

## Media Reviews

### **Keeping In Simple – Self-Released January 2014**

*These two Californians are well matched. Philbin has a warm voice, an ear for lyrics, and phrases impressively. Levine's accompaniment provides just the kind of instrumental support that brings out the best in his vocal partner... Warm and intimate are two words that fit this collaboration between Philbin and Levine, a pair well suited to bring some musical pleasure into your days.*

JOE LANG, *Jersey Jazz* (April 2014)

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*The album title tells you what to expect and it delivers. Yet for all its simplicity in presentation, the skills of this delightful duo are vividly evident from the first bars. Judy Philbin is an experienced singer, well known in California, and has a classical background, studying voice, trumpet, piano and guitar, but has chosen to express herself in jazz and superior popular song. She is linked here with Adam Levine, an exceptional guitarist whose background includes studies at Berklee and with Joe Pass... Throughout this set, Judy's warm vocal sound blends beautifully with Adam's fluid instrumental work.*

BILL CROWTHER, *JazzMostly.com*

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Neal Losey from KCBX's *Morning Cup* gave me my first taste of Judy Philbin's voice when he started playing tracks from her new album *Keeping It Simple*, a collection of a dozen songs—nine classics and three originals. My first thought was, "Where have you been all my life, Judy Philbin?" Her voice is a bell-clear thing of beauty, playful, nuanced, and able to effortlessly convey emotion. [Read more...](#)

GLEN STARKEY, *SLO NewTimes* (January 29, 2014)

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*This splendid January 2014 release (self-produced) from Judy on vocals and Adam doing guitar shows the beauty of simple music that's done with talent and high-energy for the listener... nothing "hard" or "difficult" here at all, as evidenced by the excellent opener, "A Wink and a Smile"... it just doesn't get better than this, even on a sunny day! The joyous pace on "Django's Delight" will have you up & hop/skippin' 'round the room in a matter of only 2 or 3 notes – absolute fun! If mellow is your mood right now, it will only be enhanced by my personal favorite of the dozen tracks, "Skylark"... mighty fine jazz! I give Judy & Adam a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for listeners who demand a bit of vocal jazz in their listening experience. "EQ" (energy quotient) is 4.98. Get more information at Judy's website.*

DICK METCALF (aka Rotcod Zzaj), *Rotcodzzaj.com*

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*Vocalist Judy Philbin and guitarist Adam Levine explore the close confines of the jazz vocals-guitar duo... With all duos and duets, there is always the daunting "no place to hid" environment that requires performance levels above more elaborate ensemble... a duo performance like that of Philbin and Levine produces a recording, at once, that is warm and intimate. The pair easily accomplishes this with their compelling mixture of popular standards and originals... Philbin's voice is no nonsense, pliable and studied, easily slipping from the contemporary-folk "Keeping it Simple" into a period setting of "The Nearness of You."*

*Standout, over-the-top is a plaintively authentic reading of "Bésame Mucho." Levine summons that low Latin guitar and Philbin sings in the original Spanish. Oklahoma's "Surry with the Fringe on Top" bounces with mirth and fun, Philbin navigating R&H's modulations so that the song melds well with those surrounding it. As a total program, Keeping it Simple works well on every level, hitting all of the highpoints making it a very enjoyable disc.*

C. MICHAEL BAILEY, *AllAboutJazz.com* (Feb. 13, 2014)

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What a wonderful recording is that "Keeping It Simple"! I look forward to playing more of it when I return to New Orleans. I am currently covering the International Jazz Festival in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Congratulations on a fine effort, and let me know when you are coming to New Orleans...we would love to meet you!

MARYSE DEJEAN, WWOZ, New Orleans

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*...Keeping was motivated by a genuine love of the materials and form as well as a purity of stylistic approach. The crystalline beauty of Besame Mucho is a stand-out example, and Philbin invests it with respect and love... what's going on here with this pair is an exposition of plain ol', good ol', from-the-heart singing...Perhaps the most interesting cut, though, is Philbin's own gentle tough-love parting song, Don't be Easy on Me. I won't be a bit surprised if this song ends up, years from now, being a standard. It has that brilliant way with poetics that's so damnably difficult to frame without becoming cliché, overblown, or ridiculously stately...I was still myself pondering the enigmatic honesty of it days later, after several listens right off the bat. I can't think of even three other songs quite like this one.*

MARK S. TUCKER: [AcousticMusic.com](http://AcousticMusic.com)

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*Voice and guitar, that's it...Delightful, easy going stuff that just falls right in the pocket throughout. Check it out.*

CHRIS SPECTOR, Editor and Publisher, [www.midwestrecord.com](http://www.midwestrecord.com)