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Te Llevo Bajo la Piel: The Great American Songbook goes Latino

Yolanda Duke

Amigos Music Co. - AMM-10955

Available from [Amazon.com](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange

by **Mark S. Tucker**

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Now this was a great idea: take the resurgence of interest in one of the killerest periods in music history and send it to Spanish classes! After all, we Norte Americanos have been going crazy over samba, ranchero, and all those irresistible Latino modalities, so why not translate our gig into another language via a songstress who carries the strains in a perfect balance between two cultures? Not only that, but several of the best Latinate arrangers in the business gussy everything up with full band orchestrations (save for one cut, *Contigo en la Distancia*, where Arturo Sandoval did everything except sing!), treading a tightrope between traditional Northern Mancini/Riddle/etc. sensibilities and the classic style with percussionistics in Middle and South American flavors.

Yolanda Duke has a strong confident voice and, when she wants to, can belt it out like Shirley Bassey. Nor does she lack an ounce of passion, as the takes on Sedaka's *The Hungry Years* (*Extrano Aquellos Anos*) and an Italian re-do of *Dios, Como te Amo!* (*Dio, Come Ti Amo!*) demonstrate, the latter of which will have Fellini applauding from the grave. My favorite cut? The cha-cha version of *Blue Moon*, although the Myrta Silva medley is awfully attractive with its foxtrot tango-esque back beat and lurid foregrounds...but no! Ya hafta love cha-cha-cha (it's in the Bible somewhere, I think) and so *Blue Moon* is my choice.

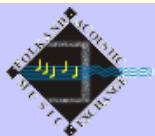
The liner photos are interesting, with Duke looking a couple of times like a cross between Bette Midler and Todd Rundgren in bird-of-paradised rainbow hair (and even platinum blonde). In other poses, she's either smoldering with desire like Mae West or else looking like she's warning you not to mess around or she'll rip your lungs out, Jack...and that, I think, is what informs the no-compromises nature of everything here. Duke doesn't just sing from heart and soul but also backbone, and I've no doubt you don't fool around with her or her music unless you want a quick trip to bruises and the back alley. Good! Wallflowers are all very well, but they sure as hell couldn't tackle this CD without self-immolating like the last of night-time shadows in morning sun. So be warned: *Te Llevo Bajo la Piel* isn't for the weak and timid, but if you have the fortitude and stamina—cause, many times, this thing smokes!—you'll be partying and swooning...in a conga line.

Track List:

- La Neblina de Tu Amor (Misty) (Garner / Burke)
- Te Llevo Bajo la Piel (I've Got You Under My Skin) (Cole Porter)
- Contigo en la Distancia (Cesar Portillo de la Luz)
- Eso Que Llaman Amor (What Is This Thing Called Love?) (Cole Porter)
- Muchos Besos (Rafael Hernandez)
- Dios Como Te Amo! (Domenico Modugno)
- Nadie Me Lo Podra Quitar (They Can't Take That Away From Me) (Gershwin / Gershwin)
- Luna Azul (Blue Moon) (Hart / Rodgders)
- Myrta Silva's Medley: Tengo Que Acostumbrarme / Tu No Sabes Nada / Fin de un Amor (Myrta Silva)
- Extrño Aquellos Años (The Hungry Years) (Sedaka / Greenfield)
- Dio, Come Ti Amo! (version Italiana) (Domenico Modugno)

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