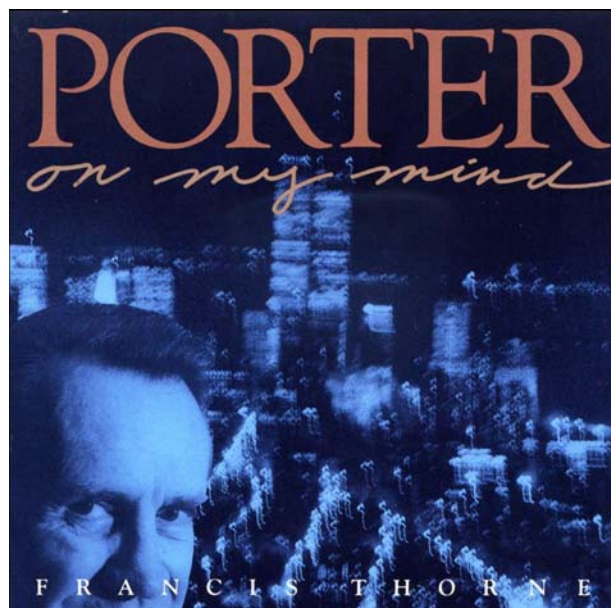


Francis Thorne: Porter On My Mind

Francis Thorne, piano and vocals; Jack Six, bass



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. At Long Last Love (3:50)
(From <i>You Never Know</i> , 1938) | 7. Just One Of Those Things (3:45)
(From <i>Jubilee</i> , 1935) |
| 2. I've Got You On My Mind (2:02)
(From <i>Gay Divorce</i> , 1932) | 8. You're Sensational (4:04)
(From <i>High Society</i> , 1956) |
| 3. Dream Dancing (2:57)
(From <i>You'll Never Get Rich</i> , 1941) | 9. Why Shouldn't I? (3:54)
(From <i>Jubilee</i> , 1935) |
| 4. What Is This Thing Called Love? (6:45)
(From <i>Wake Up and Dream</i> , 1929) | 10. You Do Something To Me (2:41)
(From <i>Fifty Million Frenchmen</i> , 1929) |
| 5. Make It Another Old-Fashioned, Please (2:11)
(From <i>Panama Hattie</i> , 1940) | 11. Please Don't Monkey With Broadway (2:16)
(From <i>Broadway Melody of 1940</i>) |
| 6. Goodbye, Little Dream, Goodbye (3:43)
(From <i>Red, Hot and Blue</i> , 1936) | 12. How Could We Be Wrong? (3:46)
(From <i>Nymph Errant</i> , 1933) |
| | 13. All Of You (2:26)
(From <i>Silk Stockings</i> , 1955) |
| | 14. I Happen To Like New York (2:10)
(From <i>The New Yorkers</i> , 1930) |
| | 15. A Picture Of Me Without You (4:34)
(From <i>Jubilee</i> , 1935) |
| | 16. Easy To Love (3:39)
(From <i>Born To Dance</i> , 1936) |
| | 17. Down In The Depths (3:14)
(From <i>Red, Hot and Blue</i> , 1936) |
| | 18. Night And Day (3:23)
(From <i>Gay Divorce</i> , 1932) |
| | 19. I Get A Kick Out Of You (4:32)
(From <i>Anything Goes</i> , 1934) |
| | Total playing time: 67:06 |
| | © & ©1990 Composers Recordings, Inc.
© 2007 Anthology of Recorded Music, Inc. |

Notes

“The secret of those seemingly effortless songs was a prodigious and unending industry.”

—Moss Hart

Cole Porter (1891–1964)

Even though he could well afford a life of fun and games, Cole Porter chose to work hard and play hard. Born into wealth, the darling of international society, he took his career as composer-lyricist with utmost seriousness. As the only child of a strong-willed mother and a rather ineffectual druggist father, his inherited fortune came from his maternal grandfather, who had pronounced that his favored grandson would be a lawyer. Reluctantly, he was brought around to accept the fact of Porter's natural talent and genius. Peru, Indiana's most famous son clearly outshone his patriarch well before the latter's death.

