

# 'Fever'

**Verona Chard – Vamp Jazz Records**

Further information at [www.veronachard.com](http://www.veronachard.com)

Just occasionally you discover an absolute musical gem. This new album, featuring vocalist *VERONA CHARD*, with a sensational line up of the very best Jazz musicians, absolutely oozes class. 'Fever' is inspired by *JOHN DANKWORTH* and *CLEO LAINE'S* iconic 'Shakespeare and all That Jazz' album which was produced in 1964 and Verona Chard and her musicians have brilliantly updated the Dankworth/Laine original. The clever connection with the bard is that each song was originally derived from a show with a Shakespearian link or been written with a Shakespearian verse or couplet in mind. For example *COLE PORTER'S* 'Why Can't You Behave' is from the show 'Kiss Me Kate' which is based in part on Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. So you get the idea.

Verona Chard has taken old and new standards and jointly with *JOHN HAWKINS* and others, written lyrics and arranged new songs that dovetail



beautifully. Her vocal range at times is reminiscent of Cleo Laine at her peak. However, Verona has a vocal purity and range that is very much her own style and she is blessed with a voice which tells a story musically. A rare singer where the lyrics are crystal clear, her performance is enhanced on this album with superb arrangements. Contemporary songs by *SIR ELTON JOHN*, *EDDIE J. COOLEY* and *JOHN DAVENPORT* have also been given

the 'Chard' treatment. Elton's 'The King Must Die' conjures up Shakespeare's tragic "King Lear" and is delivered in a wonderfully dreamy style. 'Cool' from "West Side Story" (inspired by "Romeo and Juliet") sees Verona using her voice as an extra instrument. I cannot pick a highlight from the album as every track would qualify, from straight ahead swing on 'This Can't Be Love' (from "The Boys from Syracuse" based on a "Comedy of Errors") to a funky 'Willow Weep for me' inspired by 'The Willow Song' from "Othello".

'Fever' is an album that can be enjoyed for its pure musical taste and artistry or, for the more academic, play spot the Shakespearian connections.

Would the Bard, in turn, be inspired by our present day Chard? I fancy a cry of 'Once more into the CD player dear friend' might just be in order!

**Chris Hare**