

Diana Panton

*blue*









# Diana Panton

## blue



*blue* is the third – the previous being *pink* and *RED* – in a trilogy exploring the arc of an ultimately ill-fated relationship. It is Diana Panton's 10<sup>th</sup> album since she began recording in 2005, and the most stunning example yet of the deep musical friendship between Diana and multi-instrumentalist/arranger Don Thompson, O.C. Over the course of this relationship, they have cultivated a reciprocal altruism, each playing to their strengths in support of the other and in the process attracting a talented team to realize the musical vision.

Diana is the goal-setter, the planner. Over the past 20 or so years, she has created a body of work that is notable for its consistency, thoughtfulness, cohesion, and clarity of purpose. Almost any sort of publicity machine or major label backing, she succeeds on her own merits, of which there are many. Diana's ability to marshal the resources necessary to accomplish what she has is beyond impressive, and her certitude attracts great musicians to work with her and compels listeners to hang on her every word.

On *blue*, Diana's achievements as a storyteller have reached another peak. From the start, in the unaccompanied first eight bars of the lead-off track, "Where Do You Start?", she foretells a journey with like-minded musical travelers, all serving the stories and the music.

It is a remarkable collection of stories and music. Marilyn & Alan Bergman, Johnny Mandel, Dave Frishberg, Lennon & McCartney, Rodgers & Hart, Stephen Sondheim, Sammy Cahn & Jimmy Van Heusen, and Frank Loesser, all masters able to imbue a song with wistful longing, meditations on what might have been, tearful resignation.

Resonant material opens a gateway to a profound listening experience. Diana's careful attention in this respect pays huge dividends. Her process of song selection is painstaking and exhaustive. Once she has finished, Don turns his mind to creating the instrumental setting for each piece. Each arrangement on *blue* is a masterclass in elegance and proportion, showcasing both Diana's interpretive strengths and the skills of the musicians to their utmost.

Don has been Diana's musical arranger on all her recordings. Don's accomplishments defy easy summary, but through a historical lens, it may be his role as a mentor that best defines his considerable legacy. Don's loyalty and generosity in this respect loom large on this recording; the musicians appearing on it are among those who have benefitted the most and certainly among the most grateful.

As an accompanist, Don's skills are second to none, showcased beautifully on the tracks with him and Diana alone. Since I met Don, he has spent more time perfecting his craft than anyone I know. That dedication has culminated in a level of performance that is deliciously subtle and nuanced, a simultaneous exposition of fluidity, precision and grace.

A few words about the other musicians.

Reg Schwager, C.M. can play in virtually any style and sound utterly convincing. Whatever the context, his spirit and musical values shine through. Renowned among fellow musicians for knowing more tunes than any half-dozen regular people put together, Reg is also a skilled and disciplined composer and arranger. A complete musician.

Jim Vivian's experience as a classical bassist is invaluable in this context, working with the string quartet. Finding the center of the pitch, every time, is essential, and Jim lives there. He also has a wonderful bounce to his beat, even at the more languid tempos. His contributions to the album, maybe not obvious to the casual listener, are foundational to its success.

Don's writing for the Penderecki Quartet showcases their flexibility and skill in a jazz setting. It's not uncharted territory: the group favours diversity in both its repertoire and choice of collaborators. They make the most of their opportunity, with melodies and counter melodies passed around with an assured balance honed by many years of working together.

A key musician, who you won't hear playing an instrument, is recording engineer Chad Isrchied. Chad demands excellence from himself and the people with whom he works. I've enjoyed a 30-year recording relationship with Chad, and I've never left the studio feeling I'd done anything other than my best work. Chad's mixes are marvels of detail and depth, revealing new sonic treasures on each listening.

While writing these notes, I was reading a book about David Simon's television show, *The Wire*. The book, *All the Pieces Matter*, is partly a reflection on the uncompromising pursuit of artistic vision, and what that necessarily entails. In Diana's process, all the pieces do matter, and she takes whatever time and effort are required to ensure they are in place for each of her projects. She develops a theme through her choice of material, gathers her team to bring it to life, and gives everyone the freedom to do what they do best. Within this deceptive simplicity lies the brilliance that is Diana Panton. Listen. Enjoy.

