

GOING FOR ADDS: AUGUST 7th, 2026 **FILE:** JAZZ VOX

ARTIST: AMBER WEEKES

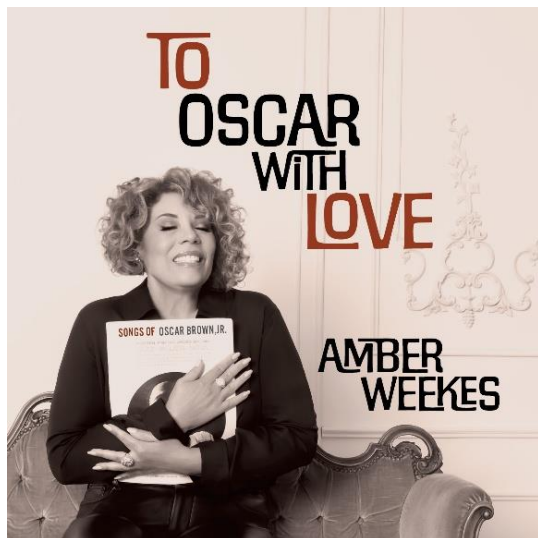
TITLE: TO OSCAR WITH LOVE

LABEL: AMBER INN RECORDS

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BARCODE: 85218 14686 3

WEBSITE: www.amberweekes.com



TRACKS

1. MISTER KICKS (Featuring Keith Fiddmont) – 2:36 (Oscar Brown, Jr.)
2. *AFRO BLUE – 4:08 (Mongo Santamaria and Oscar Brown Jr.)
3. *STRONG MAN - (Featuring Paul Jackson, Jr. & Mark Cargill) – 5:22 (Oscar Brown, Jr.)
4. *BUT I WAS COOL (Featuring Glen Berger) – 3:07 (Oscar Brown Jr)
5. BROWN BABY – 5:26 (Oscar Brown, Jr.)
6. HAZEL'S HIPS - 2:34 (Produced by Mark Cargill and Trevor Ware) (Oscar Brown, Jr.)
7. *RAGS AND OLD IRON – 6:33 (OSCAR BROWN JR.)
8. *HUM DRUM BLUES (Featuring Adam "Aejaye" Jackson, Paul Jackson, Jr., Philip Whack) – 3:22 (Oscar Brown, Jr.)
9. THE SNAKE – (Featuring Scotty Barnhart) – 4:42 (Oscar Brown, Jr.)
10. *WORK SONG (Featuring Tony Campodonico and Mark Cargill) – 2:53 (Nat Adderly, Oscar Brown, Jr.)
11. *A LADIES MAN (Featuring Adam "Aejaye" Jackson, Tony Campodonico, and Tom Luer) – 5:16 (Oscar Brown, Jr.)
12. *A TREE AND ME (Featuring Tony Campodonico, Paul Jackson, Jr.) - 6:23 (Oscar Brown, Jr.)

TOTAL RUN TIME 50:22

*Strings and Horns arranged and conducted by Mark Cargill

Executive Producer Amber Weekes

Producer & Arranger Mark Cargill

Mixed & Engineered by Gregory Cook & Mark Cargill

Mastered by Gregory Cook

Recorded at CCIMEDIA Studio in Gardena CA.

ABOUT

LA-based jazz vocalist and recording artist Amber Weekes fulfills her musical destiny with the release of her new album, ***To Oscar with Love***, which celebrates the late, great singer-songwriter, poet and Civil Rights activist Oscar Brown, Jr., who used his many talents to impart his wit and wisdom about the lived experience of Black Americans.

"Oscar Brown, Jr. is one of my musical heroes, perhaps the biggest one," says Weekes. "It was a privilege to get to know both the man and his music. My hope is that ***To Oscar with Love*** will introduce him to new generations, making him as memorable to them as he continues to be to me."

When, as a child, she first heard "The Snake" on the car radio during a family excursion, it fired her imagination. "My mother made us stop what we were doing to listen," Weekes recalls. "She wanted us to hear the moral lesson in it," she remembers. Her mother need not have worried. Brown's music, his persona, and his unique way with a story hooked a young Amber right away, beginning what has become a lifelong fascination with his artistry. Now, nearly five decades later -- and just before Brown would have turned 100 on October 10, 2026 -- she marks his centennial with a collection of his songs that resonate in today's world just as much as they did back then. Weekes has included her seductive rendition of "The Snake" on this album, featuring an evocative trumpet solo by Count Basie Orchestra director **Scotty Barnhart**.

