

Jazz Reviews

Featuring

John Pizzarelli

Maceo Parker

Harry Connick Jr.

Chick Corea

HARRY CONNICK, JR.

She

COLUMBIA CK 64376 • 1994

PERFORMANCE **3/5** SOUND QUALITY

Here are some words you wouldn't normally expect to read in a review of a Harry Connick Jr. album: power ballad, guitar solo, rock-'n'-roll, soul, robotic voice-over. They're all here—and less—on *She*, Connick's excursion into New Orleans funk and extended jams, and an album that is virtually without merit.

Though the album is a radical departure, not that much has changed for Connick. He is still a talented singer with real interpretive skills and a charming stage presence, and he still tackles too many chores he is unsuited for (writing and producing). Now he's just doing it in another genre.

She goes so far astray musically, you may find yourself reaching for the cover to make sure you're playing the right CD. When a mechanized voice drones endlessly about "the groove" and then gives way to a flacid jam called "Joe Slam and the Spaceship," it seems...unfortunate. But when it happens all over again near the end, patience is gone. Other low points include that power ballad "Honestly Now (Safety's Just Danger...Out of



Harry Connick Jr.

Place)" (has Connick been studying Meatloaf?) and "Booker."

Connick sings tightly and without character, often processing his voice to achieve various effects. Never rule out someone as talented as Connick—maybe he'll find his way to the heart of this music by performing nightly on the road. But right now, *She* sounds more like a dead end than a promising new beginning.

—Michael Giltz

Chick Corea has long enjoyed the best of both worlds. A fusion pioneer who continues to explore electric jazz/funk/rock's possibilities long after the demise of his seminal group Return to Forever, Corea has often returned to his acoustic roots with equally appealing results. While Corea's first Elektric Band was among the most exciting fusion units of the late 1980s and early '90s, his Akoustic Band CDs reminded us how engaging a "straight-ahead" player he can be.

After presenting his Elektric Band II with 1993's *Right Here, Right Now*, Corea's current