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 **BRIDGE**[®]
BRIDGE 9430

GOT A LITTLE RHYTHM



AMY BURTON, SOPRANO PATRICK MASON, BARITONE
JOHN MUSTO, PIANO

GOT A LITTLE RHYTHM

Amy Burton, soprano • Patrick Mason, baritone • John Musto, piano

- 1) Fascinating Rhythm (2:12)
Music: George Gershwin • **Lyrics:** Ira Gershwin
Amy Burton, Patrick Mason and John Musto
- 2) A Wish (3:26)
Music: Fred Hersch • **Lyrics:** Norma Winstone
Amy Burton and John Musto
- 3) Little Jazz Bird (2:47)
Music: George Gershwin • **Lyrics:** Ira Gershwin
Patrick Mason and John Musto
- 4) Tale of the Oyster (3:22)
Music: Cole Porter • **Lyrics:** Cole Porter
Amy Burton and John Musto
- 5) All Through the Day (2:41)
Music: Jerome Kern • **Lyrics:** Oscar Hammerstein II
Patrick Mason and John Musto



Composer/pianist **John Musto's** catalogue embraces virtually every musical genre: orchestral and operatic, solo, chamber and vocal music, concerti, and music for film and television. He performs frequently as soloist and chamber player, and with his wife soprano Amy Burton in recital and cabaret. This recording marks his fourth collaboration with Bridge Records. Previously issued are a disc of his songs (BRIDGE 9286), his two piano concerti (BRIDGE 9399), and his fourth opera, *Bastianello* (BRIDGE 9299A/B).



Patrick Mason has performed and recorded an astonishingly wide range of music spanning the last ten centuries, including work with leading early music ensembles, romantic song repertoire, orchestral song, and contemporary operas. Most recently Mr. Mason gave the world premiere and later recorded George Crumb's *Voices from A Forgotten World* with Orchestra 2001, (BRIDGE 9413). His recording in the dual lead roles of Tod Machover's opera VALIS was named "Best of the Year" by the *New York Times*, and his recording

of songs by Amy Beach was nominated for a Grammy in the "Best Vocal Recording" category. Mr. Mason can be heard on recordings of operas by William Bolcom and John Musto, performed with the New York Festival of Song (BRIDGE 9299A/B) and has recorded Schubert's *Winterreise* (BRIDGE 9053). Patrick Mason studied voice at the Peabody Conservatory with Francesco Valentino and art song with Ellen Mack. Mr. Mason is a Berton Coffin Faculty Fellow at the University of Colorado in Boulder and is the vocal coordinator of the John Duffy Composer's institute (an annual two-week event which is part of the Virginia Arts Festival) where he works with young singers and composers to create new works for the musical stage.

- 6) *If You Talk in Your Sleep* (3:05)
Music: Nat D. Ayer • **Lyrics:** A. Seymour Brown
Amy Burton, Patrick Mason and John Musto
- 7) *Lazy* (4:14)
Music: Irving Berlin • **Lyrics:** Irving Berlin
Patrick Mason and John Musto
- 8) *Autumn in New York* (4:55)
Music: Vernon Duke • **Lyrics:** Vernon Duke
Amy Burton and John Musto
- 9) *The Nearness of You* (2:21)
Music: Hoagy Carmichael • **Lyrics:** Ned Washington
John Musto
- 10) *Dewitched, Dothered and Bewildered* (4:36)
Music: Richard Rodgers • **Lyrics:** Lorenz Hart
Amy Burton and John Musto

11) *Everybody Loves You When You're Asleep* (2:13)

Music: Frank Loesser • **Lyrics:** Frank Loesser

Amy Burton, Patrick Mason and John Musto

12) *I'll See You in C-U-D-A* (3:35)

Music: Irving Berlin • **Lyrics:** Irving Berlin

Patrick Mason and John Musto

13) *He's So Unusual* (3:56)

Music: Sherman & Lewis and Abner Silver

Lyrics: Sherman & Lewis and Abner Silver

Amy Burton and John Musto

14) *Embraceable You* (3:08)

