

ALBUM QUOTES

Story Songs

“There is a fragile vulnerability in voices of the legendary vocalists. Only the truly great singers have it. Betty Buckley does. When she sings, her voice reaches out to embrace your heart. And for those magical moments, you are suspended in a state of bliss and emotional simpatico.

The CD shows off Buckley’s eclectic taste in music. The songs range from Radiohead, Peter Gabriel, Joni Mitchell and Sting to theater composers Stephen Schwartz and Jason Robert Brown.”

- Starla Smith – *Equality365.com* – April 8 2017

“Betty Buckley’s new 2-CD release is called “Story Songs.” The title is perfect because each tune becomes a mini three-act play in the fresh interpretations of this wonderful singer-actor, whether she is applying her talent to a classic theater song (“You’ve Got To Be Taught”) or Radiohead’s “High and Dry.”

Working with a terrific quartet of musicians, led by Christian Jacob on the piano, Buckley digs so deep into the lyrics of each tune that they all become theater songs, whether or not they were written with that intention.”

- Joe Meyers – *Blog.CTNews.Com* – April 11, 2017

“Betty Buckley likes to tell stories. On her latest disc, *Story Songs*, which may arguably be her finest album in years, she proves once again why she is a definitive teller of tales. With ease, she also proves why her vocals are so revered.

Buckley has the gift to rivet the listener with simple nuances, gentle pauses, and electrifying tones that are spine-tingling. In short, she’s a master story teller at the top of her game here.

The album offers these epic songs stamped with her signature attention to every subtlety unforgettable. Buckley’s simpatico with these stellar musicians in the tight band and is electric. The collaboration of the musicians with such a lofty array of songwriters has yielded such emotionally inspired vocal interpretations, that it’s hard to imagine anyone else singing them. They are more than “covers” of great songs: they are authentic, consummate renditions of a greatness that defies category.”

- John Hoglund – *CabaretScenes.org* – May 26, 2017

Ghostlight

USA Today chose *GHOSTLIGHT* as one of the Top 5 albums of 2015

Supported by T Bone Burnett's stark production, the veteran singer and actress stripped standards down to their bare essence, approaching them with a mix of delicacy and conviction that was haunting.

-Elysa Gardner – USA Today – December 18, 2014

The return of the much-missed Betty Buckley – with six concerts at Joe’s Pub in support of her superior pop album, “Ghostlight,” is a special occasion. The record, produced by her fellow Texan, T Bone Burnett, touches all four corners of Ms. Buckley’s complicated sensibility: the Texan country girl, the Broadway diva, the New Age jazz singer and the aficionado of great, offbeat pop songs. The songwriters include Abbey Lincoln, Tom Waits, Jacques Brel and Mary Chapin Carpenter.

-Stephen Holden – The New York Times – October 3, 2014

Betty Buckley is about finding her own soul in the soul of a song and adding to it in a way that makes it her own while making it irresistible to us. She is the opposite of a belter: she is, instead, an artist of restraint. We’re disarmed in her presence. I’m neither exaggerating nor making this up, as you will find listening to “Ghostlight,” surely her most accomplished album to date.

Counter-intuitive describes so many pleasures of Betty Lynn Buckley’s art, and as good as these selections are, it’s the non-theater songs that I keep returning to. Her albums are full of songs by contemporary songsmiths Betty admires – my first infatuation came with her take on Mary Chapin Carpenter’s “Come on Come On,” so brilliant the word “cover” seem libelous. But her choices for “Ghostlight” are flat out remarkable.

- Jeremy Gerard

T Bone Burnett has captured...(a) restrained, subtly innovative mix of songs from the Great American Songbook, Broadway, the 1960s and contemporary songwriters. The disc opens with Lerner and Loewe's "Come to Me, Bend to Me" in a minimal, almost pop-country arrangement, a little reminiscent of Willie Nelson, that focuses the attention on the haunting melody. It's a high point of the disc.

A slow, deliberate "Bewitched" leads into a bewitching "This Nearly Was Mine," one of the most beautiful show tunes ever written, especially touching in Buckley's exquisite phrasing. Abbey Lincoln's lovely "Throw It Away" showcases the effectiveness of Buckley's subdued delivery.

The tasteful and often imaginative arrangements, consistent and well-imagined atmospherics, and...well-chosen material make "Ghostlight" a worthy testament to the long-running success of both Betty Lynn Buckley and T Bone Burnett, two of the standout artists of their generation.

- *Jon Sobel - Classiclite.com - September 5, 2014*

Of all the Broadway divas, my favorite is Betty Buckley. She won a Tony singing "Memory" in "Cats," and she broke my heart as Norma Desmond in "Sunset Boulevard," with the best rendition of "As If We Never Said Goodbye" you'll ever hear. She has a new album out, "Ghostlight," produced by T Bone Burnett...and in honor of the occasion, here are my five favorite Betty Buckley songs of all time."

- *Michael Riedel - New York Post - October 8, 2014*

The Grammy-nominated singer has teamed up with her childhood friend T Bone Burnett for "Ghostlight," an evocative blend of show tunes, standards, and rock. The album, including a limited art-box edition that will be available in October, was released earlier this month.

