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Carol Kidd Nigel Clark

tell
me
once
again



stormy weather

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moon blue

Stevie Wonder & Akosua Busia (EMI Music Publishing Ltd / Stevland Morris Music)

Alfie

Burt Bacharach & Hal David (Sony / ATV Harmony)

once in a while

Michael Edwards & Bud Green (EMI United Partnership Ltd)

tell me once again

Carol Kidd & Nigel Clark (Copyright Control)

he won't send roses

Jerry Herman (Chappell-Morris Ltd)

moon river

Henry Mancini & Johnny Mercer (Sony / ATV Harmony)

I got lost in his arms

Irving Berlin (Chappell Music Ltd)

you don't know me

Cindy Walker & Eddy Arnold (Carlin Music Corp)

I loves you Porgy

George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin, DuBose Heyward & Dorothy Heyward (Warner Chappell Limited)

the shadow of your smile

Johnny Mandel & Paul Webster (EMI United Partnership Ltd)

the end of a love affair

Edward C Redding (Universal / MCA Music Limited)

Carol Kidd Nigel Clark *guitar*

Recorded at Castlesound Studios, Pencaitland, UK from 1 – 3 February 2010

Produced and Engineered by Calum Malcolm

Mixed by Calum Malcolm and Philip Hobbs

Post-production by Julia Thomas, Finesplice, UK

Design by John Haxby

Photography by Robert Black and William Ellis

tell me once again

I am a sucker for a jazz duo. Really. Offer me a big band with a handful of fantastic players or two world-class musicians performing duets, and I'll plump for the duo every time. There is no more intimate setting – and no context which demands more from either musician. It's more intense, it makes them more vulnerable – there's nowhere to hide, after all – and, with the right combination, it can be absolutely magical.

Anyone who has been to a Carol Kidd concert in the last twenty years will know that a guaranteed highlight is the point in the evening when the stage clears, the lights dim and the audience hushes to pin-drop levels as the singer embarks on a duet with her long-time guitarist Nigel Clark. In fact, those of us who savour their sublime musical rapport have been waiting for this recording for a very long time.

It may have been obvious to everyone else that they should make a duo album, but it never occurred to Carol and Nigel until Linn Records suggested it. One song in particular triggered that suggestion: '**Moon River**'. Carol recalls, "*We did a gig in Edinburgh last year and they said that they thought that that duo number was the strongest part of the whole show, so how about doing an album*".

The dreamy Henry Mancini-Johnny Mercer ballad, written for Audrey Hepburn to sing (with just guitar) in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, was still a relatively recent addition to the Kidd-Clark repertoire. They first performed it with singer JJ Gilmour at a charity concert at Glasgow's Oran Mor in April 2008 and it stopped the show. It was such a perfect song for Carol – and one she had long loved, but never sung.

"JJ was the one who suggested '**Moon River**' – not being a jazz singer, he didn't want to do something that was too jazzy", says Carol. "And it just worked, so well, with just guitar." It was at an all-star Johnny Mercer concert at the Glasgow Jazz Festival in June 2009 that '**Moon River**' was established as a new Carol Kidd signature song; up there with her trademark '**When I Dream**'. The duo's heartbreakingly lovely performance of it prompted a visibly moved Sir Michael Parkinson to comment that, "*You'd have to travel a very long way to hear a better singer*".

With '**Moon River**' in the bag, so to speak, Carol and Nigel had to put together a selection of songs that would work individually as duo numbers – and collectively as an album. One of the things that leaps out from the end result is that the songs

each phrase just came to me. I could hear Carol's voice in my head singing it, even though she'd never heard the melody before. It was one of those ones where you think 'somebody else is doing this', and it took me twenty minutes to get it the way it is now."

"We call it our little opera because it is quite complicated", laughs Carol. "It goes into so many changes, but again it's a story and that's what's important about it for me." The pair's confidence in their first collaboration shot up when they tried it out at Glasgow's Cafe Cossachok, where Nigel has a regular gig. "The reaction was fantastic", recalls Carol. "I was worried about how we were going to hold their attention because, being an original, they wouldn't know it but they loved it - I guess because they could relate to it. And of course they were getting it straight from the horse's mouth!"

Audience reaction clearly plays a huge part in the decisions that the duo has made about its repertoire - after all, Carol and Nigel are in a sort of cocoon when they're working together, so they welcomed the chance to gauge listeners' responses. Their exquisite recording of **'Once In a While'** - which stands up alongside Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass's version - would quite simply not exist had it not been for a St Andrews audience being blown away by their first public performance of it.

