



ANGELA HAGENBACH

*The Way They
Make Me Feel*



The Way They Make Me Feel

► **No, nobody asked me.** Singer Angela Hagenbach and producer George Klabin made the very intelligent decision to title this album *The Way They Make Me Feel*. I do agree that it's a good title, and it's a clever play on the song *The Way He Makes Me Feel*. The "they" that Angela and George are referring to are Michel Legrand, Johnny Mandel, and the late Henry Mancini—three composer-orchestrators-conductors—all of whom have served as links between the worlds of jazz and Hollywood, whose music she brilliantly addresses in this wonderful album.

Like I say, they didn't ask me. But if they had, my suggestion for a title might have been that of the song which serves as the opening track, Mandel's *Cinnamon and Clove* (which I had previously heard only by Zoot Sims). I can't think of a better way to describe Angela's singing—her music is all *Cinnamon and Clove*, which is to say that she's spicy. She not only has a beautiful voice and strong interpretive prowess, but there's a little something extra—a certain kind of spice and seasoning that makes her singing distinctive.

The track (and the album) opens with what sounds like a New Orleans street parade rhythm—that kind of funky backbeat that seems to turn in on itself—and New Orleans, as is well known, is a place where they know all about spices, musical and otherwise. The horns enter and play a bluesy vamp that gives the proceedings a hard bop feel, and then and only then, nearly 50 seconds into the track, do we hear Angela's *Cinnamon and Clove*-covered voice, and it becomes clear that the mood is not only funky and boppy, but Pan-American. There's a pronounced Latin feel that makes Angela's description of tangerine moons, salty days, and sultry nights—a perfect combination—seem much more vivid.

Yet, now that I think of it, one could also call the album "Summer Me, Winter Me." This surprisingly under-sung gem of a song is notable both for Legrand's sweeping, soaring

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melody and the no-less ambitious, all-encompassing lyrics of the Bergmans. It seems only fitting to accompany almost anyone who sings it (and there haven't been many, after Sinatra and Streisand) with as big an orchestra as possible, and here, Ms. Hagenbach is outfitted with a full string section and a large-scale arrangement by the inspired Kuno Schmid. Both the text and the tune are about big ideas: love is not only expressed in terms of the changing seasons, but the elements. Yet, Ms. Hagenbach is well aware that the song can only work if you make it about the small things—it isn't massive formations of rock hurtling through space, it's the details, like firesides and rainbows.

Legrand's earlier *I Will Wait For You* (English lyric by Norman Gimbel—more from him later) similarly concerns itself with big ideas—she's talking about waiting forever, not just for the next half hour, not just until next Tuesday, not until five o'clock the fifth of June, but forever. But Angela knows that "forever" is almost too big a concept to deal with in a 32-bar song, and, as with *Summer Me*, she makes the text really resonate by concentrating on its small and intimate aspects.

You could say that she makes *Summer Me* and *I Will Wait For You* as personal as Legrand's *His Eyes, Her Eyes*. This theme from *The Thomas Crown Affair* was unfairly overshadowed in that film by the blockbuster *Windmills of Your Mind*, and has been principally recorded by the composer himself—as a vocal (on the 1968 soundtrack album), as a piano solo, and in collaboration with Sarah Vaughan. The Bergmans' lyric is the polar opposite of *Summer Me*, this time it's directly about the small stuff. Legrand and the Bergmans (in their first major score together) don't even want to deal with the entire face—they tell the whole story of a relationship through the eyes alone: "they betray with their eyes everything they are." Even though, as of yet, I haven't had the

pleasure of experiencing Ms. Hagenbach performing in person, I can totally visualize her eyes as she's singing this song. (And, here and *I Will Wait For You*, the use of clarinet and accordion makes the two melodies sound especially French.)

For all of his consistently excellent work over the last 60 years (I know he must shudder to hear that number), Johnny Mandel has had relatively few songs that are widely sung (beyond the pop hit *Shadow of Your Smile* and *Where Do You Start*, which is literally over-sung in New York cabaret rooms). Ms. Hagenbach makes it perfectly clear that *Sure as You're Born* and *Quietly There* (two songs favored by saxophonists, like Zoot Sims, Bill Perkins, and Stanley Turrentine) deserve to be performed more often. *Close Enough for Love*, with Paul Williams's masterful text is a little more familiar, but the song, especially with Angela's restrained vocal, is one that I couldn't possibly get enough of.

