

# Lainie Cooke Reviews

## The Music is the Magic

### CADENCE

April 2015

Bob Rusch

LAINIE COOKE's [voc], THE MUSIC IS THE MAGIC [Onyx 005] is a full length CD and I'm glad it is. At 73 when she recorded this, she shows little sign of voice deterioration and her choice of material is refreshingly hip. Beside the title track, one of Abbey Lincoln's finest compositions, there is Ronnell Bright's "Sweet Pumpkin", Monk's "How I wish" [Ask Me Now], Peggy Lee's "Mañana", Frishberg's "Our Love Rolls On" and Kellaway's "I Have The Feeling I've Been Here Before". These titles are joined by "Lazy Afternoon", "Loving You", "When I Look Into Your Eyes", "Fascinating Rhythm", "Out Of this World" and "Them Their Eyes". Besides fine renderings of the program (the aging of this singer is only apparent on ballads like "When I Look Into Your Eyes" but with it comes an emotional punch youth could not bring) add to that fine jazz work from the rest of the group [Tedd Firth-p, Luques Curtis or Tabari Lake-b, Myron Walden-sax, Ralph Peterson-dms/tpt] and you get music well worth listening to.

### All About Jazz

C. Michael Bailey

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Lainie Cooke is a singer not afraid to take chances. Her third recording, *The Music is the Magic*, she populates her recital with near standards: songs that are familiar but not cliché. Supported by a reeds-led quartet anchored by drummer (and producer on this recording) [Ralph Peterson](#), Lainie displays a command of vocal jazz that is impressive. "Lazy Afternoon" and "Sweet Pumpkin" are sung with a [Sarah Vaughan](#) angularity betraying a good deal of practice and talent. [Abbey Lincoln](#)'s tightly arranged title piece hosts a rhythm section interlude featuring bassist Luques Curtis and Peterson's percussive drumming and tart trumpet playing.

A perfect vehicle for Lainie proves to be [Thelonious Monk](#)'s "How I Wish" complete with [Jon Hendricks](#)' lyrics. Her phrasing is solid and confident. Her performance of Gershwin's "Fascinating Rhythm" is a study in drama with a brief balladic introduction that amps up into a blues-driven simmer and stays there for [Ted Firth](#)'s bright solo followed by [Myron Walden](#)'s tenor solo. *The Music is the Magic* is a wholly satisfying collection of jazz vocals that does not rely on the heavily traveled standard delivered by a singular and inspired voice.

Track Listing: Lazy Afternoon; Sweet Pumpkin; The Music is Magic; Loving You; How I Wish; When I Look in Your Eyes; Fascinating Rhythm; Live for Life; Manana; Our Love Rolls On; Out of this World; Them There Eyes; I Have The Feeling I've Been Here Before.

Personnel: Lainie Cooke: vocals; Ted Firth: piano; Luques Curtis: bass; Myron Walden: saxophones; Ralph Peterson: drums and trumpet; Tabari lake: bass (9).

## **New York City Jazz Record**

**April 2015**

**Alex Henderson**

Listening to Lainie Cooke's third album, one is likely to wonder why a singer this talented is not better known. It comes down to marketing above all else. The 73-year-old Minneapolis native, who has spent most of her adult life in New York City, has only recorded sporadically (her first album *Here's to Life* was released in 2002, followed by *It's Always You* in 2008). And although she has a long history of performing live in NYC, she has not done a great deal of touring. But Cooke's obscurity doesn't make this Ralph Peterson produced CD any less enjoyable. Cooke favors a warm, appealing postbop approach, which draws on the influence of Sheila Jordan, Annie Ross and Anita O'Day (among others) and *The Music Is The Magic* underscores her willingness to take some chances when it comes to selecting material.