Solid success, however, came only when Porter was in his late 30s. After serving in a humanitarian unit in France during the last years of World War I, he settled in Paris, married the wealthy divorcée Linda Lee Thomas, and centered his

creative talents on writing party songs. Nevertheless this activity, in combination with studies at the Schola Cantorum with Vincent d'Indy, prepared him well. As the most highly trained of the songwriters of his era, it is a small wonder that his career took off like a rocket when, in 1928, E. Ray Goetz sought him out in Venice to write the score for *Paris*, starring Goetz's wife, Irene Bordoni. A typical party song, “Let's Do It (Let's Fall in Love)” was a smash hit and Porter was thereafter in demand with *Fifty Million Frenchmen*, *Wake Up and Dream*, and *The New Yorkers* following in the next two years.

After the notable success of *Anything Goes* in 1934, Hollywood beckoned. His first film score, for *Born to Dance*, contained much vintage Porter, and thereafter he maintained permanent homes on both coasts, as well as in Paris and later, in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Once a successful career was in Porter's grasp, his wife, Linda, was a staunch supporter of his serious professional life in spite of her simultaneously participating in a constant

round of parties, travel, and entertaining. Although badly crippled by a horseback riding accident in 1937, when both legs were crushed (one was finally amputated years later), Porter continued to turn out first-rate material. His creative life gradually drew to a close after the death of his wife in 1954; however as late as 1956, at age sixty-five, he turned out one of his most ingratiating scores for the film *High Society*.

Cole Porter's enormous success is interesting when one considers the highly urbane and witty sophistication of his lyrics, and his music as well. Perhaps just as the general public subscribed to *The New Yorker*, they experienced the good life vicariously through Porter's best work. With the recent renaissance of cabaret, they experience it to this very day.

About the Songs

Porter always claimed that while waiting for the ambulance to arrive at the site of his riding accident he worked on the lyric of "At Long Last Love" from *You Never Know* of 1938. This is one of Porter's "list" songs, the most famous of which is "You're The Top." This recording also contains two more list songs, "A Picture of Me Without You" from the 1935 musical *Jubilee* and "Please Don't Monkey with Broadway" from the film *Broadway Melody of 1940*.

Although one thinks of Porter mostly for the elegance and wit of his most celebrated songs, his ballads show that he was capable of tenderness and lyricism. The enchanting "Dream Dancing" from the 1941 film *You'll Never Get Rich* was only used (abused) in the film to underscore a dance sequence, its poetic lyric completely ignored. "Easy to Love" from *Born to Dance* (1936) was similarly mistreated by being assigned to James Stewart, who was hardly an accomplished enough singer for the song's wide range. Another case of criminal neglect was "Goodbye, Little Dream, Goodbye" which was excised from *Red, Hot and Blue* (1936) as "too somber" for the roughhouse comedienne Ethel Merman, and also from *Born to Dance* with Frances Langford. It finally had a modest success in France with Yvonne Printemps, who recorded it in her piping, quavering soprano. "How Could We Be Wrong?" had some success in England in *Nymph Errant*, a Gertrude Lawrence vehicle from the depression year 1933.

Fred Astaire sang two unusual Porter songs in 1932 in *Gay Divorce*. "Night and Day," perhaps Porter's most popular success, employs repeated notes to denote the relentless passions of love, and "I've Got You on My Mind" uses the technique of strings of thirds in both verse and chorus. The lyric of the latter's verse is particularly amusing, as it is a song of lust rather than love—for example: "You don't sing enough, you don't dance enough, you don't drink the great wines of France enough." When Hollywood filmed it, the title-change to *The Gay Divorcée* reflected the Hays office's timidity, although it is ironic considering today's meaning of the word "gay."

