

GOING FOR ADDS: OCTOBER 17TH, 2025

FILES: JAZZ VOX

ARTIST: JOSIE FALBO

TITLE: KICKIN' IT

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BARCODE: 7 08096 01242 5

WEBSITE: <https://www.josiefalbo.net/>



Josie's Picks: 1,2,5,6 **Lat 3,7,10**

1. ***Get a Kick Out of You** 3:57 Cole Porter
2. ***Autumn Nocturne** 5:28 Josef Myrow and Kim Gannon
3. **Flor de Lis** 6:02 Djavan
4. **Love Dance** 5:13 Gilson Peranzetta, Ivan Guimaraes Lins, and Paul Williams
5. ***I Just Found Out About Love** 2:37 Harold Adamson and Jimmy McHugh
6. ***Yellow Days** 5:28 Àlvaro Carillo and Alan Bernstein
7. **Brigas Nunca Mais** 6:52 Antonio Carlos Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes
8. **Social Call** 4:33 Gigi Gryce and Jon Hendricks
9. **Lazy Afternoon** 3:46 Jerome Morass and John Latouche
10. **Estamos Ai** 5:12 Mauricio Einhorn, Durval Ferreira, and Regina Werneck
11. **Chelsea Bridge** 6:02 Billy Strayhorn

PRODUCED BY Carey Deadman **ENGINEERED BY** Jim Massoth
ARRANGED AND ORCHESTRATED BY Carey Deadman, **EXCEPT TRACKS 3, 7 & 10 ARRANGED AND CONDUCTED BY** Marshall Vente, **AND TRACK 2 ARRANGED BY** Carey Deadman **AND** Chris Sargent, **AND ORCHESTRATED BY** Carey Deadman **ASSISTANT ENGINEER:** Bryan Clavey
MIXED BY Jim Massoth **AND** Carey Deadman **FOR** Squint & Hobble Productions
MASTERED BY Brad Blackwood / euphonicmasters.com

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Where has Josie Falbo been all my life? ... is a question you might ask yourself within the first 15 minutes of hearing this album.

It would be disingenuous for me to direct that question to myself: living in Chicago, I've known about Josie for years. If you ask the city's musicians, it seems that everyone has known about Josie—not only through the (literally) hundreds of commercial jingles on which she sang during the city's advertising heyday, but also owing to her backup vocals behind dozens of popular music stars, from Michael Bolton to Nancy Wilson. And, more and more in this century, folks around Chicago know Josie from having heard her sit in with jazz artists for a tune or two—where the often gigantic voice emanating from this short woman comes as a gleeful surprise.

That voice can indeed reach the rafters. But “gigantic” does triple duty here. It also covers Josie's three-octave-plus range; and it speaks to her deeply layered timbre and phrasing, in addition to the decibels she can achieve. Her vocal instrument carries us from the angelic strains of “Flor de Lis” to the sultry low notes of “Chelsea Bridge.” It's a voice that expands to embrace the brassy exuberance that Carey Deadman (Josie's producer and arranger) has poured into the Cole Porter classic that kicks off this album. Yet it can also sustain the focused hush with which Josie propels “Lazy Afternoon,” swaddled in strings and marked by Larry Kohut's brief and compelling bass solo.

It's a voice that retains its mother-of-pearl luster at every tempo and in any setting, and it carries an instinctive musicianship that, according to her mother, Josie first exhibited at 19 months old, when she began singing what she heard on the radio—in both English and Italian.

You might also ask why I suggest it would take all of 15 minutes to appreciate that voice. It has nothing to do with Josie herself: she makes the case in a few seconds. But unlike her previous album (You Must Believe in Spring)—on which she realized a longtime dream of recording with a full symphonic orchestra—Kickin' It features a rainbow of orchestrations and ensembles, covering a canyon-wide range of material. So, those first 15 minutes give you a pretty good glimpse of the stylistic swath. And hearing the ease with which Josie inhabits these settings tells you even more about the unassuming authority she brings to them all.

