


On Richard Rodgers' Piano

John Bucchino plays classic Rodgers songs on the composer's own Steinway



1. Do Re Mi / The Surrey With The Fringe On Top
2. My Favorite Things
3. Isn't It Romantic?
4. Edelweiss
5. My Romance
6. It Might As Well Be Spring
7. The Lady Is A Tramp
8. Where Or When
9. You Took Advantage Of Me
10. If I Loved You
11. My Funny Valentine
12. Something Good
13. Bonus Track: Bewitched



The piano was built in 1938...

It was purchased by Richard Rodgers for \$1925.00 (minus a discount for being a "Steinway artist") and was delivered to him at 50 East 77th St. in New York City on March 28th, 1939. It is a Steinway B which, somewhere along the line, had extra lead weights put into the keys, giving it a much heavier action than most pianos. No one knows why the weights are there, but family members are fairly certain Rodgers purchased the piano that way and did not have the weights put in himself. One can only assume he preferred the heavier action. This alteration, however, along with its age and condition, make it a challenging instrument to play. It constrained, frustrated, guided, and ultimately inspired me in a way no other piano has.

Between May 12th and 30th, 2003, during a series of eight sessions, I played (and played with) these marvelous songs, many of which were no doubt born on this very instrument. Since I play purely by ear and by instinct, none of these arrangements were written down or even (with the exception of the basic structure of "My Favorite Things") premeditated. We'd turn on the machines, and for a couple of hours, I'd call out one Rodgers title after another and improvise wildly different versions as the spirit moved me. Then came the task of deciding which version of each song to include. I chose those takes in which I felt I'd responded in the most intuitive and spontaneous way to the instrument itself. I also tended to choose those where the song was at least somewhat recognizable (though there is a dissonant, nearly 12-tone version of "If I Loved You" that was tempting...) What you hear are all single takes. There was no overdubbing, no editing of takes together for perfection's sake. This is exactly what happened in the moment in what turned out to be a deeply rewarding collaboration - a collaboration with Richard Rodgers' piano.

Enormous thanks to Rob Darling, who recorded and mixed these tracks with such sensitive musicality. Thanks always to Mario Vaz De Mello, wonderful composer and dear friend, who mastered this recording with his usual care and consummate skill. Thanks to Asami Alberti, piano technician extraordinaire. Boundless love and gratitude to Adam Guettel, the owner of his grandfather's piano, for allowing me to record this in his home studio, and for so inspiring me with his own astonishing work. Thanks to everyone at the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization for their constant support whether I'm writing or playing. Thanks to Chris Janssen for wise and generous design help. Thank you, Mom, for playing me Carousel when I was a kid and for sharing your love of this music, and Dad, for bringing me a new record every Friday (and not forcing me to take piano lessons). Many thanks to Dan Binstock, David Cornue, Milena Govitch, Matt Mullin, Stephen Schwartz, Alan Silverman, Lucas Steele, Danny Whitman, and Cris Williamson for listening early on and helping me to believe.

“Here is great beauty and
humor and understanding,
as if Rodgers and Bucchino
are friends who never met,
united by a lovely old piano.”

— *Adam Guettel*

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PRODUCED BY John Bucchino

RECORDED & MIXED BY Rob Darling

MASTERED BY Mario Vaz De Mello

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