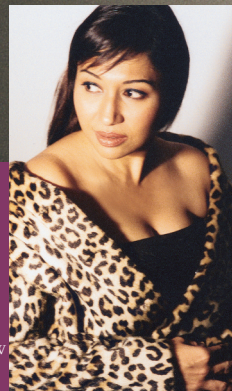
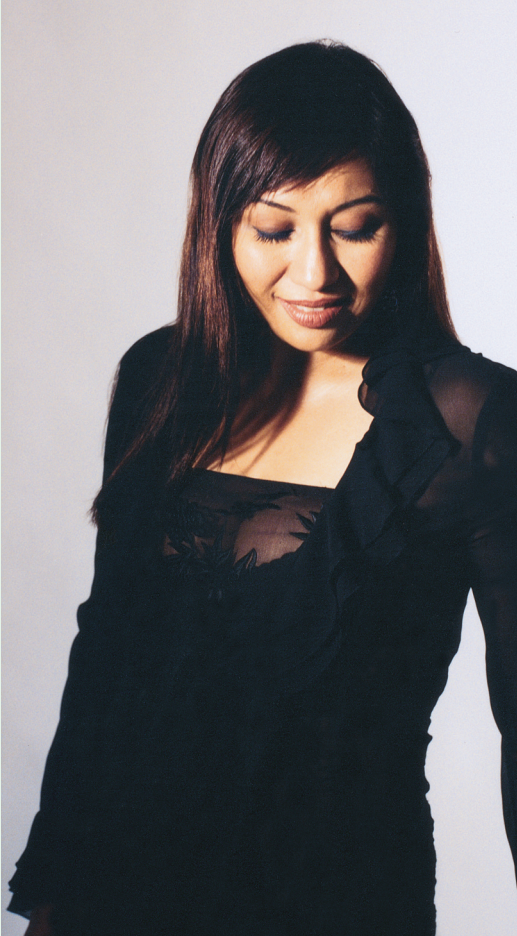




Jacintha
lush life

1. *The Boulevard Of Broken Dreams*
(DUBIN, WARREN)
WARNER BROTHERS INC., ASCAP 4:55
2. *Black Coffee*
(F BURKE, P WEBSTER)
SONDOT MUSIC CORP., WEBSTER MUSIC CO.,
ASCAP 6:39
3. *Summertime*
(GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN, D HAYWARD)
WB MUSIC GROUP, GERSHWIN MUSIC, ASCAP
6:13
4. *Lush Life*
(BILLY STRAYHORN)
TEMPO MUSIC INC. ASCAP 6:19
5. *Manha De Carnaval*
(L. BONFA, L. CREATORE, A. DEMORAES,
H. PERETTI, G. WEISS) MUSIC SALES CORP.,
ANNE-RACHEL MUSIC CORP., ASCAP 6:10
6. *The Shadow Of Your Smile*
(J. MANDEL, P WEBSTER)
EMI MUSIC, MARRISSA MUSIC, ASCAP 5:12
7. *When We Were Young*
(P BLOCH, J. MERCER, A. VANNIER)
CRITERION MUSIC, ASCAP 8:23
8. *September Song*
(M. ANDERSON, K. WEILL)
HAMPSHIRE HOUSE PUBLISHING CORP., ASCAP
5:09
9. *Harlem Nocturne*
(EARL HAGEN)
SHAPIRO BERNSTEIN CO., ASCAP 6:20
10. *Smile*
(C. CHAPLIN, PARSONS, PHILLIPS)
ASCAP 2:17



VOCALS: **JACINTHA**

PIANO AND ALL STRING ARRANGEMENTS: **BILL CUNLIFFE**

BASS: **DAREK OLES**

DRUMS: **JOE LABARBERA**

FLUGELHORN: **DMITRI MATHENY** ON SUMMERTIME, THE SHADOW OF YOUR SMILE, SEPTEMBER SONG AND HARLEM NOCTURNE (DMITRI MATHENY APPEARS COURTESY OF MONARCH RECORDS)

GUITAR: **ANTHONY WILSON** ON BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS, THE SHADOW OF YOUR SMILE, MANHA DE CARNIVAL AND SEPTEMBER SONG

ACCORDION: **FRANKIE MAROCCO** ON BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS

VIOLINS:

PETER KENT (CM)