Deadman handled most of the arranging, and it's a treat to realize that the same pen produced the big-band swing of the opening track, the intimidating ocean of strings on “Autumn Nocturne,” and (a bit later) the burnished horns that frame “Lazy Afternoon.” Deadman also produced and arranged Josie's previous album, and his string writing remains grandiloquent.

The wild card here is dealt by Marshall Vente who, says Josie, “pushed me into a whole world of bossa nova artists I wasn't aware of.” A veteran Chicago bandleader, composer, educator—who has led the Brazilian jazz group Tropicale, and hosts the long-

running program Jazz Tropicale on WDCB radio—Vente charted three of the four tunes written by Brazilian composers. They jolt the program with percolating percussion and willowy woodwind ensembles. And Josie channels the uniquely Brazilian blend of passion and nonchalance, a reflection on her continually evolving artistry. (Don't miss her spot-on imitation of the Brazilian cuica in the last 20 seconds of "Brigas Nunca Mais.")

Josie can navigate these crosscurrents in part because of her eclectic, five-decade career. She earned a voice scholarship to Mundelein College, and had occasional lessons in classical singing when she was younger. Her ex-husband, a trumpet player, steered her to bop icons Clifford Brown and Lee Morgan; she also discovered, on her own, the Chicago-based MJT+3, which introduced pianist Harold Mabern to listeners. She was leading her own "little rock band" in the 70s; but "I gravitated more toward r-and-b, and mostly to jazz," she recalls, before making her first demo tape and joining the stable of commercial singers at Nuance Productions in Chicago.

"But I never had the ambition to make an album," she admits. It took incessant noodling from Nuance owner Dick Boyell—who kept sending her music he thought she should record—before she finally got into the studio for her debut album, Taylor Street (1980). "I was perfectly happy just doing commercials. But after that first album, I started thinking of the next one." The world of listeners beyond commercial consumerism thanks her.

On this disc, Josie works with an array of Chicago's finest, from the pitch-perfect Crystall String Section to a raft of top-flight jazzmen. The pianists alone make up a unique assortment of widely admired accompanists. The saxophone soloists, each chosen to enhance specific arrangements, shine throughout. The world-renowned guitarist Fareed Haque lends his unmistakable sound to two of the Brazilian tracks, and Steve Eisen's exquisite flute work further brightens "Brigas Nunca Mas" ("No More Fights").

The open secret to assembling a sonic army of this caliber? Just savor "Social Call," where Josie winningly sings the vocalese lyrics. Hear the gentle shiver she brings to "Chelsea Bridge." Dive into her delightful, horn-worthy scat solos at both ends of this album. Many singers improvise without words; most should not. But Josie is the exception that tests the rule. She doesn't twist herself into knots by trying to imitate an instrumentalist's pyrotechnics; instead, she crafts gorgeous, lyrical new lines of her own.

The secret is that great jazz artists love to work with a singer whose musicianship equals their own. Game respects game.

Those who've heard Josie in Chicago clubs, or who've been wooed by her two previous albums—well you know what to expect. But for those who've never heard her before, I envy you. You've waited your whole life to discover one of your favorite "new" singers, and that experience—like falling in love for the first time—really can't be beat. — **NEIL TESSER**

1. I Get a Kick Out of You

Solos:

Josie Falbo: Scat Solo

Steve Duncan: Trombone Solo

John Wojciechowski: Tenor Sax Solo

Scott Burns: Tenor Sax Solo

Musicians:

Jeremy Kahn: Piano

Eric Hochberg: Bass

Bob Rummage: Drums

Carey Deadman: Trumpet 1

Rob Parton: Trumpet 1

Dave Katz: Trumpet 2

Mark Olen: Trumpet 3

Chad McCullough: Trumpet 4

Dan Johnson: Lead Trombone

Steve Duncan: Trombone 2

Tim Coffman: Trombone 3

Tom Matta: Bass Trombone

Ken Partyka: Lead Alto Sax

Dan Nicholson: Alto Sax 2

John Wojciechowski: Tenor Sax 1

Scott Burns: Tenor Sax 2

Ted Hogarth: Baritone Sax

Crystall String Section:

Shawn Stengel: Conductor

Michèle Lekas: Concertmaster

Violins:

