

01/15/16

## Carol Welsman Alone Together

Welcar

By **Christopher Loudon**

Though Carol Welsman's lengthy career has been liberally dotted with fine albums, she reaches a lofty new plateau with *Alone Together*. It's a well-traveled route. Many of the past century's foremost jazz and jazz-influenced pop singers didn't find their sweet spot, their defining sound, until middle age—Fitzgerald, McRae, Sinatra, Tormé and Bennett among them. As with those masters, Welsman's interpretive and stylistic maturation evinces a seeming effortlessness, an organic oneness with each song.

Welsman's flowering extends to her scat skills, lightly but winningly exercised across a lithe "Day by Day," and her deft navigation of the Eddie Jefferson vocalese masterpiece "Disappointed," based on Charlie Parker's "Oh, Lady Be Good" solo. With stellar support from bassist Rufus Reid, drummer Lewis Nash and trumpeter Wallace Roney, joined by guitarist Jay Azzolina on four tracks, Welsman divides the rest of her elegant playlist between sturdy chestnuts and less-familiar standards. Highlights among the latter: a shimmering treatment of Frank Loesser's romantic Cuban travelogue, "Sand in My Shoes," winningly accented by guest percussionist Steven Kroon, and "Killing Time," Carolyn Leigh and Jule Styne's heartrending ode to post-breakup loneliness. Least known among her 11 selections is "The Blues Are Out of Town," a hip delight, crafted by the late (and underappreciated) singer-pianist Joe Derise, that Welsman resurrects with jubilant verve.

