

# La Tanya Hall ...it's about time

Vocals by La Tanya Hall

MUSIC ARRANGED & CONDUCTED BY ANGELO DiPIPP0

1) The Nearness of You (5:06)

MUSIC: HOAGY CARMICHAEL; LYRIC: NED WASHINGTON

DAVE MANN, TENOR SAX

2) Summertime (4:39)

MUSIC: GEORGE GERSHWIN

LYRIC: DUBOSE & DOROTHY HEYWARD, IRA GERSHWIN

ANGELO DiPIPP0, ACCORDION

3) It's All Right With Me (4:05)

MUSIC & LYRIC BY COLE PORTER

DAVE MANN, TENOR SAX

4) Like a Lover (4:13)

MUSIC BY SERGIO MENDES; LYRIC BY ALAN & MARILYN BERGMAN

JAY BERLINER, GUITAR

5) Straighten Up and Fly Right (3:16)

MUSIC & LYRIC BY NAT KING COLE

DAVE MANN, TENOR SAX

6) Skylark (4:01)

MUSIC BY HOAGY CARMICHAEL; LYRIC BY JOHNNY MERCER

7) (It's Gonna Be A) Great Day (2:00)

MUSIC BY VINCENT YOUMANS

LYRIC BY BILLY ROSE & EDWARD ELISCU

DAVE MANN, TENOR SAX

8) I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good) (6:58)

MUSIC & LYRIC BY DUKE ELLINGTON & PAUL FRANCIS WEBSTER

JAY BIANCHI, PIANO; LEO HUPPERT, BASS; DAMON DUEWHITE, DRUMS

9) Bluesette (4:00)

MUSIC & LYRIC BY TOOTS THIELEMANS

DAVE MANN, TENOR SAX

10) You Don't Know What Love Is (4:25)

MUSIC BY GENE DE PAUL; LYRIC BY DON RAYE

DAVE MANN, TENOR SAX

11) Sabor a Mi (4:45)

MUSIC & LYRIC BY ÁLVARO CARRILLO

DAVE MANN, TENOR SAX

12) A Lazy Afternoon (5:50)

MUSIC BY JEROME MOROSS; LYRIC JOHN LATOUCHE

JAY BIANCHI, PIANO; LEO HUPPERT, BASS;

DAMON DUEWHITE, DRUMS, DAVID HEATH, ALTO FLUTE

*It's about time...* For at least ten years, La Tanya Hall has been one of the most recognized but least spotlighted singers in New York. She has literally sung everywhere and with everyone, and I'm never surprised wherever she turns up. One minute she's doing Christmas carols with Michael Feinstein at his annual Holiday show, then the next she's working with producer/singer Steve Tyrell on *The Tonight Show* or at the Blue Note, and then you turn around and she's improvising free-form vocal jazz with the one and only Bobby McFerrin. When ASCAP recently mounted an All-Star Tribute to Quincy Jones, she was on stage for virtually the entire evening, singing with nearly every big name pop and soul star who was ever produced by that legendary impresario. I wasn't remotely surprised to learn that she was a key member of Harry Belafonte's musical family for five years, or that she played the lead in the touring company of *Dream Girls*.

The only thing that La Tanya has done that has caught me completely off guard is that she waited until now to do a solo album. Obviously, she wanted to wait until the time was right, when the opportunity arrived to put together a perfect combination of musical director (the talented

Angelo DiPippo, a triple threat as arranger, conductor, and hot accordianist), a full orchestra combining a jazz big band and strings, and a gallery of first-rate soloists.

*It's About Time* is a wonderful mixture of the fresh and the familiar, a combination of some of the famous samples of the American songbook alongside some not-quite-so-well-known songs. Some of the arrangements are more or less as we would expect them to be – as in the case of her ballad treatment of "Skylark" and her fast swinging version of "It's All Right With Me." Other ideas for charts come from further out of left field, like the undulating bossa nova re-imagining of "Summertime" (with accordion solo by the musical director). But even when Ms. Hall sings a familiar song in a familiar way, she makes it seem new, by virtue of her beautiful contralto and powerful personality.

The fast numbers aren't just big, blasty showpieces but have a considerable amount of nuance: "It's All Right With Me" starts out killer fast, but then slows down dramatically and gets into a very agreeable groove in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, especially in the last eight bars, where she tellingly spaces out the words ("you – can't – know – how...") for maximum effect. "Great Day" is a 1929 show tune (the

kind of song that Mr. Feinstein might have recommended to her) one of the earliest pop songs to use a Church or spiritual model, which she's renders as a modern swinger – even the verse is red, hot and blue.

"Straighten Up And Fly Right" was Nat King Cole's most notable success as a singer-songwriter (the bridge uses "I Got Rhythm" changes), yet even he never sang it with a big band; Ms. Hall and Mr. DiPippo make the tale of the buzzard and the monkey come alive in three dimensions, as if it was being animated by Pixar. "Bluesette," Toots Thieleman's famous jazz waltz, is another subtle swinger. Putting over a love song at a fast tempo is difficult enough as it is, but making it work in 5/4 is even more so – yet Ms. Hall (aided by a tenor saxophone solo from Dave Mann) pulls it off with aplomb.

"Summertime" and "Like A Lover" represent a crafty bit of cultural exchange between the Northern and Southern American hemispheres. The "Porgy and Bess" lullaby is delivered in a Brazilian samba tempo, with the accordion giving it a distinctly Argentine touch. Contrastingly, "Like A Lover" was originally a hit for its composer, Sergio Mendes, in a fast bossa nova, which was catchy but which downplayed the marvelous English lyric by Alan and Marilyn Bergman.