Carol's initial reaction when she listened back to this CD for the first time was, *"I don't sound young anymore!"* Certainly the coquettish Kidd from her earliest albums is not so much in evidence, but age and experience bring with them a richer repertoire - and allow the imaginative singer to invest lyrics with deeper emotion as well as, in some cases, another level of meaning.

'He Won't Send Roses' is a stunning example. Carol says, *"That's one I've been doing for years but had never recorded and I was desperate to put it down on disc. Robert Preston sang it to a younger woman in the show Mack and Mabel."* Nigel picks up the plot. *"He's a big Hollywood producer, Mack Sennett, and she's a young star. She falls in love with him, and he's saying 'Don't. Don't do it.'"*

Carol takes the song and sings it from a woman's perspective, an older woman advising a younger woman not to fall in love with a guy who 'won't send roses, won't hold the door'. Nigel laughs, *"It absolutely kills audiences, this song - people relate to it so much. I've watched Carol sing this so many times - she usually does*

it with the piano player, and has usually been joking around just before she sings it - and it's always the same reaction. You've got the guys squirming in their seats and you've got the women, who had been laughing a minute before, and now their smiles evaporate and eyes start to shine. It slaughters the audience!"

Clearly, it's not a song that a young singer could pull off, then. *"For me", says Carol, "this sort of song - about someone who's had a life, who has life experience - is perfect. I have to choose my repertoire very carefully not only because my voice has matured, but also because, with me being older, I have to sing mature songs - like 'Once In a While', which is about someone looking back on a past relationship. I don't want to go out and do throwaway pop songs."*

Mind you, pop songs do feature on this album - though, in this duo's capable hands, they're hardly throwaways. Burt Bacharach and Hal David's theme song from **Alfie** may not be a song readily associated with Carol Kidd, but she has sung it before. *"In the mid-1960s, I was the resident singer on a radio show here in Glasgow. They would bring up all the pop stars of the day - Adam Faith, Mark Winter, the Baron Knights ... whoever was in the charts. They would be the guests, but I'd always do a couple of songs with Peggy O'Keefe's trio. When I did 'Alfie', Peggy just about died - she loved it. When it came to this album, and thinking about songs I'd loved singing years ago but not recorded, this was an obvious choice."*

Nigel needed no convincing, especially once he had done a bit of digging on YouTube. *"I came across this clip of Bacharach singing it at a lifetime achievement awards bash. He sings it at the end - just his husky voice and the piano - and he kills them with it. It's just perfect."*

The Bacharach performance shaped the duo's rendition. Carol explains, *"We thought - that's how we have to do it. Not like a pop song - but just sing it the way it's meant to be sung - very quietly and very emotionally. He sings it so heart wrenchingly, with no fuss. And that's what we decided to do."*

The inclusion of a Stevie Wonder song may surprise some Carol Kidd fans but **'Moon Blue'** is one of the great joys of the album; a gorgeous, typically sunny bossa nova which lifts the mood after Harold Arlen's 'Stormy Weather'. Carol gasps, *"I love 'Moon Blue'. It's so romantic and it fits in with everything we're trying to do."* Another Wonder song was dropped as it would have jarred, mood-wise, with the rest of the

album – but The Stevie Wonder Songbook could well be a future project, as could (or should) a bossa nova album, judging by 'Moon Blue' and by the pair's sumptuously slow performance of **'The Shadow of Your Smile'**.

That song was among several which Nigel and Carol checked out on YouTube, where they found the verse – as they did with 'Stormy Weather'. The classic Harold Arlen-Ted Koehler torch song was one with which they were already familiar, and which Carol had performed regularly in the past. Indeed, after 'Moon River', it was the first song that they decided to include in the album. Carol says, *"I didn't realise it had this verse until I watched the clip of Lena Horne singing it in the original movie Stormy Weather. So I did it with the verse in the middle, like she did it."*

For Nigel, that verse was one of the revelations of this project; *"It's got this great key change. Harold Arlen wrote it so it goes into the key change right in the verse itself, and then when you come out of it, it sounds as if you've gone up a tone, but you haven't – you've come back to the key. It's so clever – a real Jerome Kern-ish touch. I had goose bumps the first time I realised that it was going back to the original key."*

Another revelation is the duo's take on a song that Nigel concedes was *"all Carol's idea"* – **'You Don't Know Me'**. *"Aw, that is great – that song"*, says Carol, eyes sparkling as she admits that she was inspired by crooning pop idol Michael Buble's version. *"I love the Ray Charles recording but I really loved how Michael Buble did it, and I thought it would be a great way to end the session. We'd never played it before but we just had a quick run-through and a wee chat about how we were going to do it. Then we started recording and all of a sudden it just took off. It all came together – and that was it in one take."*

Only Carol and Nigel could possibly be surprised by such one-take wonders, or by the magical moments that run through this album. The rest of us have always known that a Kidd-Clark duo album would be a gem. And that it would be worth the wait...

