

Recording studios are not the most personable place in this world to be if you're an entertainer; it is the singer and musician's answer to the office and cubicle. This evening, inside Studio A, at Criteria Studios in Miami, is an assemblage of some of the finest session musicians found on either coast. Some have even worked with Deana's Dad on his old Thursday night TV show! On this first night of recording, a voice booms over the studio monitors from the control room: "She's here!" Moments later, the door opens and Deana Martin enters – Deana's Husband and Producer, John Griffith is at her side. They make the rounds with greetings and salutations. In an instant, there's a spark in the air, smiles are on every face, it's like old home week...minus the red wine and braciola!

The ease with which it all looks is directly proportionate to the months of preparation to make it all happen: meetings on song selection, arrangements and rehearsals. The glittery trimmings of a concert performance are not present this evening. Tonight, it's the recording engineer, the orchestra, the arrangements, conductor and singer. This night, Dean's kid approaches her craft with more wisdom and musicianship than ever. A little tea, a quick chat with arranger and conductor, Charles Calello and it's time to begin recording.

The lady is a champ...and she's trained like one for this release! "I've grown as a performer since the last album", she says. It shows...starting with the opening track, "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone"; you hear a confidence and swagger, which underscores her artistic growth. Listen to the way she swings in and out of the lyric and arrangement. Oh, and listen for the imaginative lyrical twist as Deana vamps her way into Rodgers and Hart's "I Wish I Were In Love Again!" This is Deana Martin at her sassiest, swinginest best...and the album has only just begun.

Actually, the aspiration to become a singer and entertainer took hold of Deana as a little girl. She used to visit her Dad's sessions at Capitol Records, in Studio A. I asked her if that desire was met with formal training? "Yes," she smiled. "I remember when I first asked my Dad if I should take voice lessons he said 'No, – you'll end up sounding like everyone in the choir! Be you...make it your voice'. But that was easy for him, he was a Natural". As you listen to this album it will become obvious that the apple didn't fall far from the Martin family tree. She was made to sing these songs!

On the title track of this album, "Volare" (Italian for 'to fly'), notice Deana's Italian dialect...quite different than what her Dad recorded fifty years earlier. "I took Italian lessons", she announces, "because it was important for me to pronounce all the words correctly." Wait, Dean's daughter took Italian lessons? Did I hear that correctly? "Absolutely. It was imperative for me to be accurate, because there are so many dialects in the Italian language", she confides. "Dad, actually, uses some different words! But that could be the Abruzzi slang", she says to great laughter. "I can speak a little Italian, but this is something I wanted to be as perfect as I could make it". You've heard this song hundreds...maybe thousands of times...then you hear Deana's version. All of a sudden she OWNS IT!

Each song on this album has a special place for Deana. For example, Billy Joel's "Just The Way You Are" is a song she felt a strong conviction to incorporate into this collection. Call it a contemporary standard. A monster hit for Billy Joel in 1977, it's been covered by Johnny Mathis...even Frank Sinatra.

This is no cover. It was important for Deana to crawl into this song and "live with it for a bit", as she says. The result is pure Deana! She pours herself into the song and makes you feel it...perhaps in a whole new way! During playback there are big smiles and high-fives all around, another track is in the can. An album is blossoming before everyone's ears.

In discussing how one interprets a song – makes it their own as an entertainer – Deana said she learned this from Frank Sinatra. "He taught me many things about singing. How to breathe, about phrasing and to live with the song and try it many different ways. He felt it was important to get the song into your soul and know what the words mean and feel...what it's all about. What a life lesson he gave me! You know, when I think about Dad and the way he sings - Dean Martin makes me feel good. When I listen to Uncle Frank, he makes me feel". How can you go wrong with a musical faculty like this?

Deana Martin is adamant about keeping The Great American Songbook alive. Three Songbook entries are included here...for very personal reasons: "What A Difference A Day Makes" is a request from Jeanne, Deana's Mom; "A Kiss To Build A Dream On" was the favorite tune of Deana's Mother-In-Law Christine. The inclusion of Charlie Chaplin's poignant classic, "Smile" is a special tribute to Jerry Lewis who, long ago, adopted it as his theme song. The comic legend has long been part of her extended family and a dear personal friend.