Cooke picks a few Tin Pan Alley warhorses, including George and Ira Gershwin's "Fascinating Rhythm" and Harold Arlen's "Out of This World" but Cooke also unearths songs ranging from Artie Butler's "Loving You" and Abbey Lincoln's title track to Francis Lai's theme from French director Claude Lelouch's 1967 movie *Vivre pour Vivre*. And Cooke shows her fondness for pianists with expressive performances of Dave Frishberg's "Our Love Rolls On", Ronnell Bright's "Sweet Pumpkin", Roger Kellaway's "I Have the Feeling I've Been Here Before" and Thelonious Monk's "Ask Me Now" (with Jon Hendricks' lyrics). Cooke's solid backing comes from Peterson (drums), Myron Walden (saxophones), Tedd Firth (piano) and Luques Curtis or Tabari Lake (acoustic bass). This album called for sidemen who were swinging but nuanced and all of them fit right in. Although primarily a drummer, Peterson plays the trumpet as a secondary instrument; his Miles Davis like mute is an asset on a sensitive reading of Leslie Bricusse's "When I Look in Your Eyes". In a perfect world, Cooke would have a much larger catalogue. But a small one is certainly preferable to none at all and *The Music Is The Magic* demonstrates that this seasoned but underexposed vocalist is still very much on top of her game.

For more information, visit [lainiecooke.com](http://lainiecooke.com). This project is at Zinc Bar Apr. 10th. See Calendar.

## **It's Always You**

**eJazzNews - July 2009**

**Edward Blanco**

Better late than never, is a phrase everyone is familiar with but takes on a special meaning for vocalist Lainie Cooke, a remarkable singer who has waited more than most for the opportunity to engage her first love of song. With "It's Always You," her sophomore recording, Cooke presents a mellow twelve-track set of wonderful standards bathed in new light and well accompanied by a finesse cast of players. No longer a

youngster, this mature seasoned veteran of the arts, possesses powerful vocals allowing her to travel effortlessly from fiery passages to soothing cool terrain in graceful style.

She actually began singing very early in life, from age six to fronting a big big band at the tender age of fourteen, this Minneapolis-born songbird had much promise when life managed to get in the way. After an education and working as an actress and voice over artist for 30 years, Cooke clawed her way back from obscurity singing in night clubs and in cabarets from New York to LA culminating with her 2002 debut "Here's To Life" at the age of sixty. Now, just a tad older but finer, Cooke provides a superb performance interpreting old standards like Ray Noble's "The Very Thought of You," Michel Legrand's "I Will Wait For You," and Cole Porter's classic "After You" with tenderness.

Of course there are other songs that deserve meaningful attention beginning with the opener "It's Always You," and continue with the oft recorded "Too Close For Comfort," and lesser known scores like "Tuesdays In Chinatown," and "Answer Me" just to name a few. Not to be overlooked here is the personnel that provide the backup instrumentals which include none other than the great Joel Frahm on the reeds, Ted Firth on piano, Roland Barber on trombone and rounding out the rhythm section are guitarist Marvin Horne, bassist Cameron Brown and drummer Matt Wilson-all providing superb musical support.

No question about this one folks, Lainie Cooke has a winner on her hands with "It's Always You," ably demonstrating that sometimes the wait is well worth it-considering the quality of the music and her unique vocal delivery-it certainly was.

### **JazzTimes, March 2009**

#### **Christopher Loudon**

Among jazz singers, there's never been any shortage of late-to-the-game practitioners, but Lainie Cooke numbers among the few who can claim to have started early--very early--yet waited more than half a lifetime to make their recording debut.

The Minneapolis-born Cooke has been singing since age 3 and was fronting a big band at 14. Throughout the 1980s, she proved a consistent favorite on the L.A. club circuit. She then planned to take New York by storm but instead ended up paying the bills by lending her sand-dusted soprano to jingles for the likes of Ford and McDonald's, augmenting her commercial work with regular concert dates. Finally, in 2002, the wider world got the chance to discover, with the release of *Here's to Life*, what a select few bicoastal clubgoers had known for decades: that Cooke is a first-rate interpreter of jazz standards both sassy and sweet.

