

Dennis Day's new CD

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When a vocalist, particularly an African-American male singer, is confident enough to record songs so strongly associated with Johnny Hartman, Joe Williams, Nat "King" Cole and Sammy Davis, Jr., you question his bravado and wait to listen to the result of such audacity.

Dennis Day is not afraid of the challenge, and if he doesn't completely wrest the tunes from their progenitors, he puts his unique stamp and vibrato on a few of these standards from the American songbook.

What stands out most with this Harlem-based singer is his versatility. Day's pleasant baritone, with dollops of second-tenor silkiness, is as warm and inviting on ballads as it is bouncy and exciting on the up-tempo tunes. From the opening, "Caravan," you know it will be a global excursion of melodies with touches of Brazil, Africa, the Mississippi Delta, London and delightful forays into those evergreens of Tin Pan Alley.

On "All Things in Time," the title of this his first jazz CD, Day is backed by some of the finest musicians one can summon, including pianist Danny Mixon, trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, trumpeter Joey Morant, pianist John Dimartino and vibist Stefon Harris. His version of "Everything Must Change" is a perfect showcase for his range and interpretative skills, and together with the obligato from the flutist, they provide an irresistible comfort



zone. Cue the lovers!

The lovers will also welcome Day's lilting sway on "Desafinado" and his mellifluous swing on "Taking a Chance on Love," which is accentuated by his choice of selecting some rarely sung lyrics. Day's passion for words is no surprise for a musician who is also a very fine writer and whose byline used to grace these pages.

But Day should not even think about banging out those articles anymore. By putting those words to music, he has truly found his *métier* as well as his meter, whether on novelty tunes or the folkloristic

"Trouble Down Below."

After the lovers have expended their romantic inclinations, Day has a few spirited numbers to get to to resume their romp around the globe, but they had better hurry, because the singer is a veritable will o' wisp on "The Trolley Song," which segues neatly into "Get Me to the Church on Time."

Yes, Day's debut jazz CD pays homage to those singers he admires, but this is his moment, and it's a good chance this isn't the last time we'll hear from him. How about "Night and Day"? Now, there's a tune that fits him to a tee, one he can really turn to.