

## **I Remember You liner notes by Al Young, Poet Laureate of California**

### **WAYS TO LISTEN TO TUCK AND PATTI**

Remember that eternity resides in the moment, which pushes and pulls, egging us on to ever-virgin growth. "Long, long ago;/Say, an hour ago,/I recall that/I saw you smile." Or so Patti Cathcart intimates in her affectionate reading of the verse master lyricist Johnny Mercer co-wrote with Victor Schertzinger in 1941: "I Remember You." Long out of fashion today, the verse back then wasn't so much poem-like as it was opening-like: a kind of prelude, an intro, really, that segued or melted into a song's anticipated melody. In those days and nights one thing led up to and away from another. All this has changed.

At the sound of Patti's welcoming voice and Tuck's unpredictable but always delicious embraces, hug yourself. If you can't hug yourself, then hug somebody or something you love. Do it with a song in your heart.

Remember the pauses and rests. Don't forget that with every passing note and sigh, with every silence, music, as we turn ourselves over to it, turns us back into our native zone of pauses and rests, rhythm, vibration and sensation. Routinely, unless drama re-directs us, we overlook the pauses and rests. We pay attention to the melting years that go on melting. Salvador Dali's surrealist painting of a dissolving watch has nothing on the way the moment works.

Remember this: In a world dismembered, violated, mutilated, ripped apart, the role of remembrance can't be celebrated enough. Musicians are professional rememberers. While Tuck and Patti harbor and shelter memories of music they no longer play, they never stop harvesting their seed and root influences. For Tuck, whose sister started him out on piano, it was swing bands and classical music, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, then along came Jimi Hendrix and Wes Montgomery. For Patti, who from childhood sang in church and played violin, it was all the cool music she heard at San Francisco's Fillmore Auditorium in the fiery Sixties. She sat in with as many bands as she could. With Grateful Dead guitarist Bob Weir and others, she co-founded Kingfish.

Remember the bumper sticker from the Sixties and Seventies that read: IF YOU THINK EDUCATION COSTS, TRY IGNORANCE. Consider the high and spiraling cost of forgetfulness, inattention and indifference to the time-outs, the pauses and rests. Who can't understand what it means when the words "And now, these messages ..." ooze out at them from a TV? Hearing this, you're supposed to forget everything you've been seeing up until now. "If seeing is believing," the legendary Lester Young said, "then hearing is a bitch!"

Savor the pleasure it is to hear Tuck and Patti perform classic songs composed in the first half of the 20th, the American half-century. Johnny Mercer, Victor Schertzinger, Duke Ellington, David Rose, British-born Ray Noble, Victor Young and lyricist Edward Heyman, George and Ira Gershwin, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, Yip Harburg and Burton Lane, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart—their names resound—and for wonderful reason. They and scores of others wrote

the good stuff. "I wanted to sing grownup music," Linda Ronstadt said recently about her attraction to "standards," as they're still called, and how these deathless songs yanked and tugged at her.

Remember the first song you ever tried to sing. Did you really have to try? Remember the first musical instrument you ever laid hands on. Consider the miracle of singing and playing. This is how guitarist William "Tuck" Andress and singer Patti Cathcart melted hearts and spread their message of love all over the world. Who's singing? Who's playing? I remember how fresh they sounded to my ears when I first heard them. I heard them in person, pristine; they had no records—their sound not only thrilled; it made me tingle. At first what I heard as Patti's singing to Tuck's pliant, responsive accompaniment seemed tempered, quiet, tenderly yet powerfully understated. Listening closely, though, I gradually came to hear where Patti left off and Tuck began, and the other way round. Sometimes it sounded as though Tuck were singing and Patti accompanying.

Consider this: Like messages folded up and sealed inside bottles and tossed upon the ocean, sentiment and insight sealed up in song float out on a sea of sound. By and by listeners crack them open and hear them. Good songs may go neglected, but they don't go away; they live on in listeners' memory and imagination. This is especially true of songs meaningfully crafted and beautifully composed. As the food of spirit, music will always nourish the ineffable. More often than any might imagine, wordlessness (as in words fail me, a re-occurring yet emotionally appropriate cliché) takes a backseat to what can in fact be sung and played.

If you ever get the chance, observe Tuck in action. Hear him out as he has his say on guitar. I do. Sometimes, watching as closely as I listen, I see his jaw muscles clench, or I watch his thinking-face (his feeling-face) contort. He reaches in and pulls out hunches and whispers from what he alone can hear, delivering his findings to the hearable realm. Again and again you get his drift.

Remember with me the look on trumpet great Dizzy Gillespie's face when one night—on break from his starring set in the revered Venetian Room of San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel—he wandered into the New Orleans Room, where Tuck and Patti were enticing an audience of passers-through to settle down and enjoy themselves. I watched with affection the big grin that bloomed on Dizzy's face. "Bloomdido," I thought, remembering a sparky record he'd made with Charlie Parker long, long ago—many decades ago. Grown familiar by then with Tuck and Patti's repertoire, I sat hoping Diz would stick around long enough to hear the way they did his old arranger Tadd Dameron's "Our Delight" to which poet Michael Stillman penned lyrics. Back then they also performed Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" for which Stillman has written a pensive and winning verse-narrative.

Remember how prominently jazz and what was once called pop-rock figured into Tuck and Patti's songbook of their fledgling days and nights. I remember how beautifully in 1983 we flew off to Italy, to Rimini, where the three of us performed an evening of poetry & jazz. Our audience, a gathering of thousands, went crazy when Patti sang Van Morrison's "Moondance." And even before the soloist Tuck completed his flamenco-like prelude to Carlos Santana's stately "Europa," the crowd was bristling with excitement. In Rimini they were an instant sensation. Luciano Federighi, the eminent author-musician and exquisite critic for Musica Jazz and one

of the contributing producers, declared: "They are wonderful, simply wonderful." Thus began the worldwide love affair with Tuck and Patti's music.

By becoming all ears, you can take years and years off your life. Every moment counts. Every moment keeps score and—like an isolated frame in a motion picture, or like the fluctuations of a single heartbeat—every moment matters.

Count your blessings every time you hear or see the pictures and feelings that music causes and discloses. Imagine yourself in Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, floating on a timeless cloud of memory. Never forget that music, like you, will always be vaster than mountains, sea or sky.

Remember to enter the feelings and pictures that rise up in you as you listen. For me, Tuck and Patti's luscious sound always feels healthful, even healing. Picture sound as color and light. Through the prism of their practiced, devoted musicianship, light frolics and flows.

Remember to remember.

—Al Young,  
Poet Laureate of California