The combination of Steve Wilkerson's clarinet and Frank Marocco's accordion again conspires to make *Close Enough for Love* sound distinctly European, in a minor key way. I had grown up assuming that both *Charade* and *Whistling Away the Dark* were French—which meant that Henry Mancini was doing his job, since he was trying to evoke a Parisian atmosphere for films that transpired in that city. You could say that Mancini cheated by setting both of them in $\frac{3}{4}$, but since these represent two of his loveliest and most durable themes, only a naïf would complain. *Charade* is rendered as a swinging jazz waltz, introduced by Angela's scatting, while *Whistling* gets the full ballad and strings treatment. (Thankfully, nobody whistles.)

I have to admit, *The Way He Makes Me Feel* is as great a title song as anyone could ask for; small wonder that Angela and George saved it for last. Like most of the songs in *Yentl*, *The Way He Makes Me Feel* has been largely—and unforgivably—ignored by jazz

instrumentalists and singers. Like the movie itself, Barbra Streisand's iconic performance is largely self-directed (as with most of what she sings). Babs sings it as *The Way He Makes **Me** Feel*, but Angela is much more centered on the idea of love for another person, (i.e. *The Way **He** Makes Me Feel*). I know she makes me feel something with this intimate, romantic reading. Among other responses, one thing I'm feeling is the urge to hear her sing the entire score to *Yentl*; George Klabin, can you hear me?

One last point of debate regarding the album title: you could describe Angela's voice as *Cinnamon and Cloves*, you could talk about the way she makes you feel, but it's also perfectly appropriate to liken her singing—on ballads especially—to a *Slow, Hot Wind*. Mancini and lyricist Norman Gimbel based this 1963 song on an older instrumental tune of the composer's entitled *Lu-jon*, and it's a rare example of an independent Mancini number—not from a film score. Possibly for that reason, *Slow, Hot Wind* (recorded, most notably, by the late Johnny Hartman) is rarely heard. Abetted by Kuno Schmid's luxurious string orchestrations, Angela's singing is certainly slow and inarguably hot. In fact, she embodies the kind of a breeze that heats you up rather than cools you down. Tamir Hendelman captures that same sultry warm feeling in his piano solo; my inevitable response is to turn up the air-conditioning. Whew! Is it hot in here, or is it just me?

– **Will Friedwald**

"And this Angela sings and swings with wisdom and humor. Her musical roots are deeply planted in the best of American popular music."

– **Alan & Marilyn Bergman**

"Having my songs sung along with Henry Mancini and Michel Legrand is wonderful, but the greatest treat is to hear what the beautiful and gifted singer Angela Hagenbach does with them. She sings with perfect taste and sounds like no one else."

– **Johnny Mandel**

Produced by: GEORGE KLABIN

Co-produced by: KUNO SCHMID

Recording Engineers: GEORGE KLABIN & PIERRE PAUL

Mixing: GEORGE KLABIN & JONATHAN JISKRA

Assistant Engineer: FRAN GALA

Cover Design: ANDRÉ PERRY

Photos: PATRICK SCHNEIDER

2xHD Mastering: RENÉ LAFLAMME

2xHD Executive Producer: ANDRÉ PERRY

- ① **Cinnamon and Clove** (J. Mandel) [*] 5:49
- ② **Slow Hot Wind** (H. Mancini) [* *] 5:12
- ③ **Summer Me, Winter Me** (M. Legrand) [* *] 4:44
- ④ **I Will Wait for You** (M. Legrand) [*] 7:36
- ⑤ **Quietly There** (J. Mandel) [* *] 4:20
- ⑥ **Sure as You're Born** (J. Mandel) [* *] 5:09
- ⑦ **Close Enough for Love** (J. Mandel) [*] 6:02
- ⑧ **Charade** (H. Mancini) [*] 5:34
- ⑨ **Whistling Away the Dark** (H. Mancini) [* *] 5:03
- ⑩ **His Eyes, Her Eyes** (M. Legrand) [*] 6:57
- ⑪ **The Way He Makes Me Feel** (M. Legrand) [* *] 4:08

Angela Hagenbach, *vocals*; Tamir Hendelman, *piano*; Kevin Axt, *bass*; Bill Wysaske, *drums*; Steve Wilkerson, *reeds*; Willie Murillo, *trumpet*; Frank Marocco, *accordion*; Larry Koonse, *guitar*; Peter Kent, *concertmaster, violin*.

String section: Sharon Jackson, Vladimir Polamiditi, Cameron Patrick, Shari Zippert, Susan Chatman, Gina Kronstadt, Kathleen Robertson. Arranged by: Tamir Hendelman (*), Kuno Schmid (**). String orchestra arrangements by Kuno Schmid.



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