One of the diamonds in this album is Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender". Guitarist Tom Lippincott worked out the chord structure in the studio, at John's request. After a dry run with Deana and guitar, she enters the vocal booth. John is in front of her on the other side of the glass. Remember, just minutes before, this was all worked out in the studio. While hard drives are rolling, she sings this sweet and tender ballad to her husband! "This is something I'll remember the rest of my life", beams John. The song is quite fitting for Deana, especially since it was Elvis who once told her: "They call me the 'King Of Rock and Roll'. But you're Dad...he's The King of Cool!" Imagine Elvis Presley saying that about your Dad!

Cole Porter's classic "I've Got You Under My Skin" is delivered here in a fresh and inventive style. "I wanted to do this for Uncle Frank, he taught me a lot about being a singer...but I didn't want to do it like his recording", says Deana. The arrangement is contemporary, a somewhat Mediterranean feel. Like all the other songs on this album, Deana makes it new...her own.

I mentioned how impersonal recording studios can be at the start of this testimony. You can't say that about the legendary Studio A at Capitol Records in Hollywood, CA. This is hallowed ground in the industry. When you enter Studio A, you have to physically stop for a second and feel the rush. It's almost as if the spirited presence of Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Bobby Darin, Dean Martin and so many others are greeting you as you enter. It is here - where Deana's Dad cut so many memorable recordings – that she will record some additional vocals...even using the same microphone he used! "I held the box in my hand", exclaimed John. "The box has Dean's name on it!"

At the controls for final recording and mixing at Capitol is world class recording engineer, Al Schmitt. Al's work as an engineer and producer is credited on thousands of LP's, hit singles and CD's. Ask Al

how many albums he's been a part of and his casual answer is "thousands". Ask Al about the sheer number of talented artists he's worked with, and he responds with a chuckle: "It might be quicker to just give the names of the one's I haven't worked with". How true. Thousands of album credits and 20 GRAMMY Award™ wins later, Al is one of the most sought after recording pros in the world.

After tracks are assigned channels, Al begins to adjust levels on playback of the tracks. He looks at Deana, who now wears the biggest grin you've ever seen. "How does this sound to you?" he asks. Deana responds, "Al...this sounds fantastic...you've brought the horns to life. I can really hear them now". This is a very special project for Al Schmitt to be connected with. It was Al's nomination that precipitated Dean Martin being presented a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2009 GRAMMY™ ceremony. In Al's words: "You know, I've worked with Sinatra on the 'Duets' albums and I did the 'Forever Cool' CD of Dean's...but I never got to work with Dean in person. So, working with Deana is very special to me. She's so sweet...and listen to her – she's singing her tail off!"

As the mixing continues, singers and songwriters begin popping into the studio. Each offers enthusiastic verbal support to Deana and well wishes to her on the new album. Even musicians recording down the hall for the 'Lost' TV show soundtrack stand just outside the studio door and listen. Al grins and says: "This is the kind of music these guys love to play...what we're working on". Somewhere, Dean Martin is proudly surveying his daughter's achievements from above.

One very special visitor to the studio was songwriter, Johnny Rotella. Johnny has written songs for Sinatra, Rosie Clooney, The Four Freshmen and more. Dean also recorded some of Johnny's songs, most notably "Baby-O", "Just Close Your Eyes" and "Via Veneto". He looks as dapper as ever. He and Deana embrace and Johnny tells Deana stories about working with her Dad. Wherever Deana goes, it seems a reunion breaks out! Johnny listens to a few mixes, beams with delight and pays her the ultimate compliment by saying, "Deana, I have a perfect song for you to record."

There is much that could be written about all that went into this album. So many experiences. Space, however, does not permit. Everyone who has been connected with this album will tell you how proud they are to have been a part of it.

As a friend, and fan, it's been a great privilege to witness the making of this album and the growth of Deana Martin as a consummate performer and vocalist. She works hard, I assure you, she just makes it look so easy and so much fun, whether on stage...in the studio...or even piloting a plane!

