Dixieland Jazz Festival", and the Boswil [Switzerland] "Stride Summit." My best wishes to see her play here recently became a reality. Her arrival announced by the Petit Journal last November has sparked keen interest among jazz musicians in Paris. I would like to mention what Louis Mazetier said on the HCF website last October: "Bernd Lhotzky and I were stunned when we heard her at the last Arbors festival in Florida." He explained, "She won the esteem of specialists by her beautiful interpretations of classic stride... her punch is equaled by her accuracy."

I will add what Paul Smith (who was the accompanist of Ella Fitzgerald for several years) wrote about it: "I gave a concert here (in California) with my trio, and she did the first part. Not only did she impress the audience with her quick technique, but she surprised us all by giving us a beautiful interpretation of "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning." He emphasizes "the amazing mastery of her left-hand playing" and concluded, "I think that she has a bright future ahead of her."

As you can see, we are far from the cliché "needy young keyboard player" that the negligent critic dismisses out of hand. Of course, if one expects to hear a carbon-copy of Ralph Sutton or Henry Chaix, we will be disappointed ... because she has her own personality, style, accents – in brief, she brings her own ambiance. When she plays the stride classics, she does not make them sound alike, she adds her own signature. She uses circumlocution at some key passages that we thought would be irremovable, and then she has her own timing in her playing left hand, her stride is tight, vivid, more like a Donald Lambert than a James P. Johnson. Her extreme liveliness is not detrimental to the roundness of the bass or the perfect accuracy

of its harmony. This is what we will be able to prove at the hearing of her new CD (available on CD Baby, or from stephanietrick.com/cds.htm) recorded during a concert at "Sheldon Concert Hall" in May 2010, entitled simply "LIVE."

She gives splendid interpretations of "Mule Walk", "Liza", "Anitra's Dance", "Handful of Keys", "Bach Up To Me", "Nothin'", [and] "Harlem Strut", but with slight and significant alterations by which she makes the piece her own. At the hearing of her previous disc, a friend had lamented that there were not any blues, so I asked her to record one – which she did and sent to me under the title "Blues for Alfie", played partly in the style of Jimmy Yancey. This piece appears in the new collection, but it is totally different, while still imbued with the spirit of the blues, with great bass and melodic developments worthy of pure blues. Her version of "St. Louis Blues" is a rare originality, and decorated with memories of the Lion and some others. We see that she has fully mastered this idiom so unique in jazz. From thence to boogie, it is not far and it is this she did with "Shout for Joy" as she follows closely the interpretation of Albert Ammons.

As Paul Smith had advised her, she included in her program a few calmer interpretations or songs known by the general public, and voilà, "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning" (Sinatra) and "Champs-Élysées" (Joe Dassin), in adaptations that demonstrate her great musical skill. Also, note her clever variations in "Truckin'" at the beginning of the second chorus. Other songs: "I Ain't Got Nobody" (in the style of Fats), "Echoes of Spring" (delicate, lilting bass), "Hallelujah" (with verse), "Roberto Clemente" (romantic, off tempo). As for "Harlem Strut", it is the "tour de force" final, on a tempo extreme, with incredible accuracy of the left hand and phenomenal agility with the right hand.

I do not fear to say that Stephanie Trick is the greatest artist who has appeared on the American jazz scene in the 21st century.

Jacques Pescheux