

Gloria Cooper - Biography

Gloria Cooper brings extensive professional experience as a vocalist and pianist to her performances. Her cool voice and piano playing convey a deep understanding of the music and the ability to express many layers of emotion. Her piano playing swings in the truest sense, and one of her many strengths is sensitive piano accompaniment for her vocals, including a wide range of repertoire.

Gloria Cooper is an experienced jazz vocalist and pianist. She grew up in Missouri, and completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in music at the University of Missouri. Gloria lived in San Francisco, California from 1972-1988 where she played in numerous venues and jazz clubs with many musicians such as Eddie Henderson and Donald Bailey. She also played in the house band at the re-opened Jazz Workshop where she accompanied Eddie Harris, Red Holloway, David "Fathead" Newman, and numerous others. Gloria moved to New York City in 1988 and completed an Ed. D. in Music and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1992. She taught at Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York as Associate Professor of Music, and has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. Cooper is active as a performer, educator, and clinician. She has also accompanied many singers including Meredith d'Ambrosio, Oscar Brown Jr., Giacomo Gates, Gloria Lynne, and Jimmy Witherspoon.

Dr. Cooper has over 35 years of experience as a performer/educator and has taught many clinics, camps, and workshops. She has also served as a consultant in the development of numerous jazz education projects and performances.

Gloria Cooper – Reviews

(For the album - Dedicated To You - Origin Records, 2005)

“Jazz vocalist/pianist, Gloria Cooper, adds a veteran's voice to the mainstream jazz idiom with her second release, Dedicated to You. In this collection of instrumental music written by jazz composers and musicians, Cooper includes a vocal rendering to the work of such greats as Hank Mobley, Renee Rosnes, and Tommy Turrentine, as well as standards from the pens of Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer.

The pianist has a post-bop style that reflects the voices of McCoy Tyner, Bill Evans, Gene Harris, and other greats, revealing the depth and extent of her grasp of the idiom. She lays down her performances in a simple but not simplistic manner, as with any top-drawer player she makes these challenging performances sound easy. Don't let it fool you, there's maturity in her performance that is technically sound and highly imaginative. There is something special about pianists who also sing, they have the ideal accompaniment in their own playing. Yet Cooper doesn't rely on that alone, rather, she's invited a cadre of skillful players to render these rich arrangements created by pianist Cooper and trumpeter Don Sickler (who also acts as Producer). Cooper's voice is clear, her articulation precise, and she has a penchant for long, lean lines that gracefully bind the arrangements together. Like the entire sound of the CD, Cooper creates space with her vocal delivery, creating a fluid and gentle mood.

The two horn arrangements galvanize the full ensemble sound, which features the vocal lines written into the arrangements rather than a distinct vocal on top.

Saxophonist, Wayne Escoffery, and trumpeter, Don Sickler, have a symbiosis that's hard to beat and add the sheen on this gleaming piece of work. Guitarist Freddie Bryant, who is clearly versed in the masters, offers a loose, gentle touch to the many contemporary Latin feels, and at times captures the soul of Neves and the heart of Pizzarelli and Ellis. Bassist Tim Givens is an empathetic player who supplies a solid bottom end with drummer, Vince Cherico. The whole is recorded, mixed and mastered by the best in the biz, Rudy Van Gelder, who once again creates a masterpiece of engineering with a warmth and presence.

The bulk of the recording has a Latin underpinning, with up-tempo swing and swing ballads rounding out the balance. In a similar fashion to Jon Hendrick's versions of Monk's work, many of the song titles have been changed to reflect the vocal addition. "Just a Little Boy" by Argentinian master Sergio Mihanovich, begins with piano/voice, illustrating the strength of a player supporting their own vocal. The ballad is further enhanced by the brilliant piano solo the artist delivers, and the golden horn of trumpeter, Sickler. "Garden in the Sand," written by Hank Mobley with lyrics by Bebe Herring, was originally entitled "Bossa De Luxe," and has a relaxed Latin ballad feel. The sole blues offering "Something Unusual" is one of the few swing ballad feels on the CD. The artist contributes one of her own compositions, co-written with Ira Gitler, "Reveling in the Beat," an up-tempo Latin with a playful melody and a great guitar solo. Trumpeter Tommy Turrentine's "Glo's Theme" becomes "Big Brown Eyes" with the addition of L. Aziza Miller's vocal, and offers a hard swinging feel with superb brushwork by drummer Cherico, who trades fours with bassist Givens. My personal favourite, "Without You," was written by Canadian pianist Renee Rosnes. Originally

entitled "Malaga Moon," the composition receives the new title with the addition of lyrics by Shelly Brown, and is a sparse, sensitive read of this gorgeous composition. Saxophonist Escoffery contributes a standout tenor solo on this track.

