

JILLIAN LEBECK

PRESS QUOTES AND REVIEWS

Songs & Melodies CD

Pianist/Vocalist/Composer Jillian Lebeck follows up her critically acclaimed debut with her second album Songs & Melodies (Talie Records). It finds the musician amongst some of her favorite artists - Jon Bentley (saxophones), Paul Rushka (bass), Paul Townsend (drums) with guest appearances by Peggy Lee (cello), Seamus Blake (voice, guitar), Evan Arntzen (clarinet) and Miranda Clingwall (flute and electronics). This album showcases the writing and vocals of Lebeck – in songs like Gone By; A Cloud, A Storm; Round and Round; Lost in a Dream; and Everywhere But Here. Instrumentals Starlight and Lost and Found. Ambient and creative improvisations Nelson Sound, Intro, Confusion and Carnivale.

And four carefully chosen vocal covers – Lennon and McCartney’s Julia (a duet with Seamus Blake), Thomas Mendez Sosa’s Cucurrucucu Paloma, Jazz standard Smile, and Emiliana Torrini’s Fisherman’s Woman. A departure from her first effort Living in Pieces, the musician has noticeably evolved and Songs and Melodies is the start of a new journey for her fans and listeners.

Oregon Jazz Society

Lebeck is a young Vancouver, Canada artist who favors a mellow approach, but certainly not easy. She's quick with a chord change on electric piano, especially on her own tunes. Her voice is an intriguing mix of Blossom Dearie, Patricia Barber, Joni Mitchell and Norah Jones. It is plaintive, whispery and sweet but with the right touch of melancholy to bring depth to the lyrics. She shows a sense of whimsy with the playfully surreal, “Round and Round,” which features clarinet and electric piano lobbing lines back and forth.

Her cover of Lennon & McCartney's “Julia” is a beautiful duet with the right balance of pop, folk and jazz. The combination of instruments (saxophones, clarinets, cello, flute, electronics) makes for unique textures, and the mood is often near midnight.

An artist deserving to be heard outside her native land. 2007, Talie Records. Playing Time: 59 minutes. ****

Songs & Melodies Review July 2007 by Cory Weeds (Record Producer/Radio Host/Jazz Club Owner "The Cellar"/Saxophonist)

"Simply titled Songs and Melodies, the album name is the only simple thing about this fantastic new record from the extremely talented pianist/composer and vocalist Jillian Lebeck. An absolutely gorgeous follow up to her debut release Living In Pieces, Songs & Melodies is more of a continuation of her first record than a radically different statement. Lebeck continues to exploit interesting harmonies and write unconventional chord changes that all seem to weave together and work wonderfully. The depth of her compositions and way she uses her voice is sublime.

There is a decidedly melancholy vibe about Lebeck's music that was very evident on Living In Pieces and in her live shows but that doesn't mean that its void of humour, buoyancy, or personality. For example check out the quirky 'Round & Round' that features some great clarinet work from Evan Arntzen. The doubling of Jill's voice with bells results in a very different sound and Peggy Lee's cello ostinato doubling with the clarinet under the melody keeps the tune pushing forward. The tune keeps my head bobbing throughout. Very cool!

Lennon and McCartney's Julia is another highlight of the album. Jazz musicians recording pop songs has been going on for many years. It seems to be back in vogue in the last few years however and I for one love it! A musician of Lebeck's talent applying her harmonic knowledge to a simple pop can only yield fantastic results. Much like her interpretation of Ani DiFranco's Everest on her first record, she succeeds again in honoring the tune but putting her own unique perspective on it. A cameo appearance by tenor saxophonist and ex-Vancouverite Seamus Blake displaying his vocal talent is also a perfect touch on this track.

The exclusive use of the Rhodes and Wurlitzer on the date is very refreshing and she has nurtured a very unique touch on these keyboards. Not switching back and forth from the piano allows for a very cohesive sound from start to finish and being a fan of the Rhodes and the Wurlitzer, I love it!

There are great performances all around: bassist Paul Rushka, drummer Paul Townsend, tenor saxophonist Jon Bentley, flautist Miranda Clingwall (the latter 2 are also responsible for the beautiful sound of this recording.)"

Acclaim for Living in Pieces:

Nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award for Outstanding Jazz Recording 2004

Most under-rated record of the year (From !Earshot Best of 2004)

Jim Dupuis CFBX 92.5 fm -

Jillian Lebeck Living in pieces (Talie/Universal)

Just another girl that the music marketing machine produced? Well, not exactly. Jillian Lebeck from Vancouver Canada is low profiled and she sets up her career relying on her rich talents. Her nice compositions, her gentle and expressive voice, her ability to select the songs that suit her, emanating either from the classic jazz songbook, or from the modern songwriters. With her debut Living in Pieces she states clearly that she considers herself firstly a composer and secondly a singer.