Now with more than another half-decade having passed, Cooke has delivered a follow-up disc, demonstrating that her unique brand of steel-lined warm-an enticing style that suggests the musical astuteness of Sheila Jordan blended with the salty panache of Anita O'Day-has in no way diminished. Trolling the fogged passages of "Tuesdays in Chinatown," gently peeling back the tender folds of "The Very Thought of You", softly plumbing the elegant regret of Cole Porter's "After You," or suggesting a female Sinatra

as she meanders through O'Day's cheeky barroom anthem, "Waiter Make Mine Blues," Cooke consistently proves the long wait has been more than worthwhile.

### **Jazz Improv Magazine, June 2008**

#### **Bob Gish**

Here's a delightful assembly of musicians holding forth on a cool dozen ditties new and old. It's a winning CD all around: Lainie Cooke's vocals are smooth and comforting, filled with that old heartache blues feeling (e.g., check out "When A Woman Loves a Man" as a kind of epitome of how to sing a torch song). This is so whether she sings a ballad or swings out on tunes like "It's Always You." Cameron Brown supplies just the right pulse and phrasing for the first introductory phrases. After a chorus, Tedd Firth takes over establishing the fulsome jazz credentials of the group with Matt Wilson's cymbals ringing out we're here to play. Brown ends things appropriately enough with a few measures of goodbye.

Take "I Will Wait for You"-there's plenty of sadness and longing in each and every word, enunciated and held in just the right way to wring out every metaphorical tear. Even, or especially, Cooke's intermittent scatting is just right, so natural so fitting, so beautiful. Every vocalist should be so lucky to have sidemen like Brown, Firth, and Wilson. Not everyone knows the ins and outs of accompaniment, and vocalists often pay the price-or at times deserve a kind of carelessness from the backup personnel. Here, however, there's more than enough mutual respect to go around and you can hear it.

Then there's a companion "You" lyric, the familiar but always special "The Very Thought of You," demonstrating the almost universal versatility and appeal of Noble's perfect lyrics. Cooke's voice here is so tender, so touching, so heartfelt that you're convinced she truly knows the meaning of the words she so mellifluously delivers. Those words are echoed by the loving, longing lines of Joel Frahm on alto sax.

"Too Close For Comfort" has all the right punctuation and lyricism, again with the bass, drums, piano trio backing up Cooke as she struts her stuff, never missing a beat, always hitting her mark, ever strong, typically enunciating each and every word as if some kind of advocate for actually pronouncing words. She scats just enough to avoid crossing over into another mood.

"Tuesdays in Chinatown" begins with the exotic strains of Frahm's soprano sax and sets the mood, a la a latter day Grover Washington, for the plangent narrative Cooke tells about Sammy and Billy and their train ride rendezvous in a dead end but ecstatic escape each Tuesday in China Town. It's a variant of tunes like "Frankie and Johnny" or "Me and Mrs. Jones," age old archetypes of illicit love. In the story, the couple engages in a slow dance away from external responsibilities in a drawn out weekly moment.

Frahm and Cooke do their own kind of slow dance-with Cooke's forceful, full-ranged vocal lament, answered by Frahm's obbligato lines, each note resonating more fully with the sadness of the lyric.

More musical dancing occurs with Firth's piano accompaniment to Cooke's slow and strong singing of "Answer Me," a tune so worthy of the magical talents of this duet (as is the concluding tune, "After You"). Firth's solo is simple and beautiful, just the right touch and sensibility for the lyric and for Cooke's compelling plea. Who couldn't answer this kind of sweet-sorrow?

And...if you want some swingin', funky trombone playin' just order up some Roland Barber when you say "Waiter Make Mine Blues," a kind of great foot-tappin', happily melancholy tune that with lesser talent might go unnoticed. Here, it's appetizer, entre, and dessert all in one. The aforementioned "When a Woman Loves A Man" is a superb confluence of lyric, vocalist, and musicianship-with Frahm's alto sax ringing forth again, matching the downright strength of Cooke's voice, and the mindful feeling of her singing. Eckstine's "I Want to Talk about You" is another fine bluesy ballad, here again with Roland Barber's trombone winning the day with purity and grace. His solo here is simply flawless: sustained beyond belief amidst sophisticated tempo changes. As for the Latin aspect of a love song..."Take Me In Your Arms" is so wonderfully alluring that the listener merges completely with the music, and is more or less left breathless from the strategic sighs and rhythmic syncopations, all matching a lover's flirtations and hesitations. The final goodbye of the lyric and long held breath of Cooke is downright erotic!

