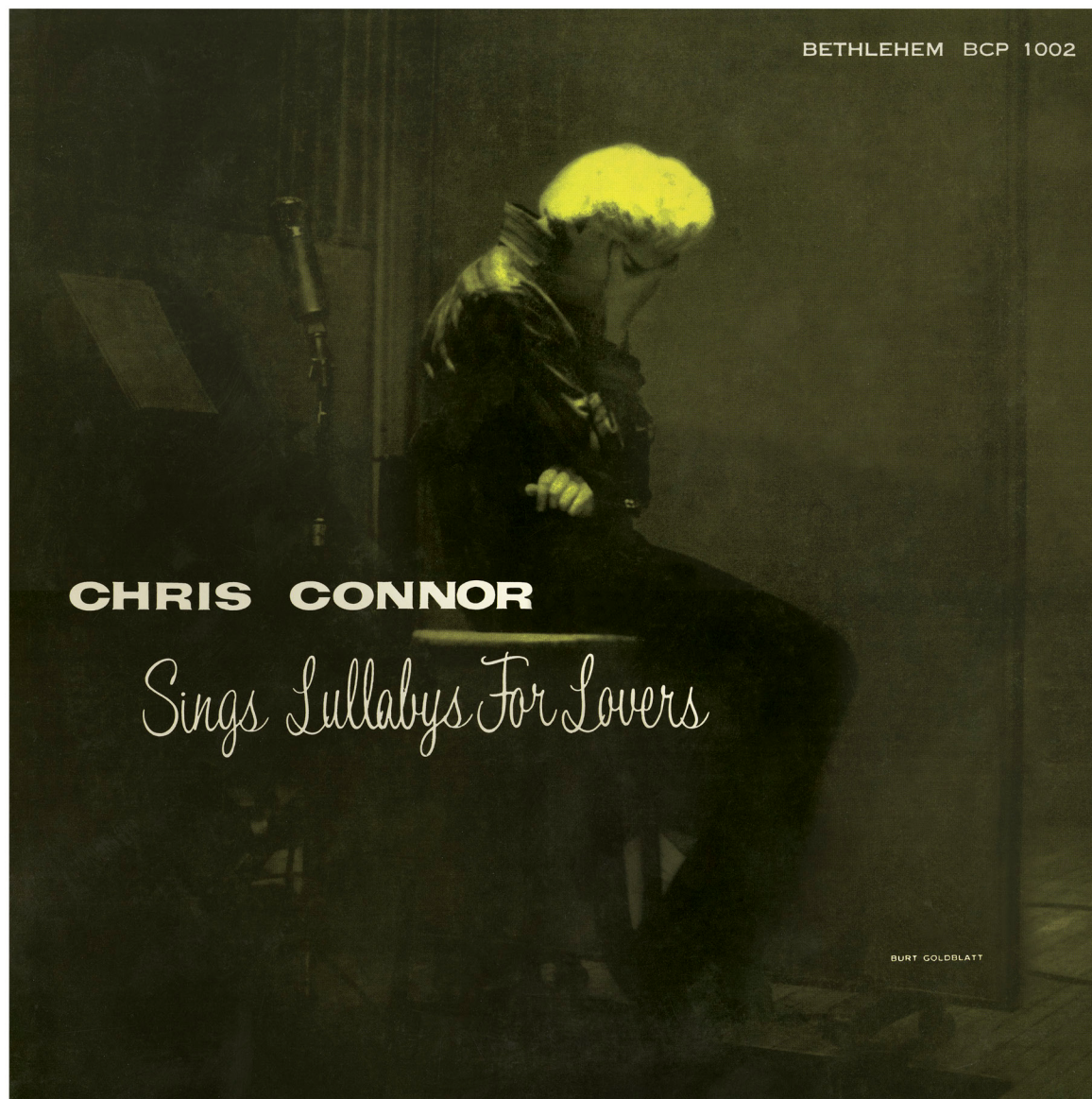


CHRIS CONNOR

"Sings Lullabys For Lovers"



PHOTOGRAPHY BY:
BURT GOLDBLATT

Foreword & Notes From
Original Vinyl Release

CHRIS CONNOR

Sings Lullabys For Lovers

With the unbelievable development of jazz and popular music in the last few decades, with all the experiments and “new sound” and new instrumentation and new tonal theories, even with what has emerged as practically a new musical art, one factor has generally remained unchanged – the vocalist...