Music: George Gershwin • **Lyrics:** Ira Gershwin

Patrick Mason and John Musto

15) *It Never Entered My Mind* (3:30)

Music: Richard Rodgers • **Lyrics:** Lorenz Hart

Amy Burton and John Musto



With a voice the New York Times has called, “luminous” and “lustrous”, soprano **Amy Burton** has enjoyed an international career in both classical and popular music. A longtime principal artist with the **Metropolitan Opera** and **New York City Opera**, she also appears frequently in recital and cabaret with composer/pianist John Musto. Recent appearances include venues such as the Café Sabarsky, Songfest (Los Angeles), Glimmerglass Festival, Joe’s Pub, a one-woman show at the Foyer at Barcelona’s Liceu Opera House, New York’s National Arts Club, 92Y, Lincoln Center Great Performer’s Series, the Kennedy Center, and tours with *Late Night with Leonard Bernstein* throughout the US. Ms. Burton sang in the modern-day revival of Cole Porter’s rediscovered 1928 musical, *The Ambassador Revue (La Revue des Ambassadeurs)*, both in Paris and at New York’s Town Hall, which was recorded by Harbinger Records. An acclaimed interpreter of French song as well as American Songbook, Ms. Burton’s recording, *Souvenir de Printemps* (Harbinger) was praised by both the French and American press. She has recorded for Angel/EMI, *Bridge (Songs of John Musto)*, Albany, Soundmirror, CRI, and Naxos.

the contributions by Rodgers and Hart. Numbers fell by the wayside during the heated out of town tryout. The lovely *Everybody Loves You* was one of those casualties, a minor classic, here caressingly sung by Burton and Mason.

Mason also does a simple yet ardent rendition of a late Jerome Kern gem, *All Through the Day*, written for “Centennial Summer,” (1946), Twentieth Century Fox’s attempt to cash in on the huge success of MGM’s “Meet Me in St. Louis.” Although Kern composed the entire score for the film, each song was the work of a different lyricist. Oscar Hammerstein II, who began his collaboration with Kern on “Show Boat,” provided the lyric to this Academy Award nominated song. Kern’s nomination was, alas, given posthumously as he had suddenly passed away the year before the film was released.

Like “Centennial Summer,” the animated feature “Gulliver’s Travels” was Paramount Pictures’ response to another film, in this case the Walt Disney blockbuster “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.” The animators Max and Dave Fleischer hired the Oscar winning songwriting team of Ralph Rainger and Leo Robin to write the songs and they, in turn, received another nomination for one of the creations from “Gulliver,” *Faithful Forever*. This lovely song enchantingly ends the album, a testament to the bonds of true love or, in the case of this treasure trove of a CD, the enduring bonds of personal and musical friendship.

Barry Kleinbort, New York City

- 16) *What'll I Do?* (3:52)
Music: Irving Berlin • **Lyrics:** Irving Berlin
Patrick Mason and John Musto
- 17) *By Strauss* (2:34)
Music: George Gershwin • **Lyrics:** Ira Gershwin
Amy Burton and John Musto
- 18) *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise* (2:15)
Music: George Gershwin
Lyrics: B.G. DeSylva, Arthur Francis (Ira Gershwin)
Patrick Mason and John Musto
- 19) *Faithful Forever* (2:26)
Music: Leo Robin , Ralph Rainger • **Lyrics:** Leo Robin , Ralph Rainger
Amy Burton, Patrick Mason and John Musto

"Got a Little Rhythm"

Amy Burton, John Musto and Patrick Mason have certainly known each other for a long time. Besides being an acclaimed singer/pianist concert team around the globe Burton and Musto are, in real life, husband and wife. Burton and Mason have, over the years, warbled together on various high profile opera and concert stages. Mason, an internationally renowned baritone, has also performed vocal music composed by the multi-faceted Mr. Musto. Ditto, the lovely Ms. Burton. But there is another major connection for this group: Although they all have strong ties to the world of classical music, these renowned musical mavens tirelessly promote the merits of the Great American Songbook, saluting the composers of our glorious past as well as endorsing the catalogues of the current or the up and coming. Hence the CD now in your hands, *Got a Little Rhythm*, which is a huge slice of American musical heaven. Covering roughly a century of this country's musical styles and attitudes, they have assembled a program of juggernauts from many of the revered masters of popular song (The Gershwins, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Rodgers and Hart) and tempered these classics with gems by composers as disparate as Nat Ayer and Fred Hirsch. Although the joyous and layered interpretations preserved on this disc speak for themselves, allow me to provide a little historical information about the songs contained herein.