Dedicated to You is a first-rate recording in the mainstream jazz idiom, and will inspire you to put your feet up, close your eyes, and drift into a sea of soft Latin grooves created by the gifted Gloria Cooper. Recommended."

By Cindy McLeod

Jazzreview.com

"This is a very pleasing offering that came as a result of Gloria Cooper's editing of the Second Floor Music publication Sing Jazz! Many of the songs covered in the publication she was not familiar with, prompting her to record a new CD featuring some of this material. A large number of these songs started out their lives as instrumentals with lyrics added much later. Because of this, it seems quite appropriate that Cooper's voice is treated as an instrument, rather than with an out-in-front-of-the-band vocal approach. Since her voice has a soft quality, this is a successful formula, Rudy Van Gelder's engineering talents capturing it to perfection. Instrumentally, the personnel consists of Cooper (piano), Don Sickler (trumpet/flugelhorn), Wayne Escoffery (tenor and soprano saxophones), Freddie Bryant (guitar), Tim Givens (bass), and Vince Cherico (drums). Sickler handled all the arrangements with the exception of "Dedicated To You" and "Come Rain Or Come Shine" which were done by Cooper. Cooper's one original is "Reveling In The Beat" with lyrics by jazz journalist Ira Gitler. This is a track on which Bryant's guitar work shines. The tunes all have a fine ensemble feel with good solos. Cooper's piano work is of the "less is more" school and is very tasty throughout but it is her voice that makes the chosen material."

Marcia Hillman

All About Jazz/New York

"A fairly straight singer with a warm but cool voice, Gloria Cooper at times hints at Maxine Sullivan and Shirley Horn. The program on Dedicated to You is filled with superior obscurities taken from Don Sickler's Second Floor Music publications -Sing Jazz and -Sing More Jazz. Many of the songs, written by jazz musicians, received their recording debut (particularly as vocals) on this set, including numbers by John Oddo, Hank Mobley, Jon Burr, Renee Rosnes, and the late James Williams. Cooper does a fine job of adding warmth to the lyrics, also playing piano in the backup group, which on some numbers is a full sextet featuring excellent trumpet solos from Sickler.

Dedicated to You, which only includes two standards among the dozen songs, shows that some fine new originals were written by jazz musicians in recent times, even if most remain unknown to the general public. Singers in need of fresh material are particularly recommended to explore this outing."

Scott Yanow

All Music Guide

(For the album – “Day By Day” – GAC Music, 2001)

“Gloria Cooper has earned the distinction to be called “Dr.” with the higher degree from New York’s Columbia University. She is Assistant Professor of Music at Long Island University. As she demonstrates in this her debut album, Cooper needn’t rely solely on textbook theory in the classroom. Her students can have on-the-job training by watching Cooper at the piano showing them how to make jazz.”

Dave Nathan

All Music Guide

“At the keyboard she displays excellent technique, a masterful touch, flawless time and a comprehensive post-bop vocabulary that embodies sources from Gene Harris and McCoy Tyner to Bill Evans, Chick Corea, and Cyrus Chestnut.”

Jack Bowers

All About Jazz

“Day By Day” has character in the expressions of a cool jazz singer who accompanies herself. Cooper can play with a band and be a leader. In an area of music performance (the singer/pianist) where the truly talented are few and far between, Gloria Cooper is a standout.”

Lucy Galliher

Jazz Now

“Gloria does double duty on her debut as a leader with warm vocals plus swinging piano. She adds Yoron Israel (d) and Ron McClure (b) along with nice accents from Eddie Henderson’s cool muted trumpet. The songs are popular standards and jazz classics coming together to form an easygoing program that is very inviting.”

O’s Place Newsletter

“There are 3 of Sammy Cahn’s most impressive lyrics here. “I Fall In Love Too Easily” (Styne) rings with exciting vocal inspiration. It’s sung as a lament with an ear shattering purity. “I’ll Never Stop Loving You” (Brodszky) remains one of some lover’s tender anthems gone unrecorded for so long. Gloria delves deeply here making her version classic vocal artistry.”