Sam Battista

Hermine Gagné

Renée-Paule Gauthier

Vladimir Gebe

Yuriy Geyer

Lauren Lai

Jesus Linarez

Kjersti Nostbakken

Eric Pidlusi

Janis Sakai

Emi Tanabe

Azusa Tashiro

Violas:

Rebecca Swan (Principal)

Bethany Pereboom

Benton Wedge

Jay Pike

Susan Price

Celli:

Mark Lekas (Principal)

Kerena Fox

Julie Spring: Harp

2. Autumn Nocturne

Solos:

Chris Sargent: Piano Solo

Musicians:

Chris Sargent: Piano

Lawrence Kohut: Bass

Bob Rummage: Drums

Jim Gailloro: Flutes and Clarinet

F Horns:

Sharon Jones (Principal)

Mary Jo Neher

Phil Stanley

Matthew Oliphant

Trombones:

Dan Johnson (Principal)

Steve Duncan

Tim Coffman

Tom Matta

John Blane: Tuba

Bobby Everson: Percussion

Rich Trelease: Percussion

Crystall String Section:

(SAME LINE UP AS TRACK 1)

3. Flor de Lis

Solos:

Fareed Haque: Guitar

Jim Gailloreto: Soprano Sax

Musicians:

Marshall Vente: Piano

Scott Mason: Electric Bass

Bob Rummage: Drums

Fareed Haque: Guitar

Kirk Garrison: Trumpet 1

Carey Deadman: Trumpet 2

Andy Baker: Trombone

Jim Gailloreto: Soprano and Alto Sax

Steve Eisen: Tenor Sax

Linda Van Dyke: Baritone Sax

Geraldo de Olivera: Percussion

Luiz Ewerling: Percussion

4. Love Dance

Solos:

Jeremy Kahn: Piano Solo

Musicians:

Jeremy Kahn: Piano

Lawrence Kohut: Electric Bass

Tom Hipkind: Drums

Kraig McCreary: Guitar

Paul Mutzabaugh: Guitar

Rich Trelease: Percussion

Crystall String Section:

(SAME LINE UP AS TRACK 1)

5. I Just Found Out About Love

Solos:

Jim Gailloreto: Alto sax

Musicians:

Jeremy Kahn: Piano

Lawrence Kohut: Bass

Bob Rummage: Drums

Carey Deadman: Trumpet 1

Marty Tilton: Trumpet 2

Dan Johnson: Trombone

Jim Gailloreto: Alto Sax

Jim Massoth: Tenor Sax

Linda Van Dyke: Baritone Sax

6. Yellow Days

Solos:

Jeremy Kahn: Piano Solo

Musicians:

Jeremy Kahn: Piano

Lawrence Kohut: Bass

Bob Rummage: Drums

Rich Trelease: Additional Drums

F Horns:

Sharon Jones (Principal)

Mary Jo Neher

Phil Stanley

Matthew Oliphant

John Blane: Tuba

Carey Deadman: Trumpet 1

Marty Tilton: Trumpet 2

Dan Johnson: Trombone

Jim Gailloreto: Alto Sax

Jim Massoth: Tenor Sax

Crystall String Section:

(SAME LINE UP AS TRACK 1)

7. Brigas Nunca Mais

Solos:

Fareed Haque: Guitar

Steve Eisen: Flute

Musicians:

Marshall Vente: Piano

Scott Mason: Electric Bass

Bob Rummage: Drums

Fareed Haque: Guitar

Kirk Garrison: Trumpet 1 & Flugelhorn

Carey Deadman: Trumpet 2 & Flugelhorn

Andy Baker: Trombone

Jim Gailloreto: Alto Sax & Flute

Steve Eisen: Tenor Sax & Flute

Linda Van Dyke: Bass Clarinet & Bari Sax

Geraldo de Olivera: Percussion

Luiz Ewerling: Percussion

8. Social Call

Solos:

Josie Falbo: Vocal Solo

Geoff Bradfield: Tenor Sax Solo

Steve Million: Piano Solo

Musicians:

Steve Million: Piano

Eric Hochberg: Bass

Bob Rummage: Drums

Geoff Bradfield: Tenor Sax

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