George Gershwin is the most represented composer on this album with five numbers in total. Before he collaborated exclusively with his brother Ira,

Under this new moniker, it has been recorded by jazz artists all over the world, and has now, thanks to this CD, entered the classical repertoire, too.

The distinguished team of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart are represented with three selections, two of their most admired songs and one of their least known. *Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered* is from their 1940 masterpiece "Pal Joey," where it was originally sung by Vivienne Segal as Vera Simpson, a high class, highly married society matron who falls for the morally challenged title character, played by Gene Kelly. This song, a married woman's joyful paean to infidelity, shocked the Broadway audiences of 1940 and the original lyric was banned from airplay on the radio. Hart's tartly observant and unabashedly sexual lyric is swathed in one of Rodgers' most enchanting melodies. Another of R and H's most recorded songs, *It Never Entered My Mind*, comes from one of their biggest flops. The show, "Higher and Higher," was a flat-footed satire on the dealings between the hoi polloi and their servants, sort of like an American "Downton Abbey." The show marked the Broadway debut (and, alas, finale) of one of Paramount Pictures biggest singing stars, Shirley Ross, who, at least, got to introduce this timeless standard from the score. The last R and H item, *Everybody Loves You*, didn't even make it to town. In 1937, Rodgers and Hart were commissioned to write the score for George M. Cohan's return to Broadway, a satirical musical called "I'd Rather be Right" in which Mr. Cohan impersonated another towering figure of the time, the reigning President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Cohan, a popular songwriter himself, continually voiced his disdain for all

of “peaceful” and “valise full” (...of books) is worthy of Mr. Porter, indeed. Even more than Porter, he could also be heartbreakingly simple and *What’ll I Do?* which he wrote the year before *Lazy*, is one of his most poignant and enduring waltzes. *I’ll See You in C-U-B-A* was a novelty item that Berlin penned in 1920 when Americans were boating down to the Caribbean for gambling and more importantly, the pursuit of alcohol since the States were under the cocktail-crushing bans of Prohibition. Mr. Mason revels in Berlin’s felicitous “Bacardi and coke” melody.

Ms. Burton, it should be noted, has a grand ear for mimicry. Hence, her loopy rendition of a novelty number from 1929 written by Al Sherman, Al Lewis and Abner Silver. *He’s So Unusual* was penned by this Tin Pan Alley trio for the sensational “boop-a-doop” singer Helen Kane who was the true inspiration for the beloved cartoon character Betty Boop. Ms. Burton does a stellar Helen Kane. As a side note, the composer Al Sherman was not only responsible for the music to this song, but he was also the father of Richard and Robert Sherman, who took up their father’s Tin Pan Alley mantle and went on to write the Oscar winning score for “Mary Poppins.” If only Helen Kane had lived to record “Supercalifragilisticexpolidous.” Oh, well.

There is one song in this collection that was actually written in the 21st century. Fred Hersch, a much admired jazz pianist and composer wrote an instrumental piece in 2001 called *Valentine*. Two years later, a lyric by Norma Winstone was put to it and the title was changed from *Valentine* to *A Wish*.

