



Marilyn Scott – Every Time We Say Goodbye biography

To paraphrase from the title of a vintage jazz ballad, "It Was a Beautiful Three Days in August," when singer/songwriter **Marilyn Scott** fulfilled her long-held dream of recording an acoustic jazz album in New York City the way the legends used to do it - with the singer and musicians all cutting and working out arrangements together in the studio. Christened *Every Time We Say Goodbye*, the album is a dreamy throwback to a purer aesthetic that marks the 30th anniversary of Ms. Scott's impressively eclectic recording career - one in which she has successfully sung soul, pop, smooth jazz, adult contemporary and music for motion pictures. However, anyone who has listened to her CDs knows that jazz has been a prominent part of the foundation of her artistic architecture. So much so that she is the only vocalist in the history of Billboard magazine to have two different albums charting on the Contemporary Jazz and Traditional Jazz charts - simultaneously.

Now on *Every Time We Say Goodbye*, Marilyn Scott is taking her love for jazz to new heights with a seasoned East Coast quintet led by acclaimed pianist **Cyrus Chestnut**, produced for the Japan-based Venus Records imprint by label president **Tetsuo Hara** and veteran jazz musician/producer **Todd Barkan** - his partner of 15 years. The 10-song repertoire is comprised of smoky wee hours standards such as the **Cole Porter**-penned title track, a Rio-kissed samba take on Irving Berlin's "I Got Lost in His Arms" and a blues walk through "Detour Ahead." The arrangements offer fresh nuances to familiar favorites as do Marilyn's artful and articulate vocal interpretations.

The process of how *Every Time We Say Goodbye* was created was a swift and surprise-filled one. "Todd called me in June of 2007 and asked if I'd be interested in doing something for Venus," Ms. Scott recalls. "The company was looking to do more vocal projects." Barkan - whose esteemed resumé includes production for jazz vocal greats such as **Jimmy Scott, Gloria Lynne, Freddy Cole** and **Vanessa Rubin**, as well as Venus' own **Barbara Carroll** and **Simone Kopmajer** - adds, "A year ago Mr. Hara asked me to send him demo materials on a bunch of singers to see what resonated with him and the Japanese market. I first became aware of Marilyn through a neighbor of mine - an amateur music enthusiast with whom I'm constantly sharing new music. Though Marilyn's musical style was not the idiom I normally work in, she had a resonance and timbre in her voice that I felt would sound wonderful within a straight ahead jazz framework. Mr. Hara and I both felt strongly about this, so we reached out to her."

It was Barkan who hand-picked Ms. Scott's enviable quintet of pianist Cyrus Chestnut, reed man **Ken Peplowski**, guitarist **Paul Bollenback**, bassist **Gerald Cannon** and drummer **Willie Jones III**. "I got the guys I felt could go where she wants to go but maintain the Venus straight ahead jazz sound," Barkan explains. "Bringing Marilyn to the east was a great idea. It helped meld her musical expression into more of a New York state of mind."

They spent August 27-29 at a recording facility in The Village known simply as **The Studio**, a cherished workshop among New York's jazz elite that boasts a wonderful Steinway B piano. Little did Marilyn know that she would be among the last artists to benefit from working in this space as it closed - ending 20 years of service - on January 29, 2008 after a session by piano legend Junior Mance and sax man Houston Person. Playing the images back in her mind, Ms. Scott shares, "You'd walk down a long stairwell into this little room. There was musty smell from the humidity, and there were old amps and mike stands strewn about. You could tell so much has been played there. I remember us going over arrangements, everyone looking at each other and going for it. After we got a few songs down, we'd go upstairs to get some fresh air - we had some beautiful, warm and breezy days in New York - then we'd go back down and cut a few more. It was a wonderful process. Time went by really quick. I'd retreat to my little hotel room in Manhattan, walk across the street to eat and think how blessed I was to be doing all this."

Ms. Scott has recorded jazz before (highlights being "Yesterdays" from *Nightcap*, "Round Midnight" from *Innocent of Nothing* and a breezy samba take of Stevie Wonder's "Bird of Beauty" from *Take Me With You*), but those projects often included original compositions and electric instrumentation. *Every Time We Say Goodbye* is all straight ahead jazz, comprised of standards and ballads with the exception of a novel new twist on the **Burt Bacharach/Hal David** gem "Do You Know The Way To San Jose," which Marilyn arranged herself with **Bill Wyaske**. "I wanted to give it more of a Brazilian vibe," she notes.

Marilyn bought a total of five finished arrangements to the sessions. Those - a smokin' version of **Duke Ellington's** "Caravan" by **John Beasley**, a bluesy take on **Leonard Bernstein's** "Somewhere" and the **Herb Ellis** line "Detour Ahead" by the **Yellowjackets'** keyboardist **Russell Ferrante**, and "Autumn in New York" and "I Love Paris" by **Mitch Forman** - were all recorded on the first day. The second day was given over to spontaneous head arrangements of songs like the forlorn gem "Lonely Town" and a personal request from Mr. Hara, "Cry Me a River." "The Japanese actually 'collect' standards," Marilyn learned, "researching and comparing versions of songs done by various artists. I was looking for songs I could make my own - tunes that get progressively dynamic with emotional endings."