Cole Porter's music has been performed countless times by jazz musicians. "What is This Thing Called Love?" (1929) from *Wake Up and Dream* gives bassist Jack Six the spotlight in the slow swinging arrangement. Likewise, "You Do Something to Me" from *Fifty Million Frenchmen* (1929) interests jazz players for its chromatic harmonic structure. "All of You" from *Silk Stockings*, written in the mid-50s, is classic Porter. The censors tried to tone this lyric down by substituting "The sweet of you, the pure of you" for "I'd love to make a tour of you." One monkey with a Porter lyric at one's own risk.

I saw *Anything Goes* in 1934 at age twelve, and to this day I can remember vividly Miss Ethel Merman, feet wide-spread, belting out "I Get a Kick Out of You," with every syllable clearly heard in the back row. Note the genius of Porter: making memorable the simple ascending major scale!

I have included three songs from the film *Jubilee*, in order to show the high polish of a Porter score at his maturity. In addition to "A Picture of Me Without You," there is a poignant "Why Shouldn't I?" and the masterpiece, "Just One of Those Things." Both songs include a sly reference to a Porter acquaintance (Dorothy Parker and Peggy Hopkins Joyce), and the latter song features a Baroque 'lamentoso' bass line in descending half tones to underscore the poignancy of the end of a 'relationship.'

Though choosing from Porter's large and superb oeuvre is always difficult, the remaining four songs have special characteristics that demand inclusion. "Make It Another Old-Fashioned, Please" from *Panama Hattie* (1940) is a typical beguine number that crops up regularly in Porter's post-"Begin the Beguine" catalogue. "You're Sensational" from *High Society* was a rare case of Cole Porter writing for Frank Sinatra, and is another example of Porter's "attraction-sans-amour." "I Happen to Like New York" is one of Porter's most unusual show songs. With a dance accompaniment and a sly diversion in the release to put down New Jersey, it is a rousing hymn to our great city, made unforgettable by the simple use of one long crescendo. "Down in the Depths," a more conventional Ethel Merman torch song from *Red, Hot and Blue*, also employs the repeated note to express boredom and is a quintessential Porter representation of sophisticated urban "high-life," if the pun can be pardoned.

From all reports, Cole Porter was a charmer who lived life to the hilt. There was hardly an experience that he did not savor, a place that he did not visit. He felt his experiences deeply, and was articulate enough and trained enough to express the widest range of feelings in perfect taste. Thank heaven that he was a professional workman as well as an irrepressible playboy.

—Francis Thorne

Francis Thorne played jazz piano at Manhattan's Hickory House in the mid-1950s as a protégé of Duke Ellington. He also had extended engagements at Julius Monk's Upstairs at the Downstairs, Goldie's New York and at Ruby's Café in Florence, Italy. After two years of private study with David Diamond, Thorne has devoted his primary energies to writing concert music. He has been executive director of the Walter F. Naumburg Foundation, the Lenox Arts Center/ Music Theater Group and the American Composers Alliance. He was co-founder of the American Composers Orchestra, which he still serves as president. His compositions are featured on CRI 216, 258, 397, 459, 552 and 586. In addition to singing and playing the piano, Mr. Thorne made the arrangements for the performances on the recording.

Jack Six has performed with the Dave Brubeck Quartet, the big bands of Tommy Dorsey, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, and Gerry Mulligan, as well as in his own Jack Six Orchestra. He also plays the piano and trumpet and has arranged for many jazz groups and big bands. His television appearances have included the shows of Ed Sullivan, Merv Griffin, and Gary Moore. He has placed in the top ten of the International Downbeat Poll for bassists for the past ten years.

Production Notes

Produced by Michael Riesman

Engineer: Michael Riesman

Assistant Engineers: Joseph R. Dalton, Michael McGrath

Recorded at The Living Room, NYC, February, 1990

All selections published by W. B. Music Corp. (ASCAP)

This recording was made possible by the generous support of Paul Underwood.

Special Thanks Rosalie Calabrese, Rory Johnston