



JIMMY SCOTT

Dream

SIRE 45629-2 • 1994, 44:16

PERFORMANCE **6/9** SOUND QUALITY

Every review of Jimmy Scott begins by talking about his singing, which is hardly surprising. His voice is so feminine, so nakedly vulnerable that it makes Chet Baker sound like a truckdriver. Early in his career, "Little" Jimmy

Scott's almost unnatural sound brought him close to stardom. But he was, perhaps, *too* different, and decades of obscurity followed.

That changed with the release of *All the Way*, a decent comeback album that highlighted his mastery of ballads. This similar followup—produced by Mitchell Froom—is ever so slightly more upbeat and ever so slightly less successful. The sound is quiet and warm; the accompaniment discreet. Scott's voice is always the center of attention and at times it is commanding. There's a nice, bluesy "You Never Miss the Water," a painfully honest "Laughing on the Outside," and a terrific rendition of the title cut, Johnny Mercer's "Dream." But with a rarified talent like Scott's, he either strikes to the heart of a song or misses the mark by a mile. By opening himself so much to the pain and loneliness at the heart of these standards, he risks going astray and sounding like an overacting diva. That happens more often than not here, on "I Cried for You," "So Long," and especially "It's the Talk of the Town."

Scott is so poorly represented on CD that any well-recorded addition is a welcome one. But fans are still waiting for the one album that will show how special Scott can really be. Perhaps a live album will do the trick.

—Michael Giltz