Phil Dwyer  
Member of the Order of Canada  
Juno Winner  
Qualicum Beach  
August 2022



## PRAISE for PINK - RED & BLUE

***"For Diana, her technique is rather a vehicle for expression, so that her musical message reaches the listener. Her prior album, pink had a theme of "new love", and the romance has moved to the next level in this new album RED. Diana's expression doesn't lose any of its grace in communicating these mature love songs and further reveals her purity. In addition, the elegant sounding arrangements by Don Thompson, who has supported Diana since her debut, are truly superb."** - Jazz Japan*

***"A rare and outstanding vocalist, Diana Panton has the magical ability to draw the audience into listening attentively to her album track by track."** - Hong Kong's Hi-Fi Review*

- 2x JUNO Winner; 7x Nominee (Canada)
- 2x Silver Disc Award Winner (Japan)
- TOP 10 Billboard (USA)
- Chart topping success on Amazon.ca/com; iTunes (North America), HMV (Hong Kong) Books.com (Taiwan), etc.
- Editor's Pick 2018 - *DownBeat Magazine*
- Top albums of 2017 - ICI Musique
- Top albums of 2016 - *DownBeat Magazine*

***“If the expression ‘the art of interpretation’ has ever applied, then it does here. Expressiveness, paired with a voice that is nuanced with top notch jazz inflections, gives us a vocalist that ranks among the greatest young chanteuse of our time.”***

- Volker Doberstein, *tonart magazine*, Germany

When the late great saxophonist Yusef Lateef identified Diana Panton as **“a heart singer”** and legendary jazz vocalist Sheila Jordan enthused, **“[Diana]’s so soulful, I know she means every word she sings,”** they helped highlight some of the special interpretative gifts required to create the raw emotive work that is **blue**.

Panton’s tenth release is not a casual listen, but a deep delve into the feelings that accompany the fragments of a broken relationship. The album is the third in a trilogy that began with the infatuation of first-time love on **pink** (2009 / Silver Disc Award Winner in Japan), followed by the passion of true love on **RED** (2015 JUNO Winner).

In testament to Panton’s grand vision for this endeavour, the release dates of these albums were deliberately spread out over a decade so that the music could better reflect different stages in the narrative, as well as showcase the maturation of Panton’s vocal artistry.

Supported by stirring arrangements by jazz icon Don Thompson O.C. featuring an all-star musical cast consisting of Phil Dwyer C.M. (sax), Reg Schwager C.M. (guitar), Jim Vivian (bass), Thompson himself (piano) and the Penderecki String Quartet, the quality of this **blue** recording should appeal to anyone who appreciates excellence in music

Although it may seem counterintuitive to record an album of sad songs during a pandemic, many people are dealing with the loss of a loved one, a job or a relationship during these challenging times. As listeners seek out Panton’s music for its therapeutic effects, it is hoped **blue** will bring solace to those coping with adversity.

## ***Tracklisting***

### ***01. Medley:***

***Where Do You Start?*** (Alan & Marilyn Bergman / Johnny Mandel)

***Once Upon a Time*** (Lee Adams / Charles Strouse)

***02. Yesterday*** (Paul McCartney / John Lennon)

***03. Without Your Love*** (Fred Stryker / Johnny Lange)

***04. Losing My Mind*** (Stephen Sondheim)

***05. This Will Make You Laugh*** (Irene Higginbotham)

***06. The Trouble with Hello is Goodbye*** (Alan & Marilyn Bergman/ Dave Grusin)

***07. I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out of My Life*** (Cy Coleman / Joseph McCarthy)

***08. To Say Goodbye*** (Lani Hall, Edu Lobo, Torquato Neto)

***09. Meaning of the Blues*** (Bobby Troup / Leah Worth)

***10. I'll Only Miss Him When I Think of Him*** (Jimmy Van Heusen / Sammy Cahn)

***11. It's Always 4 AM*** (Ron Anthony / Sammy Cahn)

***12. Just Sometimes*** (Armando Manzanero Canche / Norma Winstone)

***13. How Did He Look?*** (Gladys Shelley / Abner Silver)

***14. Nobody's Heart*** (Richard Rodgers / Lorenz Hart)

***15. Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year*** (Frank Loesser )

***16. You Are There*** (Dave Frishberg / Johnny Mandel)

### ***Recommended Tracks***

- The Trouble with Hello
- To Say Goodbye
- Just Sometimes

### ***CD Personal***

Diana Panton - Vocals, Producer  
Phil Dwyer - Saxophone  
Reg Schwager - Guitar  
Don Thompson - Piano, Arranger  
Jim Vivian - Bass

### ***Penderecki String Quartet:***

Jerzy Kaplaneck - Violin  
Jeremy Bell - Violin  
Christine Vlack - Viola  
Katie Schlaikjer - Cello  
Chad Irschick - Engineer

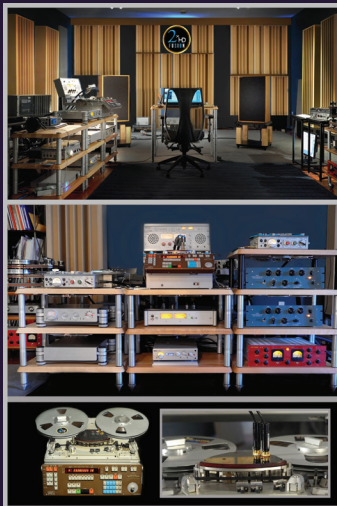


## THE 2xHD MASTERING PROCESS

The 2xHD proprietary mastering provides a unique listening experience as the process digs deep in original recordings to bring out all hidden information, without altering the music in any way, uncovering and bringing out nuances, warmth, depth of field and even the air around the musicians.