Dan Singer

In Tune International Magazine

Quotes

"Gloria Cooper provides a delicate phrasing and pacing not heard since another musician, Chet Baker, especially on the title tune. For Gloria Cooper is an original, a jazz musician's jazz singer. Don Sickler produced this wonderful CD and recorded with the capable hands of Rudy Van Gelder. When you hear "Seabreeze" and "Something Unusual" with Gloria's lifting gentle lyrics and Don Sickler's sinuous flugelhorn, you'll be back in a 'Baby Breeze' state of mind."

Dick Crockett

Still Another Jazz Show

"The Voice" 88.7fm

Sacramento, Ca

"Not only is Cooper's singing of these assorted tunes expressive, but her pianism sets off her intimate knowledge of the material."

Dave Nathan

All About Jazz

"A haunting vocalist/pianist! You can call it smooth or cool but it fits the spectrum of class."

WLNZ – Lansing, MI – Jim Stone's Big Band Swing

"Excellent. Gloria sings beautifully, plays nicely, swings, and has great sidemen. A very enjoyable recording."

KCME – Colorado Springs, Colorado

"Veteran trumpeter Eddie Henderson, Ron McClure's bass and Yoron Israel on drums in combination with Cooper's piano would have made this album a candidate for one of 2001's best instrumental sessions. The consummate vocalizing moves it to the top 10 list."

Dave Nathan

All About Jazz

"Gloria's voice is warm, wonderful, and articulate. She moves gently from ballads to swing, and her piano accompaniment is flawless. Her musicianship speaks of much experience. Bravo!"

Anne-Marie Moss

Jazz Vocalist

"Gloria's excellent musicianship is always evident. It's a pleasure to listen to this sensitive vocalist accompanied by a strong and sensitive pianist (as she is here, by herself). It was a joy to work with her on this project, and I'm hopeful I'll work with her many times in the future."

Don Sickler

Producer

“Day By Day” the inaugural CD by Gloria Cooper, is a “must have” for any jazz library. Not only is she a superb song stylist, but her piano work “swings” as hard as anyone. The sensitive dialogue between Gloria and trumpeter Eddie Henderson on Sammy Cahn/Jule Styne’s “I Fall In Love Too Easily” is reminiscent of a Bill Evans/Miles Davis conversation and alone is worth the price of the CD. Yoron Israel provides solid drum work and the solo work of bassist Ron McClure is magnificent. A great collection! More please!”

Jim Widner

The Jim Widner Big Band

Education

Doctor of Music and Education- Ed. D. – Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City – 1992.

Academic Experience:

Associate Professor of Music, and Director of Vocal Music at Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York.

Taught voice classes at the Lee Strasberg Theater Institute in New York City.

Workshops Taught:

Solano Community College – Suisun City, CA – Vocal Jazz

New York State Summer School of the Arts – Summer Jazz Camps – SUNY – Binghamton, NY (Vocal Jazz Faculty and Assistant Artistic Director)

Artist in Residence for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

- **Developed a vocal jazz curriculum**

- **Established a series of workshops in designated public schools in New Jersey.**

Taught a Vocal Jazz Master Class/Clinic at the Mellon Jazz Festival

Harrisburg, PA

Taught Vocal Jazz at the Jim Widner Combo Jazz Camp: UMSL

St. Louis, MO

Taught a Vocal Jazz Workshop and Master Class at Afro Blue Jazz Club

Kumamoto, Japan

Publications

Cooper, Gloria, ed. Sing Jazz! Second Floor Music: New York, (2002)

Cooper, Gloria. “Decoding the Lead Sheet.” Classical Singer 15.7 (2002): 14-15, 24-25

Cooper, Gloria. “Once More With Feeling.” Journal of Singing Vol. 60, No. 2 (2003): 153-157

Cooper, Gloria & Sickler, Don. Jazz Phasing: A Workshop for the Jazz Vocalist. Second Floor Music: New York, (2004).

Recordings:

Cooper, Gloria. Day By Day. Perf. Gloria Cooper, Eddie Henderson, Yoron Israel, Ron McClure. GAC Music, 2001

Cooper, Gloria. Dedicated To You. Perf. Gloria Cooper, Freddie Bryant, Vince Cherico, Wayne Escoffery, Tim Givens, Don Sickler. Origin Records, 2005.

Awards:

Recipient of the 2005 David Newton Award for Excellence in Teaching (Long Island University)

Honors:

Kappa Delta Pi (International Honor Society In Education)