

Helen Humes – Million Dollar Secret (2020)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)

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01 – If I Could Be With You 02 – Don't Worry 'Bout Me 03 – Every Now And Then 04 – I Want A Roof Over My Head 05 – ST. Louis Blues 06 – You're Driving Me Crazy 07 – My Old Flame 08 – Million Dollar Secret 09 – Love Me Or Leave Me 10 – Imagination 11 – Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone Helen Humes (vocal) Charles Gillum (trumpet) Jackie Kelso (alto saxophone) Jimmy Jackson (tenor saxophone) Camille Howard (piano) Jimmy Rogers (guitar) Lawrence Kato, Dallas Bartley (bass) Roy Milton (drums)

Helen Humes was a versatile singer equally skilled on blues, swing standards, and ballads. Her cheerful style was always a joy to hear. As a child, she played piano and organ in church, and made her first recordings (ten blues songs in 1927) when she was only 13 and 14. In the 1930s, she worked with Stuff Smith and Al Sears, recording with Harry James in 1937-1938. In 1938, Humes joined Count Basie's Orchestra for three years. Since Jimmy Rushing specialized in blues, Helen Humes mostly got stuck singing pop ballads, but she did a fine job. After freelancing in New York (1941-1943) and touring with Clarence Love (1943-1944), Humes moved to Los Angeles. She began to record as a leader and had a hit in "Be-Baba-Leba"; her 1950 original "Million Dollar Secret" is a classic. Humes sometimes performed with Jazz at the Philharmonic, but was mostly a single in the 1950s. She recorded three superb albums for Contemporary during 1959-1961, and had tours with Red Norvo. She moved to Australia in 1964, returning to the U.S. in 1967 to take care of her ailing mother. Humes was out of the music business for several years, but made a full comeback in 1973, and stayed busy up until her death. Throughout her career, Helen Humes recorded for such labels as Savoy, Aladdin, Mercury, Decca, Dootone, Contemporary, Classic Jazz, Black & Blue, Black Lion, Jazzology, Columbia, and Muse. ---Scott Yanow, allmusic.com

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