

New Jersey **Jazz** Society

January 2022

Vancouver-based vocalist Darlene Cooper and pianist Bill Sample, partners musically and as a married couple, have assumed the name **WILD BLUE HERONS** for their new album, *You & I* (Self-produced). Cooper's inspirations for the album are the female vocalists who have been so significant in bringing so many terrific songs to the consciousness of the listening public, singers like Ella Fitzgerald, Nancy Wilson and Shirley Horn. Her program includes many standards such as "The Nearness of You," "It Had to Be You," "The Way You Look Tonight," "Lush Life" and "I'll Be Seeing You." Her opener, "I Wish I'd Met You," is a too often overlooked gem with music by Johnny Mandel and lyrics by Richard Rodney Bennett and Frank Underwood. It sets the bar high and Cooper's vocalizing continues on that level for the entire program. Her two originals, written with Sample, fit nicely into the package. One song that is particularly interesting is the rarely recorded "An Older Man Is Like an Elegant Wine." Cooper and Sample have produced a winner with *You & I*.

Joe Lang