Marvin Horne's guitar and Barber's trombone take to the fore in "Meet Me Where They Play the Blues"-just as it should be. There's some New Orleans here with Wilson's strong back beat and Cooke's wailing. This lady can sing the blues. And ballads, and...well just about anything. So here's to Lainie Cooke! For this reviewer "It's always you, gal, always you!"

### **In Tune International, October 2008**

#### **Dan Singer**

Here's a truly gifted vocalist. Ms. Cooke is from the Sheila Jordan school of singing. On her 12-song programme here she's just wonderful. Her delightfully swinging "Too Close for Comfort" (Bock/Weiss/Holofcener) contains an unpredictable scat just when you least expect it. That is exactly the kind of a serendipity singer she is. Lainie gives forth with surprise after surprise song after song. "The Very Thought of You" (Noble) is stretched out ever so carefully that the listener just can't wait for the next sung line. "I will Wait for You" (Legrand/Demy/Gimbel) is sung softly, with just an ever so slight beat. When she sings the word "share" it's quite clear exactly what she means, In fact her meaningful accented singing is as pure as can be. There's no misunderstanding here. Her crystal clear style is quite original and most appealing. There are vocal tributes to a couple of fine singers. On Anita O'Day's "Waiter Make Mine Blues" (Bondi) Lainie charmingly gets to the point from the first note. Ms Cooke is

quite at home here in a wonderful, all out, let your hair down swing/blues. On Billy Eckstine's 'I Want to Talk About You' she expertly intones a fine exhausting draining ballad. Kudos to Roland Barber for a couple of wailing trombone solos. "After You" (Porter) is a vocal charmer. This is an example of singing to perfection.

## **Here's to Life**

**In Tune International Magazine, August, 2009**

**Dan Singer, *Singer's Singers***

This 2002 dozen-song collection is wonderful. "It's Magic" (Cahn/Styne) sure is. Taken for a slight swinging beat, Lainie in a relaxing performance handles herself admirably. It's a novel new take on an old song. The wonderful title song (Butler/Molinary) which can't ever be ruined is also done in a fresh pick me up toe tapping arrangement. This treasure of a great piece of material is in perfect hands. Her conclusion is like grand opera. "Close Your Eyes" (Petkere) begins with a whisper like vocal. Midway her resounding scat sets things right along and it's a thrilling clear sailing vocal. "Bye Bye Blackbird" (Dixon/Henderson) swings from start to finish. It's beat is still ringing in my ears. "The Nearness of You" (Carmichael /Washington) has much of Sheila Jordan's tender emotional style. Ms. Cooke goes many steps further though in an unbelievable duet with her talented bass player Cameron Brown. Her version of "With a Song in my Heart" (Roger/Hart) is a joy. With just the right amount of an inspiring beat it sails.

**Improv Magazine - April/May 2004**

**Bill Donaldson**

Lainie Cooke's voice is all about projection. And control. And dynamics. And lyrical insight. And connecting to her listeners. Which makes sense since she has helped to sustain herself by singing commercial voiceovers... and by coaching voiceover technique as well.

On Here's to Life!, Cooke surrounds herself with top-shelf musicians from both coasts who, by the evidence of the music on the CD, had as much fun as she did during the recording process.

"I Just Found out about Love" kicks off the CD inauspiciously, making the listener wonder what's to come-a standard piano trio employed merely to back up a singer throughout all twelve tracks, or a lowering-ofexpectations that contrasts with the eventual conclusion of a song-length build-up. It doesn't take long to find out that the second option is the one that Cooke chose. For after the first chorus, the song opens up into a solid swing leading into Joey Morant's blating and smearing trumpet solo that hints at more delights to come throughout the rest of the recording.