Ms. Hall, accompanied only by the sensitive guitar work of Jay Berliner, keeps something of the South American feeling of "Like A Lover," but her slow, ballad rendition of the text gives the Bergmans everything that they deserve. The third foreign piece here, the Spanish "Sabor a Mi" (heard in the original language) is rendered as a marvelously lush and soulful bolero.

"You Don't Know What Love Is" is another adroit mixer of moods: most singers over the last 45 years do it super-slow a la John Coltrane; Ms. Hall, however, takes the song back to its beginnings in the big band era (as Mr. Feinstein knows well, it was one of many great songs written for Abbott & Costello movies). The Hall-DiPippo treatment of "You Don't Know What Love Is" is louder, faster, brassier, than one would expect, but she takes the Don Raye - Gene DePaul text at its word, showing us how love helps us learn "the meaning of the blues." (Ms. Hall made me notice, for the first time, that "You Don't Know What Love Is" inspired an equally great later jazz classic, Bobby Troup's "The Meaning Of The Blues").

As far as slow ballads go, the standouts are two uber-classic love songs by Hoagy Carmichael. "The Nearness Of You," (with a lyric by the under-rated Ned

Washington) uses the song's bridge as a rubato verse, leading to a stunning reading of the chorus by Ms. Hall with Mr. D's strings. Apart from steady bass support from Dave Fink, there's another excellent tenor obligato and solo from Mr. Mann. Now normally, in the past few years, I run from "Skylark" (with Johnny Mercer's classic lyric), which is one of the all-time greatest American popular songs, but a song that I've just heard too many times recently. Yet La Tanya, assisted by what must be Angelo's most superlatively lovely string orchestration, overcomes my bias. She restores its meaning to me, showing that Johnny Mercer knew well what Emily Dickinson was talking about when she told us that hope was the thing with feathers. La Tanya makes me believe all over again that it's worthwhile to pin one's hopes on a bird, for what is a skylark, after all, but a kind of carrier pigeon of dreams.

*Will Friedwald is jazz (and cabaret) critic for The New York Sun and the author of seven books on music and popular culture.*

*What a Journey* this has been! A year ago, I was having a conversation with my father about this project and he commented, "Well, it's about time!" And he couldn't have been more right. This album came about at the right time with the right people, and to all of them I must give a heartfelt thanks. To my mother (the great singer), my father (the great pianist) and to the great one above – thank you for all the gifts you have bestowed upon me. To Dr. Renato Berroya and Angelo DiPippo – this truly would not have happened without your generosity and tremendous talent. I will be eternally grateful for both of you in my life. To all the fantastic artists I have had the pleasure and honor of working/touring with over the years – I have learned so much from you along the way. To all my friends who continually encouraged me when I felt like giving up – you're the best and I'm so blessed you're in my life. And last, but not least, to Becky and Dave Starobin and the fabulous staff at Bridge Records – thank you for having the vision to take on this project and support it wholeheartedly. I love you all!

– La Tanya

**Angelo DiPippo** has recorded and concertized with Peggy Lee, Billy Eckstine, James Earl Jones, Judy Collins, Harry Belafonte, Robert Merrill, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, Randy Newman, Theodore Bikel, Don Sebesky, Frankie Avalon, Skitch Henderson and many others. His appearances include The Newport Jazz Festival, The Tonight Show, The Today Show, The Regis Philbin Show, The New York City Ballet, The New York Pops, Birdland, Cafe Bohemia and other venues. Angelo DiPippo was voted the best accordionist in the *Keyboard Magazine* poll. Angelo can be seen and heard playing accordion in the wedding scene of "The Godfather".

## Orchestra personnel

**Chuck Wilson**  
soprano sax, alto sax  
flute, clarinet

**Gary Keller**  
tenor sax, flute  
alto flute, clarinet

**Dave Mann**  
tenor sax

**Al Regni**  
piccolo, flute, alto flute  
clarinet, bass clarinet  
alto sax

**Dave Rickenberg**  
flute, clarinet  
baritone sax

**Richard Heckman**  
oboe

**Glenn Drewes**  
trumpet  
flugelhorn

**Don Downs**  
trumpet  
flugelhorn

**Kevin Osborne**  
trombone

**George Flynn**  
trombone

**Barry Finclair**  
violin

**Richard Sortomme**  
violin

**Ann Leathers**  
violin

**Carol Pool**  
violin

**Shinwon Kim**  
violin

**Pauline Kim**  
violin

**Stephanie Cummins**  
cello

**Arthur Fiacco**  
cello

**David Finck**  
bass

**Jay Bianchi**  
piano

**Jay Berliner**  
guitar

**Ron Zito**  
drums

**Mauro Refosco**  
percussion

**Angelo DiPippo**  
accordion, conductor  
arranger

Producer: Angelo DiPippo

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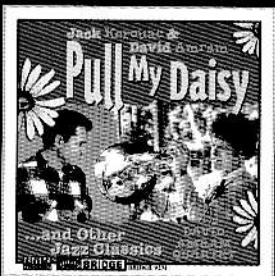
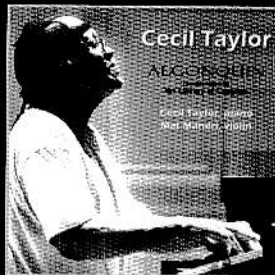


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