

Virginie Teychené 'Double' 2CD (Jazz Village)

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Here is a new discovery in French jazz singer Virginie Teychené whose previous two albums to her new one are presented here as an introduction. She sings almost exclusively in English without a hint of an accent and possesses a distinctive soulful voice with the odd Brazilian classic and even French chanson to add some variety to proceedings. The second album is the slightly stronger of the two with a more confident performance and an interesting, and, in places, unusual selection of lesser known standards. Her take on the lyrics added by Abbey Lincoln to Freddie Hubbard's 'Up jumped spring' impresses as a lovely floating waltz while she reworks the Rogers and Hammerstein piece 'It might as well be spring' as a French language version retitled 'C'est le printemps'. A duo of Brazilian songs are successfully attempted and sound authentic with the Vinicius de Moraes and Carlos Lyra composition 'Voce e eu' the most effective of the two. With greater assurance comes maturity in the songwriting department and Teychené offers 'Just a song'. Back on the Great American songbook track, she delivers a fine 'Lester leapin'. The first album does nonetheless contain some fine singing with adventurous interpretations of Mingus' 'Portrait' and Eddie Jefferson's 'I just got back in town' with a trio of Billy Strayhorn numbers of which 'Take the 'A' train' is the most impressive, another duo of Brazilian songs with an English language version of Jobim's 'Double rainbow' and the original Portugese of 'Zingaro'. The jazz standard 'The good life' is actually the Jack Reardon English version rather than Sacha Distel's French lyrics and is taken at a much slower pace than other versions, notably that of Betty Carter. Informative bilingual sleeve notes from Félix Sportis, formerly editor of the prestigious and oldest French jazz magazine Jazz Hot, is an indication of the high esteem in which Virginie Teychené is held by the jazz cognoscenti in her native country. Teychené's new album, 'Bright and sweet' is already out and promises to be a real treat. **Tim Stenhouse**