The low-voiced, slow tempo compositions roll smoothly around the senses just like the light of dawn outlining a melancholic, tranquil and mature personality that's startling considering her young age. Her discreet voice never minds to show off how many octaves she can cover, respects the grandeur of Billie Holiday, the genius of Joni Mitchell, and reaches present times with the freshness of Ani DiFranco, giving the impression of complete innocence. As a pianist she is not swing oriented but she is more interested in delicate atmospheric tinges, maintaining her style even when she leaves the piano for the fender rhodes.

The stand out of her own compositions is the nostalgic For Chris, On A Sunday, and the non-originals Ani diFrancos Everest. Her trio featuring Andre Lachance on bass and Paul Townsend on drums, on several tracks is enhanced by Brad Turner on trumpet and flugelhorn and Jon Bentley on saxophone, both contributing with some fine improvising.
- Vangelis Aragiannis

Toronto Life:

Running counter to the current mould, Vancouver-born and based Jillian Lebeck is very much a pianist and composer first and a singer second. Her CD, Living in Pieces, is a brilliant debut, with Lebeck creating an evocative terrain compounded of spare melody and surprising turns. She's joined here by her quartet, including Brad Turner (best known for his membership in Metalwood) on trumpet, bassist André Lachance and drummer Paul Townsend.

- Stuart Broomer

Coda - The Journal of Jazz and Improvised Music

Issue 314 March/April 2004

Pianist Jillian Lebeck holds to quiet and shadows on Living in Pieces (Talie Records TR1111). The typical tempo is slow, the mood keyed to rumination and little rustlings. Oddly, in her shaping of a favorite twilight sound for her signature she draws comparison not to any immediate jazz reference, but to English guitarist Vini Reilly (a.k.a. Durutti Column). Like Reilly, she doesn't break the mood even when she switches instruments (here, to Fender Rhodes) or offers a rare subdued vocal. "For Chris on a Sunday"

approaches the lullaby zone, with her restrained Rhodes work conjuring soft echoes of celestes and music boxes. Some will hear Bill Evans in his deepest indwelling, but Erik Satie is in there as well, with “Today” nodding to the delicate balance of his Gymnopedes. There’s also some Norah Jones in Lebeck’s brandy-and-fireplace singing of Ani DiFranco (“Everest”) and Rufus Wainwright (“Sally Ann”), and surely it wouldn’t take much polishing for another label to push her in that direction. Lebeck’s own dark corners and deep spaces are far more interesting.

- Randal McIlroy CODA Magazine

Vancouver Province, January 20th, 2004

Jillian Lebeck : Living in Pieces (Talie Records)

Inevitably Jillian Lebeck will be compared to Diana Krall but this 20- something, preternaturally sophisticated North Vancouver jazz singer, pianist and composer has perhaps more of a true jazz soul to her. She’s written six of the nine tracks with intriguing and quite original chord sequences and she and the band – Brad Turner, Jon Bentley, Andre Lachance, and Paul Townsend – are having fun weaving around and through them. There’s a lovely, hushed cover of “You’ve Changed” and her choice of Ani DiFranco’s “Everest” was inspired. ... this is an impressive and promising debut.

- John P. McLaughlin

The Vancouver Sun, December 18th, 2003

Vancouver pianist-singer-composer Jillian Lebeck makes a strong debut with Living in Pieces, which has her fronting a band comprising some of the city’s best musicians as they perform six Lebeck compositions and three from other writers.

The dark, minimalist Lebeck original instrumental Longing for Longing opens things, with Lebeck letting bassist Andre Lachance take the first solo before she plays hers over a Thelonius Monk-like harmonic structure. For Chris on a Sunday has Lebeck switching to Fender Rhodes, as she and trumpeter Brad Turner shape solos over a floating tempo. The two repeat the feat on Everest, an Ani DiFranco composition.

For her three vocal numbers, Lebeck displays a warm voice with a rich middle register. Rufus Wainwright’s Sally Ann has her treading Norah Jones territory, performing a country-tinged tune with a jazz musician’s sensibility. The best track is the 10 minute ballad Missing where Lebeck, Lachance, saxophonist Jon Bentley and drummer Paul Townsend listen carefully and respond to one another.

- Marke Andrews