



press release

PATRICIA BARBER

Cole Porter Mix

Release date September 15th

“One of the most accomplished female jazz singer–pianists on the planet... Chicago–based Barber has a voice that caresses and challenges and cajoles and taunts and teases every nuance of meaning from each ambiguous syllable”. **The Guardian**

“Even a casual listener would soon be won over by her seductive voice, her forceful soloing and, not least, her immaculate quartet arrangements”. **The Times**

“The most fearless, most intellectually stimulating and, by extension, most interesting singer–songwriter–pianist on the American jazz scene.” **JazzTimes**

For more than two decades, Barber, based in Chicago, has led her own band and released a series of highly acclaimed, strikingly singular albums, that have seen her recognised as one of the greatest songs tylists on the planet. For her latest album, singer/pianist Barber applies her austere but beautiful heartfelt expressiveness to breath new life into the music of one of the Great American Songbook composers. **The Cole Porter Mix** not only spotlights her artful interpretations of Porter’s songs but also features three Porter–inspired originals. “Cole Porter has always been my songwriting idol,” says Barber. “I love his music and I’ve been singing his songs for so many years.”

Barber’s band includes guitarist Neal Alger, who has been performing with her the past six years, and bassist Michael Arnopol, who has worked with her since 1980. “We’re like brother and sister,” she says. “We learned jazz together and played all those gigs in Chicago together when I was coming up.” Drum duties are shared by Eric Montzka and Nate Smith, while tenor saxophonist Chris Potter guests on five tracks. Barber plays piano throughout as well as contributes melodica colors to some tunes, including her gem, “The New Year’s Eve Song,” that closes the album. Another original on *The Cole Porter Mix* is the teeming–with–metaphors “Snow,” a song that Barber says is full of food and sex. “It’s a very sexy song about longing,” she notes. “I love that last line, ‘Do you think of me at all?’ There’s also a white/black dichotomy all the way through, like snow with jazz and salt with oil.”

The Cole Porter tunes are delivered with respect as well as playful liberty. “Easy to Love” is performed with a straight–up bossa nova beat done in a breezy style that Barber says “goes down easily.” “I Get a Kick Out of You” swings with “a very sexy” arrangement that she created years ago, in an unusual key with changed chords. One of the highlights of the album, “You’re the Top” not only features new lyrics from Barber but also a fine piano stretch in the middle.

“C’est Magnifique” was originally from Porter’s smash 1953 Broadway musical comedy, *Can–Can*, that was adapted into film in 1960 starring Frank Sinatra, Shirley MacLaine and Maurice Chevalier. “Chris is more or less astounding and I played melodica to give it a French feeling,” Barber says. “I also sang it before we warmed up for the day’s sessions so my voice comes out sounding gruff and very French.”

“Get Out of Town” is rendered with a dark, ominous rhythm (“I asked Neal to play some lonely–town sounds on his guitar, and that old–fashioned rock/snare groove makes the song sound even lonelier”), “I Concentrate on You” is delivered in a fun way (“It’s rangy, stuck in a slow bossa beat and lyrically one of Cole Porter’s best”), “What Is This Thing Called Love?” is coolly intriguing (with Barber singing at the bottom end of her vocal range) and “Miss Otis Regrets” is a storytelling beauty, as indeed in the whole of *Cole Porter Mix*, storytelling or rare and precious beauty from the inimitable Patricia Barber!

For further information, images or to arrange an interview please contact
Kerstan Mackness on 020 7193 0815 kerstan@riotsquadpublicity.com

