

KATE MCGARRY THE TARGET



Kate McGarry

The Target

PALMETTO 2125

★★★★

Kate McGarry won converts in Los Angeles in the early 1990s with sure intonation, elastic phrasing and the ability to function as an instrument within the ensemble. Her move to New York in 1998 accelerated a process that has turned the singer into an even more daring improviser and a session leader. A milestone of maturity, *The Target* puts McGarry's own stamp on material with varying origins.

McGarry has developed a liquid sense of time. One of the many "Daughters of Betty" (Carter, that is), McGarry hasn't taken that freedom as license to run hog wild on every tune. No matter how many liberties she takes with meter and interpretation, she exercises a fidelity to the meaning of the song. A rubato "Meaning Of The Blues" floats. Keith Ganz's thoughtful guitar and Gary Versace's probing organ maintain a tension off of which McGarry trampolines. The group joyously breaks bar lines in "No Wonder."

McGarry has the pure, untrammelled voice of an ingénue who finds wonder in the simplest things. She loves slow tempos and usually knows how to adorn them ("It Might As Well Be Spring" is a crystalline gem). She may be the first jazz singer since Mildred Bailey to essay Lerner and Lowe's "The Heather On The Hill," rendering it with unadorned sincerity. Her comfort zone rests in the low-to-medium dynamics, yet she has a bracing forte delivery that she lets loose sparingly. She's comely and soulful on the popping "Do Something," which features Versace's velvety organ and Greg Hutchinson's prodding drums. McGarry has her pop flies, along with the home runs. "Nobody Else But Me" is a chance to swing, but the repeated melisma wears out its welcome. This is a rarity, though, in an album of big hits. —Kirk Silsbee

The Target. The Meaning Of The Blues; No Wonder; It Might As Well Be Spring; Nobody Else But Me; Blue In Green; The Target (Miracles Like These); The Heather On The Hill; Sister Moon; The Lamp Is Low; Do Something; She Always Will; New Love Song. (55:34)

Personnel: Kate McGarry, vocals; Keith Ganz, guitar; Gary Versace, organ; Reuben Rogers, bass; Greg Hutchinson, drums; Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone (6, 9, 11); Theo Bleckmann, voice loops, effects (6).

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