

L.A.'S ONLY JAZZ PAPER

L.A.

JULY 2007

Issue No. 238

JAZZ
SCENE

Rick Blessing

I'm Just the Guy for You!

(Fast Friends Music)

Rick Blessing sings fourteen original songs for this project that all reach his audience as if they were long-affixed standards from the past. His songwriting skills have that effect. Supporting him on this comfortable and swinging session are pianist Daniel May, double bassist Benjamin May, drummer Gary Gibbons, guitarist Larry Koonse, trumpeter Ron Stout and saxophonist Penny Watson. Background voices give the program plenty of depth. Blessing's voice, while centered in the baritone range, brings a boy-next-door presence into the room. He prefers a light vocal texture that makes you feel that you're among friends. Mellow and restrained, the emotional level of his delivery remains distant and free.

"Jazzman" trips lightly with a strolling story of discovery, while "Lover's Holiday" fills itself with cliché and comedy. Blessing's merry delivery keeps things running light and smooth. He discovers quaint impressions of neighboring lands on "Mexico" and "Little Samba Serenade," where soothing melodies float gently as if on a warm, summer breeze. His songs carry a light message that fits comfortably around light, Swing Era moods. As Phillip Manos writes in the album's liner notes, these are "the kind of tunes you whistle walking down the street."

Jim Santella

L.A. JAZZ SCENE

CD REVIEWS

