

Wayne Shorter's "Infant Eyes" floats across a restless dreamscape; Jimmy Rowles' "The Peacocks" is transformed into the darkly mysterious "Cette Nuit"; and Ellington's "Prelude to a Kiss" softly unfolds as simply "Prélude," trembling with anticipation. Six originals are fully as artful, most notably the storm-clouded "A La Mer Tume" and her closing "Satieque," a swirling homage to Erik Satie.

## FREDDY COLE

**HE WAS THE KING** (HighNote)



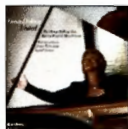
Musically speaking, Freddy Cole has long maintained a rather schizophrenic relationship with his big

brother. Freddy was only 33 when Nat died in 1965. Just starting to secure attention as a vocalist and pianist, he found himself overwhelmed by Nat's giant shadow. His career stalled and it wasn't until the 1990s that he came fully into his own. Firm in his determination to shake the connection, he went so far as bluntly titling one album *I'm Not My Brother, I'm Me*. Conversely, however, Freddy has also set a pattern of adding a Nat-associated tune or two to most of his discs. Now, at long last, he's decided to openly embrace Nat's legacy with this 12-track salute.

While vocal similarities to Nat persist, particularly in cadence and phrasing, Freddy has emerged as a more jazz-savvy singer, appreciably graveled at 84 yet sagely inventive. Alongside regular bandmates Elias Bailey (bass) and Randy Napoleon (guitar)—joined by drummer Quentin Baxter, pianist John di Martino (with Freddy stepping in on two tracks) and a trio of horns anchored by alternating tenor saxophonists Harry Allen and Houston Person—he digs deep into Nat's songbook. There's a smattering of hits, including "Mona Lisa" and a winningly balladic "Sweet Lorraine." More interesting are such comparatively obscure choices as "That's My Girl," "Maybe It's Because I Love You Too Much" and the whimsical "The Best Man." Freddy closes with the self-penned title track, a warm eulogistic hug.

## DENA DEROSE

**UNITED** (HighNote)



Pianist-vocalist Dena DeRose and drummer Matt Wilson have been making beautiful music together for more than a

decade and a half, nearly the entirety of her recording career. Their sublime rapport was, some nine years ago, expanded and intensified with the addition of bassist Martin Wind.

Across four previous albums, they've recorded only one—2008's *Live at Jazz Standard, Volume 2*—without the addition of an illustrious guest or two. For *United* they welcome trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and guitarist Peter Bernstein, each enhancing two of the album's nine tracks.

The title is surely in reference to the core trio's finely honed tightness, not the dichotomous playlist, where upbeat and romantic themes alternate with darker sentiments. Wilson and Jensen take center stage on the opening title track, DeRose adding brief, buoyant lyrics to the Wayne Shorter composition. Though their muscular faceoff is densely dynamic, it overwhelms DeRose's vocal, which feels uncharacteristically strained. Balance is righted thereafter, the results uniformly exquisite. On the bluer side of the emotional ledger: Cahn and Van Heusen's mournfully introspective "Only the Lonely," Carole King's wistful "So Far Away" and "Not You Again," Duncan Lamont's deftly crafted portrait of a lamented lover's unwanted return. They're offset by a lightly swung "I'm Glad There Is You," Cedar Walton's whirling "Clockwise," augmented by DeRose's self-affirming lyric, Wind and DeRose's delicate "Simple Song of Love" and Horace Silver's "Peace," its becalmed majesty escalating to vibrant exaltation.

## HILARY KOLE

**THE JUDY GARLAND PROJECT** (JVC)



Though her career touched four decades, Judy Garland released surprisingly few albums. None, save 1961's

landmark *Judy at Carnegie Hall*, were major successes; her recordings