

After knowing Simone Honijk for a couple of decades, as well as following her music, I can say with confidence that she is an 'illuminant'. The definition of this lovely word, in her case, is 'someone shining light on an object'. The reason that I use this term for Simone is that every album she has recorded had a repertoire where she brought to light iconic musicians' compositions deserving more attention.

This album, whose title is inspired by a phrase from the first track, "Cinnamon and Clove", is a tribute to Johnny Mandel. When Mandel passed away in 2020, most obituaries praised him for his award-winning movie and TV soundtracks. Simone has chosen 11 of his songs meant to be sung and enjoyed by singers. Though there are a couple of songs that are well known, Simone has intentionally shed light on some beautiful Mandel gems that should join the ranks of the best-loved standards.

Hats off, as well, to bassist Thomas Winther Andersen, for his creative contribution in arranging a few of the songs. Listeners' ears may be titillated with his modern jazz-fusion version of "The Shadow of Your Smile" - which has come a long way since its appearance in "Sandpiper" in 1965. I especially like his tastefully spartan version of "You Are There" with a beautiful interplay of trumpet, clarinet, and drums. And "Close Enough for Love", one of the first Mandel vocal standards in Simone's ears - also a favourite of Tony Bennett - is a song I can never get enough of either.

As always, Simone Honijk, has worked on this project with whole heart: choosing each instrumentalist for their own individual sound, while searching and finding hidden pearls to spotlight. She's done it again and Mandel would be pleased!

Deborah J. Carter