This kind of shoot from the hip recording was very new for Marilyn and a little disorienting, but she quickly adapted with the support of her ace collaborators. "Sometimes it's best to not beat a performance to death and just let it be," Marilyn muses, "those musicians in that moment. Each of the musicians was coming from the right place and we had a wealth of things to try."

Producer Barkan, who is Artistic Director of Dizzy's Club Coca Cola at Lincoln Center, has nothing but praise for the fruits of Marilyn's newfound focus. "I have to commend Marilyn for working within the time limitations of this situation and still doing an outstanding job. Sometimes necessity is the mother of invention. This album gives you a chance to hear a very natural side of her artistic expression. I believe Marilyn has a lot of potential in this direction and I'm looking forward to next one."

Marilyn Scott was born and raised in Arcadia, California. She was deeply influenced by her mother who was a classical pianist and singer. Marilyn was 11 when her mother died and the sudden silence was more than she could bear. In a way, she strongly believes that her passion for music was stoked by the loss. "What I heard from my mother absolutely ignited me," she shares. "Without her, I missed music so much that I turned to radio. I listened to jazz, R&B and pop. They all melded into one for me. I was determined to succeed in music and put myself in situations to be around great musicians that would push me to be my best.

After graduating high school, Marilyn moved to the Bay Area in Northern California where she sang in Top 40 bands. "In those days you had to do 4 or 5 sets a night. You had to know a wide range of music. And the cats turned me on to great jazz. That really shaped where I wanted to go." She met members of the soul band **Tower of Power** and did her first sessions singing background. She had a particularly soulful voice and wound up being hired as the only white member of the cast for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. musical, *Selma*. Soon after, she recorded a single for the Atco label which led to her debut album, *Dreams of Tomorrow* (1979).

Marilyn's first jazz gig followed shortly after the release of this album - a writing job with a young Russell Ferrante that turned into a friendship and creative partnership that has lasted to this day. "Whenever I wanted to write, he always found room to explore that with me," Marilyn reflects. "He was very generous with his time which allowed me to find myself. The same goes for others I've been fortunate to work with such as George Duke, **Brenda Russell** and **Bobby Caldwell**."

Over the course of ten previous albums plus contributions to movie soundtracks (including a lovely rendition of "Skylark" for the film *Torch Song Trilogy*), Marilyn Scott has been happily hard to pigeonhole. She has had a Quiet Storm classic with her song "I'll Be Loving You" (from her sophomore album, *Without Warning* - 1983). Her '90s CDs *Take Me With You* and *Avenues of Love* yielded two Top 10 smooth jazz/adult contemporary radio hits in "I'm Calling You" and "The Last Day." Her cover of "The Look of Love" was nominated for a Grammy. She has worked with world class musicians in the jazz and Brazilian worlds of music, including pianist **Patrice Rushen**, bassists **Brian Bromberg** and **Jimmy Haslip**, drummers **Vinnie Colaiuta** and **Terri Lyne Carrington**, guitarist **Dori Cayymi**, saxophonist **Steve Tavaglione** and percussionist **Lenny Castro**. In 2005, she earned the distinction of being the only artist to place two albums on Billboard's charts simultaneously for 14 weeks: *Handpicked* on the Contemporary Jazz and *Nightcap* (produced by **George Duke**) on the Traditional Jazz.

Beyond the music, Marilyn opened her own on-line store of all organic clothing for first-year babies called **Starting Green**. Once again, family inspired her to make this conscientious move.

"I was at a function held by **LOHAS** (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) where I learned about different factions of environmentally conscious businesses. It got me thinking about doing something to help sustain my life but in a healthy way. My niece had a baby and kept talking about the problems she had finding suitable clothes. I started looking into organic fabric (where no pesticides or chemicals are used in the growing) to make clothes. In the first year of a baby's life, their pores are so open, which is why they're so vulnerable to allergies. It's so important that the clothes they wear so close to their skin are as pure as possible."

Though Starting Green was also a needed income stream during this time when music is more challenging than ever to make a living in exclusively, Ms. Scott has been incredibly fulfilled by the progressive thinking and unity her clothing company inspires. "Working with all these people from every ethnic background - the farmers, pattern makers, cutters, embroiderers - really excites me. It's about more than making clothes. It's about people's lifestyles and making sure they have work right here in the U.S. This company has benefited me, the people I work with AND the people who buy our clothes. Once you start changing things for your baby, you'll change things for you, too."

Reflecting on how her organic jazz album *Every Time We Say Goodbye* will be embraced by jazz purists, Marilyn shares, "I don't like to play it safe. My last jazz album, *Innocent Of Nothing*, was more adventurous. This one is more subdued. People will say this is the album I should have done all along for radio's sake, but you can't make records for radio. You make what you love and hope they embrace it. Now I want a chance to be in front of an audience and show them who I am."

Marilyn hopes to bring the music to audiences worldwide. In Japan, where it will be released first, Marilyn already has a fan base from the numerous albums she's released there, as well as touring with artists like **Ned Doheny** and **Bobby Caldwell** and headlining her own solo tour. She had an exclusive U.K. release (2003's *I'm In Love Once Again*). And then there are her American admirers.

Marilyn concludes. "Doing *Every Time We Say Goodbye* for Venus Records in Japan was a wonderful experience and I'm very appreciative of the opportunity."

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