Weekes did more than just listen. She began her own singing career, feeling in her bones that one day she would produce an album exclusively focused on his work. That album, Weekes' fifth as a leader, has come to fruition at last. She feels blessed to have had expert support and guidance along the way, especially from her producer and arranger, string master, **Mark Cargill**, and also from **Sue Raney**, the legendary vocal coach and film/radio/television/jazz artist who has been there for her for much of her career. "What I do now is in no small part because of Sue," Weekes maintains, "and she deserves her flowers while she is here to receive them. It has also been a thrill to have Mark in the recording booth in partnership with his amazing sound engineer Greg Cook."

The album features 12 of Brown's musical masterpieces on eight newly recorded tracks and four "refreshed" from Weekes' previous releases, ***Pure Imagination*** (2019) and ***Round Midnight-Reimagined*** (2021), which Cargill brilliantly burnishes with lush string timbres and complementary instrumental lines.

Over the years, Weekes has spent hours combing through Oscar's catalog -- laughing, crying, nodding in affirmation, contemplating life's ups and downs. With over 125 published compositions, choosing which of his songs to include was daunting.

On the other hand, some choices were easy. "Hazel's Hips" landed on her short list right away because it reminds her of her aunt's real-life romance with actor Sidney Poitier, one of the famous customers who frequented Weekes Luncheonette, her grandparents' popular eatery in Sugar Hill, Harlem. There, Weekes' father, aunts, uncle and other relatives often served such celebrated musicians and actors as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Billy Strayhorn, Diahann Carroll, and Harry Belafonte.

Weekes found her own way of narrating the tale from a female perspective, using anecdotes about that famous family romance to inform her characterizations. Lyrics that talk about a waitress whose "eyes are divine and her hair is so fine, but her hips bring the tips" resonated with Weekes, especially when that waitress is hip enough to get the last laugh.

The deep connection Weekes feels with all 12 of the songs on the album is palpable. These are songs that truly speak to the profound emotion and humanity of everyday life, spun as only Brown could spin them with his sly lyrics and inimitable straight-from-the-heart style.

"Mister Kicks" -- which Weekes first recorded on her 2020 album, ***Pure Imagination*** -- was Brown's theme song, all about "the devil and the mischief people can get themselves into." "Afro Blue," as she put it, "leans into the roots of Africa that all of us from the African Diaspora have," as does "Brown Baby," a timeless, tender expression of the hopes and dreams Brown had for his children, which Weekes related to as a child born during the Civil Rights Era. "Work Song" touched her because it revealed another dimension of the Black experience, highlighting the harshness of incarceration.

In her teens, she discovered "Ladies Man," a cautionary tale, and was drawn to Brown's uncommon honesty and ability to genuinely laugh at himself. She was eager to record "A Tree and Me" because, as she put it, "it speaks of wishes for one's earthly remains," emphasizing that "Oscar was a master of commentary on the human condition and the lives of Black people in this country."

Weekes has always appreciated that Brown could still find a happy note when things became a drag, as in "Hum Drum Blues." And with **Adam "Aejaye" Jackson** standing in as the voice of the Rag Man, she

captured Brown's perspectives on an earlier time with her version of "Rags and Old Iron," his ode to the chant of a poor street vendor. Jackson was a natural to take the lead on "Ladies Man" as well, and he and she perform "Hum Drum Blues" as a delightful duet.

Weekes was thrilled to meet Brown when they both were living in Los Angeles. When she mentioned that she had recorded "Hazel's Hips," he was impressed right away, letting her know that she was the only woman he knew that had done it. Later, he invited her to perform it with him at a fundraiser for Donnie I. Betts' 2007 documentary, ***Music Is My Life, Politics My Mistress: The Story of Oscar Brown, Jr.*** In the days leading up to the event, he became Weekes' most famous houseguest. The friendship developed further shortly before his death, strengthening her desire to honor him "someday" by recording an album of his music. "I always knew that day would come," she confirms, and "his centennial just seemed to be the right time."

Weekes will perform music from ***To Oscar with Love*** in Denver on October 26 as part of a centennial celebration honoring Brown in which Betts' film will be screened.

Amber Weekes

Raised in Los Angeles in a home filled with the sounds of Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, Barbara Streisand, Diahann Carroll, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, and Nancy Wilson, Weekes was born to sing. She has performed as a classic and contemporary jazz vocalist all around the United States and the world, including Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. She is a frequent headliner at Hollywood's famed Catalina Jazz Club on Sunset Boulevard. Weekes' jazz albums have ranked high as some of America's best. With each performance and project, she continues to carry the torch for the great legacy of jazz.

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