With rare exceptions, vocalists are still vocalists. It's difficult to even consider them as singers. Thus, the emergence of a singer like Chris Connor is of true importance in the jazz and popular music fields. In an era when radio, television and the commercial orchestras demanded a cut and dried style, when the ultimate ambition of almost every singer was to sing just like somebody else, the individual vocalist with style, imagination and ideas has had a monotonous row to hoe. Music moved forward, broke the old rules, embraced new ideas. The singers, however, continued to imitate Dinah Shore or Frank Sinatra. Or, in more hip circles, their ultimate goal seemed to be to attain a watered down approximation of Billy Eckstine or Sarah Vaughan.

Not long ago, a young band vocalist named Chris Connor decided that there must be a different, a better and more original way to sing a song. In this Bethlehem album, “Lullaby's for Lovers,” she more than proves her point. And, in doing so, she does a valuable service for modern music. She has reached for songs seldom sung in the jazz idiom and in doing so she widens the range and the potential audience for jazz singers. And she proves to all singers that a good song done with originality, done differently and sometimes in revolutionary style, can intrigue the ear of any listener and can also do much toward reviving interest in a song temporarily in limbo.

The foremost vocal qualities that Miss Connor has are those of taste, style and intelligent analysis of a lyric. Her taste is to be found in the selection of these eight songs that are divided into two moods – Love Found and Love Lost. For years, the only places where a singer did “Lush Life,” for instance, was in the intimate East Side boites where singers generally can't sing very well but do know how a good lyric is sung whether it's a hit or a fail-

ure. Her style is unique, breathy and intimate – and intimacy is a quality long disregarded by singers.

It is, however, her translation of a lyric, which to me is most unusual. When Chris Connor sings “A Cottage For Sale” – a standard that has had the full treatment from every established stylist – the Willard Robison lyric becomes a story, which it is. It is surely a story as a piece of fiction; a story told in mood and nostalgia; and a story that Miss Connor sings as a story as well as a song. She is equally adept with another story song, the “He's Coming Home.”

Yet lyric quality is not Chris Connor's sole talent. Like all first class singers – Ella Fitzgerald and the late Mildred Bailey are prime examples – she has the versatility and imagination to handle any sort of a song. Like the great ones, she proves that a good singer can laugh with a laughing song as well as be emotional with a ballad or make the nonsense of a novelty tune jump up and come alive.

Listen to her odd and ultra modern background and style with “Lush Life.” And then hear her turn swingster and make the old favorite “How Long Has This Been Going On” bounce from first note to last. And then consider that in “Cottage for Sale” and the old Benny Goodman theme, Gordon Jenkins' “Goodbye.” She takes two standards that have been worked over and over again and manages to bring to each a fresh approach, a bright and imaginative quality.

In the competitive field of modern music, which is still contained in a comparatively restricted area and must still buck all the tiresome commercial dogmas, success usually comes the hard way. Chris Connor is making it the hard way. She was established as a band vocalist with such established orchestras as

Claude Thornhill, Herbie Fields, Jerry Wald and, finally, Stan Kenton. But, knowing how she wanted to sing and why she wanted to sing that way, she turned her back on security and took her style and ideas to the jazz clubs and the small, lively combos to be found there. She must have known that it was to be a long, hard pull and that the goal would be hard to reach.

But she doubtless knows, also, that is and when she reaches her goal she will be the first Chris Connor. And that's a good bit better than being another somebody else or just as good as some other star. It's always better to be yourself, win, lose, or draw.

The Vinnie Burke Quartet, with Art Mardigan on drums, is the group responsible for the purposeful multi-colored background. Ronny Ordich does the pretty, swinging clarinet and flute work, and Joe Cinderella plays the fragile, sensitive guitar lines. Don Burns' fine accordion work fills in the bottom of the group, and, of course, the excellent bass work is that of Vinnie Burke. Joe Mooney fans may remember Vinnie with the original Mooney group.

This album comprises a wedding of the modern, refreshing voice of Chris Connor and a background of equivalent instrumental sound. A homogeneous groove in any case.

– ROBERT SYLVESTER

HI-FI

"LULLABYS FOR LOVERS"



1. LUSH LIFE (Strayhorn)
2. OUT OF THIS WORLD (Mercer-Arlen)
3. COTTAGE FOR SALE (Conley-Robinson)
4. HOW LONG? (G & I Gershwin)
5. GOODBYE (Jenkins)
6. STELLA BY STARLIGHT (Young-Washington)
7. GONE WITH THE WIND (Wrubel-Magidson)
8. HE'S COMING HOME (De Forest)

CHRIS CONNOR PERSONNEL

ART MARDIGAN - Drums

(Vinnie Burke Quartet)

RONNY ODRICH - Clarinet/Flute

JOE CINDERELLA - Guitar

DON BURNS' - Accordion

VINNIE BURKE - Bass

..... THANKS FOR LISTENING!

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