

review **jazz****MY ROMANCE**

Matthew Quek
TGA

★★★★☆

My Romance, a classic ballad by Rodgers and Hart, is also the title of local singer Matthew Quek's album. He covers a dozen jazz standards and Broadway tunes (Nat King Cole's L-O-V-E, My Funny Valentine, It Had To Be You).



The album is produced by ace pianist Jeremy Monteiro, who also plays on the recording.

Monteiro, who has heard and played with many of the top names in jazz, summed up Quek's as a "pleasant voice in the style of the Broadway artists who could also sing jazz standards".

The time-tested durability and sheer quality of the material make them safe choices and guarantee easy listening.

At the same time, they also invite unflattering comparisons with classic interpretations over the decades.

There is a good balance between voice and instruments. I enjoyed Shawn Letts' Stan Getz-influenced cool school tenor sax obligattos on I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face.

And the inclusion of Fabian Lim's flute in the mix enhances the romantic mood.

The star though is Monteiro, whose playing is effortless without being facile. Check out his ravishing solo on All The Way.

If jazz rather than Broadway is his true goal, the challenge for Quek is to improvise on these great melodies and to live their lyrics so as to be able to communicate the emotional core beneath their surface splendours.

S.Y. Whang