Some of those surprises arise throughout "Don't Quit Now," which is reminiscent of Sheila Jordan's introduction of her duo with Mark Murphy on "Round About." And indeed, the lyrics of "Don't Quit Now" are as narrative and witty as a song that Jordan would have chosen: "Every kiss I take/Is a piece of cake/And to give me a sample/ Was

your first mistake/'Cause I know when a little taste-want more/And now I want the whole darned bakery store." But beyond the choice of material, Cooke and Jordan share fearlessness in their singing, swelling notes to make a point or turning in an instant from soft-sung introversion to bold entreaty. And to point out the similarities even further, "The Nearness of You" features Cooke singing accompanied only by bassist Cameron Brown, who played on the excellent Sheila Jordan duo CD, *Accustomed to the Bass*, prodding and dodging and responding in a sonic interaction.

*Here's to Life* is more than a song on Cooke's CD; it's its theme. Although the liner notes give merely a glimpse of the experiences that formed her (including a black-and-white photo of Cooke singing during a talent contest at the age of twelve), like many other singers, she has wrapped up all of her life's lessons in her music. And Cooke has chosen her repertoire accordingly. "With a Song in My Heart" emerges as a light-hearted samba, and even so, Cooke engagingly finds occasion for increasing volume, excitement creeping into the buoyancy, as she sings "I would see life through."

The liner notes don't explain how or why Cooke chose to record in both Los Angeles and New York studios, where she worked with top-shelf musicians like Paul Kreibich, David Lahm or Matt Wilson. Still, the results are similar, even as they are different. The continuity of the recording arises from the charms of Cooke's voice. Accordingly, the musicians fill in the roles of accompanists, tastefully emerging to contribute their own solos that advance the music, such as West Coast pianist Dick Shreve's tasty development in the middle of his own composition, "Bourbon Rain."

*Here's to Life* is a sleeper CD from a singer whose interpretations of its songs, varied and imaginative, no doubt will spark interest among its listeners and, with any luck at all, will lead to Lainie Cooke's second CD.

### **Music-Tech.Net - Indie Artist Showcase Review**

#### **\*\*\*\* Four Stars**

Burning jazz sidemen like pianist Ted Firth and bassist Cameron Brown help make cabaret singer Lainie Cooke live up to her last name. Stylish delivery makes "Bye Bye Blackbird" and the title track of "Here's To Life."

### **Cadence - September 2003**

#### **Alan Bargebuhr**

On her cover, Lainie Cooke seems strangely contorted, in danger of rolling backwards, in fact, and hitting her head. She's laughing, probably wondering why she let herself get talked into such an awkward position. Pianist, arranger, Dick Shreve leads a California trio (Maize, Kreibich) for five of Lainie Cooke's tracks. Her supple soprano shows surprising warmth and ample dynamic range as she correctly identifies Johnny Mercer's "Quit" lyric (Jimmy Rowles wrote the music) for the erotic tease it's meant to be. Her melodic variations on "Magic," make it a far more personal story than the familiar Doris Day version, as nice as Doris' version was ... and still is. The trio really cooks on a propulsive "Close," with some convincing scat by Lainie. Bob Maize's resounding bass is strong in support. She gives "In My Heart," a lavishly open, rhapsodic reading, with Peter Woodford's guitar added to the rhythm ensemble. Is that a bit of

vocalese overdubbing at the very end? It's a welcome little touch. "Bourbon" is a Shreve original, a boilerplate saloon song with a better lyric than the title suggests. Lainie sells it, and I bought it...greedily. The East Coast trio, with Tedd Firth on piano, is just as solid as the West. Joey Morant adds some deliciously smeary trumpet to "Found Out" and "Blackbird," and Lainie lives her "Life," with Cameron Brown's powerful bass tones behind her, as well as Matt Wilson's subtle drum accents bristling athwart. Her joy is infectious and quite a contrast to Shirley Horn's dolefully halting take (3/93, p.86) on the same song. Lainie undresses "Nearness" melodically, with Cameron Brown her only accompanist and together they make it a dazzling pas de deux.

