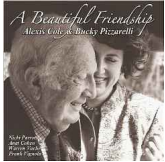


Alexis Cole & Bucky Pizzarelli - A Beautiful Friendship (2015)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 10 September 2016 12:23 -

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01. *A Beautiful Friendship* 02. *East Of The Sun* 03. *Honeysuckle Rorse* 04. *I Thought About You* 05. *If I Were A Bell* 06. *Just Friends* 07. *Mood Indigo* 08. *Blue Moon - Moonglow* 09. *On The Street Where You Live* 10. *Stardust* 11. *Stompin' At The Savoy* 12. *On The Sunny Side Of The Street* 13. *These Foolish Things* 14. *Watch What Happens* Alexis Cole - vocals
Bucky Pizzarelli - guitar Nicki Parrott - bass & vocals Frank Vignola - guitar Anat Cohen - clarinet Warren Vaché – trumpet

Natural entertainer and a relentless humorist, 89-year-old guitarist and banjoist Bucky Pizzarelli is a living legend and an American treasure. A rare jazz master of the seven-string guitar, Pizzarelli has performed for multiple Presidents of the United States, worked with Les Paul and Benny Goodman, and was a staff musician for The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson. To this day, Pizzarelli remains an artist of continued relevance and authenticity. Joining him is vocalist Alexis Cole, called “exquisite” by The New York Times. Cole has performed at top jazz clubs around the world, stolen the show at international vocal competitions, and sung with the Boston Pops and New York Philharmonic. Her nine recordings as a leader, all featuring top contemporary jazz artists, have showcased her original, interpretive vision of established jazz traditions.

This event is part of the sixth annual Coca-Cola Generations in Jazz Festival, a multi-generational meeting of legendary masters and emerging artists. --- jazz.org

The richness of Alexis Cole’s vocal gumbo is rather extraordinary, combining the warmth and

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clarity of Doris Day, the verve of Jo Stafford, the cool sophistication of Chris Connor and the authority of Keely Smith. It's a heady mix, so much so that it can, much like Diane Schuur, often be overpowering. Across these 14 tracks, all standards, Cole is firmly front and center. Whether swinging through "If I Were a Bell," "On the Street Where You Live" and "Stompin' at the Savoy" or exploring the gentler folds of "Mood Indigo," "These Foolish Things" and "Watch What Happens," her interpretive sass and ingenuity are impressive.

Trouble is, Cole's commanding presence throws what is intended to be a partnership with guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli off balance. Nor is he left alone in the shadows. Four other top-drawer players—guitarist Frank Vignola, clarinetist Anat Cohen, trumpeter Warren Vaché and bassist Nicki Parrott—weave in and out, each sometimes overwhelmed by Cole's towering contralto. Granted, Pizzarelli contributes several welcome solos (as do Cohen and Vaché), and Parrott steps forward as co-vocalist on a clever intermingling of "Blue Moon" and "Moonglow" and a breezy "On the Sunny Side of the Street." Still, it's tempting to ponder how much more affecting this session might have been if Cole's dynamism was dialed down just a shade. --- Christopher Loudon, jazztimes.com

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