The 2xHD logo on an album cover indicates that the recording was carefully selected and the high-resolution mastering was done using the 2xHD process. Created by producer/studio owner André Perry and prize-winning audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme in collaboration with several high-end audio equipment manufacturers, the 2xHD music remastering system combines the best of vintage analog with state-of-the-art DSD and DXD digital technology - a 'Back to the Future' approach. Each musical project is treated with individual attention to the selection of equipment.

Some of the top flight gear used in the process includes a selection of cutting-edge A/D and D/A converters to obtain the most natural DSD or PCM sound, such as a NAGRA-T tape recorder - modified with all tubes playback electronics (With its four direct drive motors and the tape sensor head, The NAGRA-T is one of the best transports ever made), a modified vacuum tube NAGRA HD dac (DSD) to make it possible to obtain real analog sound from a digital master and in some cases even battery power is used so as to benefit from the cleanest power source possible. The 2XHD FUSION mastering system is



powered by super capacitor power supplies with new technology that lowers the digital noise which is heard in the lowest levels, something that was not possible before. The resulting signal is then transformed to high resolution formats by recording it in DSD 256 kHz using the Merging Technologies' Horus A to D converter - which is also powered by a super capacitor power supply. All analog and digital cables are the finest state-of-the-art available today. Also used in the process are Pyramix Masscore (records all high-resolution formats, allowing for great flexibility), an Atomic Clock for re-clocking, and Siletech & Shunyata cables (all digital and analog cables are reduced to a minimum optimal length in the digital conversion and mastering system).

The particular open sound and feeling of having no ceiling to the music are obtained through the 2xHD high resolution transfer. In the case of an original analog master tapes, transfer to DSD 256. In the case of an original 96/24 or DXD/DSD master, transfer is

made to analogue using cutting edge D/A converters.

2xHD is an accurate and musical mastering system, earning recognition from peers and from the specialized trade publications around the world.

**2xHD.com**  
**Pure Emotion**

*"Sorrow is so easy to express  
and yet so hard to tell"* - Joni Mitchell

In musical memory of those featured  
songwriters who passed during the creation of this  
project:

*Ron Anthony*  
(December 16, 1933 – January 19, 2021);  
*Marilyn Bergman*  
(November 10, 1928 – January 8, 2022);  
*Dave Frishberg*  
(March 23, 1933 – November 17, 2021);  
*Johnny Mandel*  
(November 23, 1925 – June 29, 2020),  
*Armando Manzanero Canché*  
(December 7, 1935 – December 28, 2020)  
and *Stephen Sondheim*  
( March 22, 1930 – November 26, 2021)

In loving memory of  
*Kiki Schwager*  
(May 2, 1960 - August 26, 2018)  
*Norma Thompson*  
(August 26, 1937 - May 15, 2019)  
*Lauren Mair-Kennedy*  
(April 12, 1993 - Aug 1, 2022)  
You are deeply missed

In dedication  
To those experiencing grief or loss,  
I hope this music can help

With sincere thanks to  
Don, for your heartfelt arrangements crafted  
to help us shine  
The exceptional musicians who made something  
beautiful despite pandemic constraints  
Chad at Inception who masterly wove  
everything together  
Phil for your nuanced and detailed liner notes  
Sabrina for your infallible aesthetic  
My friends and family for your love  
The listeners for supporting our musical journey

Hats off to those who created  
during the pandemic.

Diana Panton - vocals  
Phil Dwyer - saxophone  
Reg Schwager - guitar  
Don Thompson - piano, rhodes  
Jim Vivian - bass

Penderecki Quartet  
Jeremy Bell - violin  
Jerzy Kaplanek - violin  
Katie Schlaikjer - cello  
Christine Vlajk - viola

recorded, mixed, mastered by Chad Irschick,  
Inception Sound Studios (2021-2022)  
produced by Diana Panton  
arranged and conducted by Don Thompson  
photography by Jose Crespo  
CD design concept by Sabrina Musa and Diana Panton  
CD final design by Jay Reason

2xhd Mastering: RENÉ LAFLAMME  
2xHD Executive Producer: ANDRÉ PERRY