NORM HUGHES

JOHN WITTENBERG

GINA KRONSTADT

EDDIE STEIN

SUSAN CHATMAN

VIOLAS:

VIRGINIA FRAZIER

MARIUM MAYER

RENETA KOVEN

CELLI:

RUDI STEIN

PEGGY BALDWIN

HARP:

AMY SHULMAN

Might as well admit my bias: Jacintha has become one of my favorite living female vocalists. I initially came across her work when my friend Paul Seydor, a senior writer for The Absolute Sound, gave me a copy of her first Groove Note album *Here's to Ben*, a tribute to legendary tenor saxophonist Ben Webster. I don't know which impressed me more: the lushness of her voice or the vividness of her interpretations. My enthusiasm intensified with her second Groove Note album *Autumn Leaves: The Songs of Johnny Mercer*, which I reviewed. I likened my experience to being the last person in a small jazz club where she creates a direct link among her, the microphone, and the listener. The immediacy is uncommon. The sound of her breathing, which would be intrusive

in other singers, is so sensuous that it adds to the beauty of her voice. The perfection of her diction is so palpable that you don't just hear the words—you feel their significance.

Now, in her third Groove Note album *Lush Life*, she sounds even more sensuous while a new musical background “strings” has been added to what so far has been a compact jazz-group accompaniment. Although jazz and strings aren't often paired, they can go together nicely. Clifford Brown worked with them. So have Charlie Parker, Ben Webster, Ella Fitzgerald, and Shirley Horn, to name a few great jazz interpreters of the American song book. But these are strings with a difference, thanks to Bill Cunliffe's remarkable arrangements. A pianist and a composer, Cunliffe received a classical musical education at Duke University before switching to jazz.

That's worth emphasizing because few jazz musicians have had that kind of formal training, and of those, even fewer (Oscar Peterson, one of Cunliffe's influences, comes to mind) have been able to take the lessons of classical music and successfully blend them with the intuition and spontaneity that jazz demands.

About *Lush Life*, Cunliffe has said that his purpose was to reimagine some of the effects that Rachmaninoff, Vaughn Williams, and Delius created, hiding poetic dissonance in the lushness. The haunting quality in many of the chords owes to his fascination with the pre-modern Dorian scale. He aims for other coloristic effects by occasionally featuring a guitar, a flugelhorn, and an accordion. Listen to the latter's wow of a tango solo on “Boulevard of Broken Dreams.”

Despite the number and unusual



complement of instruments, the intimacy of Jacintha's voice is not lost. Occasionally she allows herself to project, hinting at the strength that she otherwise carefully modulates (perhaps the musical equivalent of Hemingway's ice-berg theory about writing, in which she demonstrates only one-eighth of what her voice can do). In part, she achieves this paradoxical power-within-intimacy through a way of breathing that wraps the words around the microphone and creates the impression that she's directly in front of the listener.

While many of these songs have been associated with other vocalists "September Song," "The Shadow of Your Smile," and "When the World Was Young," with Sinatra, for example, Jacintha has a way of making them her own. Her version of "Smile" eschews the traditional

"everything's going to be okay" approach in favor of a fresh dramatic interpretation that is heart-breaking in its soul-weariness, concluding before the end of the last line, as if the character she is portraying can't manage the effort to sing the final bitter word.

An even more striking example of the way she can make us feel we're hearing a familiar lyric for the first time is evident in the piece that gives this album its title, Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life." Its complex phrasing, both verbal and musical, makes it one of the most difficult, particularly during its long introduction. Many singers have had trouble with the song because they try to do it too fast. Ella Fitzgerald barely keeps the pace under control. A bootleg album of Sinatra's out-takes has the master struggling with a speedy tempo until he finally throws up his

hands in defeat. Here, Jacintha masters the song's technical challenges by performing it with deliberate slowness, drawing out each measure, savoring the verbal and musical turns of phrase. Although sung, her version has the effect of a dramatic monologue and is for me definitive. Like this album, it deepens with emotion and meaning each time I hear it.

—DAVID MORRELL

(David Morrell's best-selling thrillers include The Brotherhood of the Rose, The Fifth Profession, Extreme Denial, and First Blood, the novel in which Rambo was created. A former musician, he contributes essays to The Absolute Sound, most recently on Frank Sinatra and Nelson Riddle.)



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