Another duet follows as David Lahm takes over at the piano for his only appearance on the disc, acting as the singer's sole support for a gorgeous reading of "Sea." This would seem to suggest another New York recording date entirely, but with only one track to show for it? One wonders what that was all about. The Firth trio returns for a boppish "As Long," with Lainie indicating a certain regard for Anita O'Day's way of disregarding time lines. The grand finale is an all-stops-out version of Cole Porter's "Do It," on which Ms. C. does not shy away from the "Chanticleer" verse, and in so doing would seem to compliment her audience on their acquaintance with Chaucer. An exciting and beautifully executed debut CD, from a singer who's been on the scene for some twenty years without making a recording. Thankfully, she finally has, and it was well worth the wait. One note-which may clear up some confusion about the tune, "Don't Quit Now." It's usually listed as "Baby, Don't You Quit Now," as on Carol Sloane's and Ella Fitzgerald's recordings of same. But, just to add to the confusion, according to Vol. 19, pg. R685 of the Lord Discography, when Rowles himself recorded the tune, it came up titled simply, "Baby Don't Quit Now." All titles, however, lead to the same tune. The lyrics themselves would seem to validate the Sloane and Fitzgerald versions of said title.

## **The Jazz Connection 0100**

### **Phil McCarthy**

Being a bi-coastal artist for many years it is appropriate that Lainie Cooke's first ever recording features players from New York and Los Angeles. Both sets of musicians support Lainie beautifully. Her interpretations of this tasty selection of tunes shows that not only is she concerned with lyrics but, more importantly, melodic and musical structure. From Cameron Brown's bass support on "The Nearness of You" to the CD title song "Here's to Life" it is evident that Lainie Cooke is in command of the lyrics and music. It is always a danger when doing familiar standards that what we hear are trite expressions. Not so here. Lainie Cooke makes us hear these tunes newly. We also hear "Bourbon Rain", an original by Dick Shreve rarely recorded before, delivered as comfortably as any other standard. Lainie's magic is hearing new avenues of presentation and phrasing. It's like having Thanksgiving dinner at a friends. The dishes are all familiar but the recipes are different. This big talent in a small package presents her voice powerfully and with confidence. Her choice of musicians on both coasts proves her commitment to Jazz. Very jazzy arrangements!!

It is surprising that this is Lainie's first recorded material. You would think that in 20

years someone in one of the studios she worked for as a 'voice' over artist would have discovered her other vocal abilities. Our only hope is that we hear more from Lainie both on disc and in live performance. If you want to know what Jazz singing is all about catch Lainie Cooke whenever you can.

### **LA Jazz Scene**

#### **Jim Santella**

The power in her voice gives Lainie Cooke an advantage over the competition. She swings a program of familiar songs but what makes her performance stand out is that these interpretations are all her own. Everything in her vocal style turns out fresh new and exciting. Cooke has talent.

#### **Harvey Siders (email to Marty Morgan - PRPlus)**

I can't possibly recall what I wrote about her in the last Millennium; I only know I dug the quality of her voice, I believed in her and I was so impressed by her intonation and phrasing. Nothing has changed regarding her talents or my reactions. I think it's a great album.

What knocks me out is that she is absolutely fearless whenever she is confronted by a bar line. She's so confident about her sense of time. And if words get in the way, she simply dispenses with them. I've always hated "It's Magic," because if the singer follows the songwriter's original notes, it becomes a sing-songy bore. Ah, but Lainie breathes new life in it. At times she re-writes it and improves it. (I guess that's what improvisation is all about.) She does the same kind of embroidery on "Nearness of You" and it's so refreshing. "As Long As I Live" just began and her entrance almost made me fall off the chair. She has such a perky musical sense of humor. Also...why don't more singers do Johnny Mandel's tune, "Shining Sea?" I only heard it once before, done as an instrumental. and besides, why haven't heard Joey Morant play before? the trumpeter is on only two tracks, but he also has a jazzman's sense of humor.

