

LISA WAHLANDT

WOWOWONDER

No worries, folks – this singer, whose voice we have been loving for quite some years now, has not developed a stutter, now that she also writes her own lyrics. **Wowowonder**, the title of Lisa Wahlandt's new CD, is not indicating a speech impairment. It's just that Ms. Wahlandt, well, yes, that she wonders.

She wonders at life, to put it broadly, wonders at love – lo-lo- love – in the sweetly, joyously skipping title song, wonders at the oh so common, yet for ever wondrous story of boy meets girl meets boy meets girl ..., including, quite naturally, the follow-up: girl becomes a mother. The loving, working mother of a Little Boy Child, as in fact Ms. Wahlandt is by now.

Could there be a nicer way for us, the singer's audience, to share that experience than in this finely crafted, uplifting swing tune with driving brush work on the drums, solid

walking bass and a piano solo respectfully quoting both The Count and The Duke?

Round about half the 14 songs on Lisa Wahlandt's latest installment are originals. She has tried her hand on songwriting before, yet never to such an extent. "I'd like to have that poet's gene", she says, "like Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Cohen ..." That's reaching high, of course. But then again, stretch and strain is what the true artist must do, per *aspera ad astra*, as the classic saying goes. And apropos stretching: To come up, as Ms. Wahlandt does self-mockingly in "She Devil From The Suburbs", with lyrics that rhyme "tight stretch pants" with "DVD's of Bruno Ganz" – that's a feat well worthy of the best in the songwriter's trade.

She has the gift of spotting the telling details in our lives, and of connecting the dots in such a way that we feel both caught and amused, but never let down. It's a grown woman's wisdom that speaks to us, of love, friendship, motherhood, of life's losses and life's joys.

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And it's a genuine poet's talent that enables Ms. Wahlandt to leave room in her lyrics, at the right moment, for us to fill out the blanks with our own, personal imagination – as in the beautiful and mysterious ballad “Birdy”.

Once again in Lisa Wahlandt's oeuvre, the new CD is an entertaining and surpriseful composite of contemporary musical styles, from Jazz to World- music to songwriter pop. Seemingly disparate musical elements find together and form an artistic entity, including free-floating, syllable-bend- ing vocal improvisations; a heart- warming rendition of Dylan's soulful „Oh,Sister” (how glad we are to be reminded of this nugget and its time!); and including even a Beatles song: “Norwegian Wood”, in a version so daring in its tonal jumpyness and rhythmic indetermination that the singer's peer Joni Mitchell actually might tip her hat.

Ms. Wahlandt's piano trio does a great job through- out. There is a feeling of friendship shining through the music, of friendship human as well as artistic. “Sometimes”, says the singer, “bands are like lovers ...

“Very nice, Ms. Wahlandt, we appreciate that. Keep it up! Keep it going, your singing, your songwriting, your music, your generous sharing of insights and fallouts. For now, you let us off the hook, in the CD's last song “Ocean”, with a cheerful Samba – Sa-sa-samba – beat. May we, please, take this as a promise for more.

Rüdiger Dilloo (freier Journalist)