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Broadway and Beyond: 3 Discs from 3 Grand Ladies

11/3/2004

XM 28 On Broadway

"Broadway and Beyond" for November 4, 2004

I'd like to spend today telling you a little bit about some CDs that are getting a lot of play in my home right now. They're 3 new releases featuring 3 women. One of them I know you know and two of them I hope you will consider getting acquainted with.

I'll start with the incomparable Barbara Cook. [DRG Records](#) has just brought her 1959 "**From the Heart**" recording out on compact disc. The album celebrates the collaboration of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart and features a plethora of standards that Cook renders exquisitely. I'd be hard pressed to pick a favorite here. Perhaps I could go with her haunting rendition of "My Funny Valentine". I could easily be swayed to pick her lovely vocals on "There's a Small Hotel." Maybe even the disc's final track, a gorgeous "Where or When." I don't know – all I know is that I'm delighted to have this in the collection and you will be too.

The second disc that has been getting a lot of Andy play-time comes from [Elaine St. George](#) and is called "**That Old-Fashioned Love**". To describe St. George's voice, I'm simply going to rely on a quote from a colleague at Time Out New York, with whom I agree. He writes that "Cook and St. George must have been separated at birth. St. George hits the same gorgeous, shimmering notes as the grand dame of cabaret." On this disc, you'll find St. George's renderings of everything from Mercer and Kern's "I'm Old Fashioned" to Sondheim's "So Many People." I highly recommend it.

Finally, you heard me raving a few weeks back about Suzzanne Douglas' performance in "Hallelujah, Baby!". Now this gifted actress and singer has released (on a [JOG Music](#) disc) "**This Moment, A Tribute to Harold Arlen**." On this grand disc, Douglas moves from blues-y to soulful to wistful with her silky and often smokily sensual voice. Among some favorites here: a deeply felt "If I Only Had a Heart" (she does both the Scarecrow and Tin Man's roles beautifully); a stirring "My Shining Hour" and the melodious "The Man That Got Away". This third disc is also a must have in my opinion.