(ooh, what a nice modulation in "With A Song in My Heart.") You don't mind the real time comments do you? Hey dig that fade out (same tune)...great place to try some overdubbing. Oh I'm so glad she's included the intro to "Let's Fall in Love." Wow! Did you hear her last note? If my piano's in tune, that was a high C#!!! And she got up there seamlessly. Talk about seamless...I cannot discern the slightest difference between recording techniques in L.A. and N.Y. She MUST have used her own mike on both sessions. I love the CD. Thanks so much for sending it to me. Nice bass intro on "Blackbird" I just repeated that track because of the bass, Lainie, and that trumpeter. I'm glad it's the longest track; everyone was up for that one. See how he sneaked in "It's Been A Long Long Time?"

Harvey

**O's Place Jazz Newsletter**

**Oscar Groomes**

**[www.OsPlaceJazz.com](http://www.OsPlaceJazz.com)**

Lainie breathes lots of life through these dozen classic jazz ballads. Along with the title track, there's "Close Your Eyes", an upbeat arrangement of "Let's Do It" and "Bye Bye BlackBird". The surrounding trio (quartet on track 10) is solid as a rock allowing Cooke to fully express her celebration.

**Jerry L. Atkins**

**DJ - Texarkana, Texas**

She's enthusiastic, innovative and romantic. My favorite track here is the not often heard "Shining Sea". Certainly she loves bass that is prominent in most of the well-done charts. Beautiful CD packaging. I hear and appreciate everything about this unique vocal album.

**Dr. Mike Matheny, Music Director, radioio**

"Great music... great voice...great delivery...glad you sent the cd our way love Morant on the trumpet...congrats on such talent.

**Live**

**Dan Ingram, WABC, WCBS-FM New York**

"As a disk jockey, I have been known for having an "ear". The many times I have seen Lainie perform prove that she continues to fill my "ear" with incredibly good taste, superb performance, presentation and a sophisticated sensual delivery. Go! See! Hear!! Enjoy!!!!

**Bob Edwards, XM Radio**

"With the cool of her native Minnesota and the grown-up sass of her present New York, Lainie Cooke swings."

**New York Post**

"Tonight Lainie Cooke returns with a straightforward jazz intonation and good, clear tones. But most of all there's a luscious optimism surrounding her...Cooke's ballads celebrate the joy of love and not its lack."

**LA Daily News**

"When a singer can cut through the ambience that overcomes the jetliners, you are talking about a powerful pair of long...such a joyful noise...She can hold a note--clear and piercing--until the vibrato emerges and at no time does the intonation waver. It is fullbodied, even in falsetto--something she proved as she romped through Aint Misbehavin', improvising with all the poise of an instrumentalist."

**Variety**

"Cooke exhibited smooth control and a jazzy way with phrasing. Radiating poise at every juncture, she has an especially good upper register, which she uses sparing but to good dramatic effect."

## **LA Jazz Scene**

"Lainie Cooke at Chadney's...clearly, on ballads, the expressive singer excels...subtle improvising a little reminiscent of Anita O'Day and she has a strong sense of humor."

## **Music Connection**

"Cooke sticks mostly to standard adding a personal touch with her phrasing. She is a diminutive professional whose husky, strong voice is best featured on up-tempo tunes. She has an impressive upper register which she employs to good effect in a style at times resembling Ella's."

## **Lainie Cooke Holiday Concert Celebration:**

### **Dec 3rd event review**

**Posted Dec 8, 2004 at 7:28 PM**

Her Band:

Roland Barber, trombone

Tedd Firth, piano

Martin Wind, bass

Peter Grant, drums

There's something to be said about talking to strangers, because that's how I heard about this gig. The trombone player, Mr. Roland Barber, caught wind of the Jazz Group's conversation at our meetup back in November, and he suggested I check out Lainie Cooke and I'm glad I did. After a cold wait outside of The Triad, surrounded by what was obviously the faithful Lainie fan, we were ushered to the third floor into what was a deep (but not particularly wide) club. I was one table away from the stage, sharing a table with two gentlemen who, like myself, had never heard Lainie sing live.