© Alison Kerr, 2010

Carol Kidd MBE

Carol Kidd is acknowledged in jazz circles as *"Britain's finest ballads singer"* Jazz Review. She has secured the Best Vocalist title at the British Jazz Awards on four separate occasions and, in 1998, received an MBE for Services to Jazz. Over a 25 year period she has released seven studio albums and a 'Best of...' compilation for Linn Records.

Kidd is renowned for her impeccable phrasing and delivery along with an innate ability to breathe fresh life into jazz standards. Throughout her career Kidd has cut a distinctive path through the Great American Songbook with orchestral and trio backing. She is a singer who is admired by contemporaries and fans alike, who enjoys popularity in the Far East and has performed regularly in China and Singapore for over the course of three decades. Indeed, in 1994 she was the first western artist to be invited by the Chinese Government to perform there in 25 years.

Originally based in Glasgow, Carol Kidd began singing professionally at the age of 15 when she joined the West Coast Jazz Band. During a five year period she met, and married, their trombonist George Kidd, who is a formidable name in Scottish jazz circles. The band appeared along with many well known names such as Kenny Ball, Acker Bilk and the Alex Welsh band, and also made guest appearances on local radio.



During the 1970s a musical association with the pianist Sandy Taylor developed. Along with drummer Murray Smith and bassist Alex Moore the trio remained the mainstay of her backing for many years. Kidd's self-titled Linn Records debut album was released in 1984 and it marked the beginning of a long and valued relationship which has helped establish her across the globe.

A long line of admirers included Frank Sinatra, who invited her to open for him at a concert at Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow. During his performance he commented, "*Carol Kidd is the best kept secret of British jazz*". This endorsement from Ol' Blue Eyes gave Kidd the confidence to truly make singing her career. Almost immediately she was invited to appear at the internationally acclaimed Ronnie Scott's Club in London. Tony Bennett was singing in London at the time and he made a point of coming to hear her stating, "*You are world class, where have you been?*".

The late Sir Humphrey Lyttelton was also a fan from early on, commenting on her first album saying, "*If this is her debut, it's fantastic*". Earlier, Annie Ross had invited Kidd to appear on her TV show, stating, "*I love this woman's voice*".

George Shearing, Georgie Fame, Annie Ross, Benny Carter, Joe Temperley, Bobby Watson and Martin Taylor MBE are among the many guest luminaries who have performed with Carol Kidd during her live concerts.

Nigel Clark guitar

Nigel began his professional career as a musician at the age of eighteen. In the late eighties he joined the band Hue & Cry as lead guitarist and he contributed arrangements to the band's several UK top ten singles and two top ten albums. High profile collaborations followed with Moya Brennan (the singer with Clannad) and with jazz singer Carol Kidd. He also worked on BBC TV as musical director and lead guitarist for 'disco diva' Gloria Gaynor. Nigel's first jazz album as a leader, *Worldwide Sound* for Wet Wet Wet guitarist Graeme Duffin's Sienna Records, featured pianist Brian Kellock, saxophonist Tim Garland, Ewen Vernal on bass and Mike Bradley on drums. The album wowed the critics, showcasing Nigel's highly eclectic compositional style, and it reached the top ten in the UK jazz charts.

In 1997 Nigel appeared at the North Sea Jazz Festival as special guest of his boyhood hero: guitarist Jan Akkerman. In Cannes the same year, by special invitation, he performed with Akkerman, Terje Rypdal and Wolfgang Muthspiel in a band featuring eleven of Europe's elite guitarists. The performance was witnessed by Bob Karcy, CEO of New York label Arkadia Records and led to Nigel signing an exclusive five-album recording deal with Arkadia Jazz; Karcy's Grammy-winning label whose roster also included such stellar names as Dave Liebman, Joanne Brackeen, Benny Golson and Dr. Billy Taylor. *Grand Hotel Europa*, Nigel's first CD release in the U.S., featured five original compositions and marked a permanent switch to nylon-strung acoustic guitar.

Nigel's most recent projects have included a duo concert with another of his boyhood heroes: the legendary Belgian guitarist Philip Catherine. He has toured extensively and recorded four CDs with the Scottish Guitar Quartet and has also toured with Australian vocalist Anita Wardell, and with pianist Dave Newton and bassist Paul Morgan in a tribute to the Oscar Peterson Trio. Nigel is a permanent member of Russian Gypsy violinist Oleg Ponomarev's trio Koshka, with whom he continues to tour and with whom he has recorded two CDs. With Dutch jazz violinist Tim Kliphuis, Nigel has recorded three CDs to date and performed with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra in Amsterdam in November 2010.

