Anita O'Day & The Three Sounds (1962)

A1 When The Worlds Was Young 3:30 A2 Someday My Prince Will Come 4:21 A3 All Too Soon 3:15 A4 My Heart Stood Still 3:33 A5 My Ship 4:30 B1 Leave It To Me 5:12 B2 Whisper Not 2:52 B3 Blues By Five 4:36 B4 (Fly With Me To The Moon) In Other Words 3:44 B5 You And The Night And The Music 2:35 Anita O'Day – vocals Gene Harris – piano Andrew Simpkins – bass Bill Dowdy – drums

This strange (and strangely compelling) album is the most controversial of all O'Day's Verve Records releases, popular among O'Day's hardcore fans for the showcase that the Three Sounds' near-minimalist accompaniment affords her singing. On a lot of levels, however, it wasn't a successful record. The album was a one-shot collaboration that happened in the narrowest possible window-of-opportunity. the Three Sounds, having left Blue Note, were passing through the Verve roster, where they would be active for about a week in October of 1962, cutting two albums in that time including this one with Anita O'Day, who was leaving the label after 10 years there. Anita O'Day & The Three Sounds is as much a Three Sounds record as it is an Anita O'Day recording -- the group is represented by four instrumentals, including "Someday My Prince Will Come," "My Heart Stood Still," and "Blues By Five," cut at the same time as their album Blue Genes, while O'Day sings five songs. She is amazingly restrained and low-key throughout most of her work here; on songs like the sultry "All Too Soon," that works out fine, but elsewhere the fit between singer and group seems uncomfortable. There's very little excitement or tension to give her songs energy, and O'Day never interacts with the trio in any discernable way. Additionally, she seems uninspired in terms of any inventiveness, with long stretches of silence where one would have expected her to improvise. What is here is fine, her husky yet playful voice a wonder to hear on "When The World Was Young" (where Gene Harris's piano does come to life), but there's amazingly little life to the procedings. The one exception is "Whisper Not," which also has the distinction of featuring O'Day's Gene Krupa-era collaborator Roy Eldridge on trumpet and is the most successful cut here, as what one would look for on a more conventional Anita O'Day album. The mid-1990's Japanese CD reissue features a second, previously unissued Eldridge cut from the same sessions, a hot remake of his and O'Day's Gene Krupa-era hit "Let Me Off Uptown," with the two of them in a duet on their old 1940's hit. ---Bruce Eder, Rovi

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