The gig didn't start at 8:30 PM, but when it did start it was with a somewhat slow jog with Ellington into "It Don't mean a thing" (If it Ain't got that swing). A very nice bass solo started and out came Lainie. First impression is, without a doubt she is diminutive, but over the evening it was obvious her tiny body holds a big voice. The night was called a "Holiday Concert Celebration" and was thematic of holidays throughout the year. Lainie made this fun for her friends and general audience as she took us through some of the most popular holidays, including ones she didn't particularly like. Fun, yet powerful as she started with "Living the Life I Love". Something about her inflection put me in the mind of Carmen McRae and I was delighted with her between-song chatter.

Next up was a completely swinging version of "To Life, Lachaim!" as she covered Chanukah first and then surprised us with a play on words by doing a Billie Holiday song, "When a woman loves a man." I liked the trombone player's chops on this one, and Lainie made the song her own; no B.S. karaoke styling of Billie, (thank you very much!) She then moved onto Christmas doing an absolutely fantastic version of Frank Foster's "Shiny Stockings"

but with entirely different lyrics that had me grinning with delight. (Basically, the premise is that regular stockings on the mantel is a waste of time when you could impress Santa wearing a nice pair of shiny stockings.) In that moment, I was duly impressed with how enchantingly charming she is as a live performer, singing or talking to the audience.

She had a hilarious, laugh-out-loud bit of chatter, wherein she makes it crystal clear how New Year's Eve is, to put it politely, an acquired taste and not one of her favorite holidays, and then launched into one of my favorite New Year's Eve songs (although an unsurprising choice) "What are you doing, New Year's Eve". There was a robust piano solo, with the entire song having a bossa nova back beat that was an unusual but nice touch. The rest of the quartet (piano, drums, bass) framed Lainie and the trombone, making a nice segue for her to start swinging again.

Valentine's Day was next (another funny bit of patter for this, as she espoused her displeasure with a holiday that points out when you don't have a significant other), with "Answer me my love", bluesy in tone. Roland with the skillful use of a mute made the trombone weep in sympathy (wa, wa, wa) with the sad lyrics.

Easter was up next with "Easter Parade", where the piano player got to shine and the bass player went from his fingers to the bow and wowed the crowd. Covering Mother's and Father's day in one song (which turns out to be the song she does every show) "Bye, Bye Black Bird" was next as a sentimental reminder of how she sang with her mother. She put in some clean and melodic scatting on this one, as intro for a trombone solo. A nice and tight drum solo followed, that hinted that the drummer could blow you away effortlessly, but just wanted to impress you a little.

The 4th of July was up next with a medley of "It's a grand ole flag" and "Yankee Doodle Dandy" that should have had one cringing - but Lainie can do "Broadway Jazz" effortlessly, even if she doesn't have a 20 piece orchestra backing her up. I thought to myself she reminded me of a clean and sparkling Liza, and in retrospect my notes revealed she'd covered a bunch of tunes Garland had done too (Easter Parade, and the fact she ended on Christmas doing "Have Yourself a Merry, Merry Christmas").

Lainie went out big with "Let it Snow" and I made a mental note that I'd be looking out for more concerts from her in 2005. I give the evening an 8 out of 10 with points off for the bit of an ouch on the bill (15% gratuity+tax on the 2 drink minimum) and the 20 minute wait in the cold to get in.

Cheers,

Deidre

NYC Jazz Group Organizer

### **Twirlie Awards Nomination**

**Dick Crockett -"The Voice" 88.7fm**

**Sacramento, CA**

THE TWIRLIES are a celebration of subjectivity, partiality and achievement in jazz

performance and composition every year. Congratulations Lainie Cooke on your nomination for 2005 Best Lady Vocalist. You are honored for your work in a world wide Pantheon of jazz vocalists who communicate a love for life through their joy and music. Best from the Academie of Jazz Twirlie!