- *Mary Lyn Maiscott - Vanity Fair - September 25, 2014*

Intimate as the album is, one never forgets Buckley's power. The force she keeps in check ripples under the surface as she caresses the lyrics and melodies. Each song is backed simply by a handful of well-chosen instruments that vary among the numbers – a piano, electric guitar, drums, bass, cello, under the unerring ear of producer T Bone Burnett, who knows his singer well. The famed songwriter/musician, who pitches in on the steel guitar, is a childhood friend who began recording her when they were both 19.

One unexpected pleasure for audiences is the choice of "Lazy Afternoon" from "The Golden Apple"...don't expect anyone to sing the song the way Buckley does. That, in part, is due to the uniqueness of her voice, at once so rich, precise, lush and clear. But it's also because she shines a light on different facets of the songs than those that fit into the larger musical. Who knew the usually brassy "Bewitched" from "Pal Joey" could brim with wonder that reminds us of the aching emptiness that precedes falling in love?

The journey twists around raw and tender places in the heart, yet the album is affirming. Each mini-story lifts us closer to a larger understanding that moves us from the darkness toward the light that can shine from a single voice singing in the dark.

-Nancy Churnin – Dallas Morning News – October 9, 2014

"Ghostlight" is a dreamy compilation of beloved Broadway showtunes, quintessential standards from the American Songbook, songs from the bands of the 60s, and tunes from contemporary singer/songwriters. As a whole and individually, this record and each track transplants listeners into the dimly lit ether of an empty theatre. Like figures dancing around the gleaming light, Betty Buckley's voice on each track catches our attention. We are drawn to the smoky, shadow play she creates, aurally appealing to our hearts, imaginations, and souls. With a life lived on the stage, Betty Buckley sings with all the magic that a performer can muster and makes "Ghostlight" one of the most tender yet provocative celebrations of a modern American legend imaginable.

T Bone Burnett and Betty Buckley have gifted listeners with a perfect album. No one song is weaker or stronger than the others it accompanies, making picking standouts incredibly hard. In fact, the songs I favor on the album simply come from having more familiarity with them over others. For example, "Come to Me, Bend to Me" from "Brigadoon," "If You Go Away" from "Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris," the standard "Bewitched," and "This Nearly Was Mine" from "South Pacific" inspire awe as each has been masterfully arranged for and performed by Betty Buckley. Yet songs like Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies," Henry N. Mancini's "Dreamsville," Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan's "Take It With Me When I Go," and Mary Chapin Carpenter's "Where Time Stands Still," which I'm less familiar with, all appeal to me and impress me with their pristinely articulated and richly evocative artistry.

I can honestly say that I doubt I've ever come across an album as perfectly constructed and put together as "Ghostlight." Whether you are a fan of Betty Buckley or not, whether you are familiar with T Bone Burnett's lauded production skills or not, whether you're a jazz aficionado or novice (like me), "Ghostlight" is an album you should own. In the age of buying a digital single song or two from an entire album, the art of creating a record that is stirring from beginning to end is almost completely gone. Yet, T Bone Burnett and Betty Buckley definitely resuscitate it with "Ghostlight." Everything about this CD works from beginning to end.

- *David Clarke - BroadwayWorld.com - October 2, 2014*

Forging ahead into new territory...all hail "Ghostlight," the shimmering, moody new album from Texas's finest, Betty Buckley, which sounds positively experimental in comparison. There has always been a freedom in Buckley's song choices that, while paying glances obeisance to her status as a Broadway leading lady, suggests an independence and elegant willfulness.

She has never been a conventional belter, and in this eclectic selection of standards, torchy ballads and soft rock and country songs, she takes some of the most familiar lyrics in the American songbook to darker, outlying terrain – exposing them to the ghostlight of the title and stripping them back to a kind of minimalist perfection. She is joined in her quest by producer T Bone Burnett, a life-long friend, who is responsible for the album’s stark, spacey beauty.

Looking back to a review I wrote of her 1993 record “Children Will Listen” for “The Gramophone Good Musicals CD Guide,” I note my remark that Buckley is “Refreshingly unafraid to try something different...[her] voice is unusual – husky and intense – often falling away almost to a murmur...” I would change little about those observations today, beyond adding that the years have simply brought greater depth and resonance to her interpretations.

She never forces the issue – as these beautiful versions of “Body and Soul,” “Bewitched” and “This Nearly Was Mine” aver, pressing all the right emotional buttons without ever going over the top. Heartbreak is only a note away. “Lazy Afternoon” takes on an extraordinary air of mystery, hinting that anything could materialize out of the haze.

But the most interesting tracks fall in the album’s second half. There’s the sublime take on the Jefferson Airplane number “Comin Back to Me,” with its exquisite string arrangement, a poignant “Take It With Me When I Go,” and an honest, lyrical reading of Mary Chapin Carpenter’s “When Time Stands Still.” Effortlessly majestic.

- *Piers Ford – cry-me-a-torch-song.com – October 20, 2014*