

Barbra, Bette and Broadway: Music for Holiday Wishlists

By ROLAND F. PALMER

I hope you haven't completed your holiday wish lists yet because I have four great new CDs to recommend for all you Barbra, Bette, and Broadway fans out there. Let's start with Barbra Streisand's *The Movie Album*. Having recently returned from a trip to Broadway where I saw a 10-story billboard promoting Barbra's newest album, I immediately went out and got a copy.

The Movie Album features 12 all new recordings including "Smile" (from *Modern Times*, 1936), "Moon River" (from *Breakfast At Tiffany's*, 1961), "How Do You Keep The Music Playing?" (from *Best Friends*, 1982), and "I'm In The Mood For Love" (from *Every Night At Eight*, 1935). By far one of the most surprising tracks (and one of my favorites) is "Calling You" (from *Bagdad Café*, 1988), for which composer Bob Telson wrote a new third verse especially for this recording.

This is Barbra's fourth decade of recording, and *The Movie Album* marks her 60th album release. The insert contains Barbra's reflections on each song chosen for the album and there is a special limited edition CD/DVD package available that features selected video performances. The album is beautifully orchestrated and arranged and is sure to be a winner for Streisand and movie fans alike this holiday season. You should also be sure to check out Barbra's web site if you've never checked it out before.

Next up we have Bette Midler's newest CD release *Bette Midler Sings The Rosemary Clooney Songbook*. The concept and inspiration for the album comes from Bette's original piano man, Barry Manilow, and also includes special guest Linda Ronstadt. The album was recorded using a full orchestra and includes 11 tracks including "You'll Never Know," "On A Slow Boat To China" (duet with Barry



Bette Midler



Barbra Streisand

Barbra Streisand
The Movie Album
(Columbia Records)
www.columbiarecords.com

Bette Midler
Bette Midler Sings The Rosemary Clooney Songbook
(Columbia Records)
www.columbiarecords.com

Various Artists
Broadway Today
(Sony Classical)
www.broadwaytodaymusic.com

Various Artists
Ultimate Broadway 2
(RCA Victor Group)
www.rcavictor.com

Manilow), "In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening," "Sisters" (duet with Linda Ronstadt), and "White Christmas."

Bette has just announced her North American "Kiss My Brass" tour. Tickets are now on sale for venues across North America, including January 17 & 18 at Madison Square Garden and January 20 at the Fleet Center (Boston). If you've always wanted to experience the *Divine Miss M*, here is your chance – and what a great gift for that someone special (hint, hint). You can find the tour schedule online at www.bettemidler.com. If you can't see her live, then I highly recommend this CD for all Bette and Rosie fans alike, or better yet do what I did and get tickets to the show and the CD.

To round out my recommendations I recently purchased two compilation CDs that feature some of the best songs from the original cast recordings of the newest Broadway musicals: *Broadway*

Today features twelve tracks plus a bonus track featuring Catherine Zeta-Jones, Renee Zellweger & Ensemble from the recent hit movie *Chicago*. You'll hear songs from *Hairspray* (with Harvey Feinstein), *Mamma Mia*, *The Producers* (with Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick), and *Movin' Out* (with Michael Cavanaugh)

Ultimate Broadway 2 features twenty tracks and covers the last three years of Broadway, featuring songs from new musicals as well as some of the recent revivals. The great news for you is that not a single song is repeated on these two CDs, so I recommend you get them both. Happy musical holidays! ▼

Roland Palmer lives in Hinesburg, Vermont and will be returning to NYC in January 2004 to fulfill a life-long dream of experiencing the *Divine Miss M* live and in person, while taking in a few more Broadway shows.

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