Hey, speaking of flying, it's time to...Volare! And who better to fly with?

Ladies and Gentleman...Deana Martin!

Jim Raposa
TheStandardsChannel.com
May, 2009

Produced by John Griffith
Mixed by Al Schmitt
Additional Mixing by Steve Genewick
Mastered by Ron McMaster
Arranged & Conducted by Charles Calello

A & R | Rob Christie
Design | Andy Engel
Art Production | Glenn Barry
Photographers | Pat Whiteacre, Dan Rockafellow, John Griffith
Recorded at The Hit Factory, Miami, FL
Mixed at Capitol Studios, Hollywood, CA
Mastered at Capitol Mastering, Hollywood, CA
Recorded by Michael Couzzi, Zach Ziskin

The Orchestra

Trumpets | Ari Brown, Jim Hacker, Sam Lussier, Chris O'Farrill,
Alex Norris, Augi Haas, Jason Carder, Matt White
Trombones | Mike Egan, John Cricker, Jeremy Levy,
Dante Luciani, Noah Bellamy
Bass Trombone | Dan Satterwhite, Brian Keegan
Alto Saxophones, Flute & Clarinet | David Fernandez, Billy Ross,
Gary Keller, Ed Maina
Tenor Saxophones, Flute & Clarinet | Ed Maina, Carlos Vega,
Pete Brewer, Dave Fernandez, Mike Brignola
Saxophone Solos | Ed Maina
Baritone Saxophone, Bass Carinet & Clarinet | Mike Brignola
Piano, Electric Piano & Synthizer | Rick Krive
Piano | David Siegel
Bass | Chuck Bergeron
Electric Bass | Leo Brooks, Niki Orta
Guitar | Mitch Farber, Tom Lippincott, Manny Lopez, Lindsey Blair
Mandolin | Tom Lippincott
Drums | Ludwig Alfonso, Mike Harvey
Percussion | Gary Mayone, Drew Tucker
Accordion | Carmen Vitanza
Strings | Encore Chambers Players
Harp | Deborah Fleis

For further info about Deana Martin visit: www.deanamartin.com

My Special Thanks To:

John Griffith, Al Schmitt, Steve Genewick, Charlie Calello, Ron McMaster, Michael Couzzi, Zach Ziskin, Rob Christie, Bob Guertin, Mark Owen, Andy Engel, Glenn Barry, Jim Raposa, Tony Oppedisano, Shannon Mills, Paula Salvatore and all our Pallies at Capitol Studios, Ken DiCamillo, Rosario Cáceda Roller, Ron Onesti, Jana King Evans, Nate Lam, Tim & Judy Smith, Larry Amarose, Rich & Rose Angelica, Greg Roller, Don Graham, Chuck Foster, Kris St. Claire, Dino Pallies.

To my Mother Jeanne: I recorded "What A Difference A Day Makes" just for you. Thank you for your love and encouragement.

In memory of my Mother-in-law Christine: Your favorite song, "A Kiss To Build A Dream On".

To Jerry Lewis: "Smile" is for you, and I truly hope this puts a smile on your gorgeous face.

To Al Schmitt: It is an honor and a pleasure to work with you. You truly are the MASTER as you set the music free and allow it to take flight. I just received a phone call from Lisa and she said, "Come home, Rufus and Bijou need you."

To the Musicians: Ladies and gentlemen of the orchestra, I thank you for your passion, and for making such beautiful music from your hearts, and souls. You freed my spirit and allowed me to soar.

To all Dean Martin Fans: Thank you for your love and continued support for my father, the King of Cool.

To all My Fans: I thank each and every one of you personally for your love and support. I enjoy receiving your letters and emails filled with fabulous stories and warm thoughts. I promise to keep my father's legacy alive and to keep singing the Great American Song Book. Your loyalty is overwhelming and an infinite source of inspiration.

To my handsome husband John Griffith: "No wonder my happy heart sings...Your love has given me wings."

For Mickey, Hunter and Jagger: I dedicate this album to you, with all my love.