George set music to lyrics by other craftsmen, among them B. G. (Buddy) DeSylva (who later went on to become part of the highly successful songwriting team DeSylva, Brown and Henderson as well as a brash, non-nonsense Hollywood producer.) DeSylva and Gershwin wrote *I’ll Build a Stairway to Paradise* for the 1922 edition of *The George White Scandals*, a popular series of revues in the manner of the *Ziegfeld Follies*. The Gershwin/DeSylva contribution became the musical standout of that particular edition. *Fascinating Rhythm* and *Little Jazz Bird* are from the Gershwin brothers’ first complete musical as a writing team, *Lady, Be Good*, (1924) which was also the first show they wrote for the brother/sister dancing team of Fred and Adele Astaire. Every musical at that time promoted a dance craze ...like the Black Bottom, the Tango and the Charleston. Syncopation was all the rage and *Fascinating Rhythm* caught the off-meter fever of the roaring twenties.

Little Jazz Bird, here performed by Patrick Mason, was originally introduced by Cliff Edwards (aka “Ukulele Ike”) who is mostly remembered today as the voice of Jiminy Cricket in Walt Disney’s “Pinocchio.” *Embraceable You* was from the 1930 musical smash “Girl Crazy,” which introduced both Ginger Rogers and Ethel Merman to Broadway audiences. Ginger Rogers was the lucky gal who first got to sing this particular classic, one of the most cherished songs in the entire Gershwin catalogue. The last Gershwin ditty included is *By Strauss*, originally a party piece for George and Ira to perform at private gatherings. The song eventually made its way into the lavish Bea Lillie/Bert Lahr revue, “The Show is On,” in 1936 but gained even wider

attention when it was performed by Gene Kelly, Oscar Levant and Georges Guetary in the 1951 movie classic, “An American in Paris.”

A close personal friend of the Gershwins was the Russian expatriate composer Vladimir Dukelsky or, as he was known in this country, Vernon Duke. Although married, Duke was quite a womanizer, which eventually led to a messy marital split-up. Duke checked into a New York hotel room, looked out the window at the view and was inspired to write both the words and music to *Autumn in New York* which wound up in the score of a revue called “Thumbs Up” in 1934. (Thumbs up also to the team of Burton and Musto for their sensitive rendition of what has since become a celebrated jazz standard.)

Like Duke, the composer Hoagy Carmichael was credited for the words as well as the music to what has become his most recognized composition, *I Get Along Without You*. But the lyric was actually the handiwork of a Miss Jane Brown Thompson who had handed her poem to Carmichael when she was a student at Indiana University and signed it only with the initials “J.B.” Carmichael tried to find the mysterious J.B. for many years after setting her poem. Ironically, Thompson died the day before the song officially premiered on the radio (sung by Dick Powell) and never knew of its great success. By the way, the mysterious J.B.’s lyric is not included on this CD, only Carmichael’s ravishing melody sensitively interpreted by Mr. Musto on the keyboard.

The earliest entry is by the songwriting team of Nat D. Ayer and A. Seymour Brown who had achieved great success with their song, “Oh, You Beautiful Doll!” Here they are represented by the equally infectious though far less-known *If You Talk in Your Sleep (Don’t Mention My Name)* which puts a delightful perspective on extra marital flings.

Speaking of novelties, Cole Porter is represented by a single item, *The Tale of the Oyster* which is actually a revision of an earlier Porter composition called “Tale of the Scampi” (I’m not making this up) which Porter used to serenade his friends visiting his sumptuous villa in Venice. *Oyster* eventually ended up in the musical “Fifty Million Frenchmen,” (1929) where it was introduced by the incomparable comedienne Helen Broderick but was removed shortly after the opening because the press deemed it a shocking number about “regurgitation.” I think they missed the point. Cleverly written as a spoof on German lieder, Ms. Burton gets all the juice out of this sassy little gem.

Irving Berlin is represented by three items, the enduring evergreen *What’ll I Do?* and two more obscure items, *I’ll See You in C-U-B-A* and the highly autobiographical *Lazy*. Berlin was both an insomniac and a workaholic, known to avoid vacations at any cost. He was forced to take a Florida respite in 1924 with the writer/composer E. Ray Goetz (whose sister later became Berlin’s first wife.) Berlin had such a relaxing time on the trip that he wrote *Lazy* upon his return. Berlin could be as sly a lyricist as Porter and his rhyming