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- [Intro...Jazz Mostly](#)
- [Jazz Notes](#)
- [Mostly Books](#)
- [Site Policies & Disclosures](#)

Jazz CD Reviews – September 2014

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Nancy Kelly *B That Way* (BlueBay Records)

An exceptionally gifted jazz singer, [Nancy Kelly](#) makes all too few albums and hence this new release is all the more welcome. Previous CDs include *Born To Swing* (Amherst AMH 4422-2) and *Well, Alright!* (Saying it With Jazz SIWJ 0309) and the joyful always swinging vocal sound is once more in evidence. On this occasion (recorded in 2012 but only now released), Nancy's regular accompanist, Dino Losito, forsakes the piano in favor of the Hammond B-3 organ and thereon proves to be an accomplished



master. With guitarist Peter Bernstein and drummer Carmen Intorre, an infectious rhythmic pulse underlies every track and tenor saxophonist Jerry Weldon weighs in on some tracks with grooving solos. Drawing from a notably eclectic repertoire, among the songs Nancy sings are *Don't Explain*, *Good Morning Heartache*, *The Very Thought Of You*, *Day In Day Out*, *Come Back To Me*, and *Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone*. All of her interpretations are personal and effective, her tough, edgy sound bringing additional layers to familiar lyrics, qualities I referred to on another occasion as spine-tingling and I'm happy to repeat myself. Speaking of which, on that occasion I urged readers of my review to run, not walk for the album. Same thing here, although this time the running will have to be metaphorical; go to Nancy's site (as above) and for more information also see [Jim Eigo's](#) website. However you do it, though, the important thing is that you do not miss this excellent CD – and if you happen to be in Nancy's stamping ground, the New York City area, try to catch her live. These days not much is guaranteed, but you can bet the farm you won't regret seeing and hearing this outstanding jazz singer.

Kelley Suttentfield *Among The Stars* (self-produced)

A warm, sensual and distinctive vocal sound marks [Kelley Suttentfield](#) as someone rather special in the somewhat overcrowded arena in which today's jazz singers must perform. Kelley's first CD, 2009's *Where Is Love?* (Rhombus Records) was well received by critics and rightly so. There, she brought to a selection of songs, largely standards, intimate interpretations of familiar material, which she agreeably revised in her own way. For this new album, Kelley repertoire is again mainly of familiar songs, yet all are crafted thoughtfully in a manner different from that adopted by less-gifted singers. On the previous set, Kelley was joined by five



instrumentalists; this time, only one of that same group is heard. This is guitarist [Tony Romano](#) and the resulting duets are superbly realized. Before turning to singing jazz, Kelley studied classical piano and also worked in the theater, and this combination of musical knowledge and interpretive skills serves her very well and she was a finalist in the New York City

Jazzmobile Jazz Vocalist competition. Among the songs Kelley and Tony perform are *Beautiful Love*, *People Will Say We're In Love*, *Until It's Time For You So Go* and, of course, given the album title, *Fly Me To The Moon*. Although based in New York and hence popular there and on the eastern seaboard, Kelley has toured Europe and the UK. Even so, she is not as well known internationally as her undoubted talent deserves, something that must surely be corrected by the release of ***Among The Stars***.

Joe Ferrara *The Tiger Walks Through My Dreams* (I.P.D. Recordings 0001)

From the outside looking in, the press release for this excellent CD by [Joe Ferrara](#) at first suggests an assembly of material that might be a little too wide-ranging for the taste of most listeners. Reading on, however, one thing in that release is absolutely spot-on when it states that such is the singer's skill and musicality he hold it all together. This he most certainly does, singing songs that are powerful, alive with imagery, filled with excitement, all presented in a rich baritone that goes far beyond the vocal sound of



almost any other male singer working today in jazz, soul and kindred styles. This said, it would be unwise and inappropriate to label Joe as a jazz singer and the publicity material is right in avoiding making such a claim. Rather, Joe is a singer of contemporary popular music of many kinds, gifted with a true and compelling vocal sound. About half the songs are his own compositions, the others drawing from the pens of Morrissey, Waits, Strouse and others. Backing Joe is the mighty big band led by trumpeter Tim Ouimette who is also responsible for the exceptional arrangements. Accompaniment of this kind and quality is rarely heard on today's vocal releases and it is a very welcome addition to an album that will have considerable appeal to many. (Also see Jim Eigo's [website](#) for booking details.)

Larry Fuller ([Capri Records 74135-2](#))

An exceptionally talented pianist, New York-based [Larry Fuller](#) often appears in a supporting role with other artists, sometimes he leads his own groups. For several years he was musical director for Ernestine Anderson, and among his sideman roles he was in trios led by Ray Brown and by Jeff Hamilton. Here he leads his own trio, a sleek group with bassist Hassan Shakur and drummer Greg Hutchinson. Larry's deft and always imaginative solos build upon a repertoire of the best of popular music (*At Long Last Love*, *Old Devil Moon*, *Close Enough For Love*, *Old Folks*), none of them overdone, and some themes from past giants of jazz.



Among these titans are Duke Ellington (*C Jam Blues*), Bud Powell (*Celia*), John Lewis (*Django*), Oscar Peterson (*Hymn To Freedom*) and Clifford Brown (*Daahoud*). Some of the pieces on display here are taken at a brisk clip others at a highly effective medium bounce tempo but there are also reflective moments, moving example being Joni Mitchell's *Both Sides Now* and Ellington's *Prelude To A Kiss*. This is Larry's second album and one that must surely bring him to worldwide attention; he certainly deserves it.

Other recent releases to come my way for review include:-

Claire Martin *Time & Place* (Linn AKD 423)

Dena DeRose *We Won't Forget You* (HighNote HCD 7263)

Coleman Hawkins *Alive! At The Village Gate 1962* (American Jazz Classics 99108)

No space here, but reviews of all of these albums can be seen in current or forthcoming issues of [Jazz Journal](#).

And in September look out for two new books:

. . . one is [Joan Merrill](#)'s new novel, ***And All That Motive***, with San Francisco sleuth Casey McKie hunting down the killer of jazz singer Sid Satin at the Pacific Coast Jazz Festival.

. . . the other is the eagerly awaited biography of veteran jazz singer Sheila Jordan, ***Jazz Child***, by [Ellen Johnson](#).