

REIMAGINE

Track List:

1. *Unwritten*² by Natasha Bedingfield, Danielle Brisebois & Wayne Rodrigues, from the album, *Unwritten*, 2004 Piano & arrangement: Wendy Cavett, Bass & Electric Guitar: Sean Harkness Drums & percussion: Rex Benincasa
2. *Before I Gaze at You Again*^{2,3} by Lerner & Loewe, from *Camelot*, 1960 Arrangement: Sean Harkness & Christopher Denny, Piano: Christopher Denny, Guitar: Sean Harkness
3. *Before the Parade Passes By*² by Jerry Herman, from *Hello, Dolly!*, 1964 Piano & arrangement: Wendy Cavett, Bass: Mary Ann McSweeney, Drums & percussion: Rex Benincasa
4. *Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life*¹ by Victor Herbert, from the opera, *Naughty Marietta*, 1910 Arrangement: Alex Rybeck, Guitar: Sean Harkness
5. *Another Day of Sun*¹ by Justin Hurwitz, Benj Pasek & Justin Paul from the movie, *La La Land*, 2016 Piano & arrangement: Alex Rybeck, Guitar: Sean Harkness, Drums & percussion: Dan Gross
6. *Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo/Love Makes the World Go 'Round*² Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo by Bronislau Kaper & Helen Deutsch from the movie, *Lili*, 1953; Love Makes the World Go 'Round by Bob Merrill from the musical, *Carnival*, 1961, Arrangement: Tracy Stark, Jon Delfin & Ann Kittredge, Piano: Wendy Cavett
7. *Make Them Hear You/Keep On Standing*² by Lynn Ahrens & Stephen Flaherty, from Ann Kittredge: *Fancy Meeting You Here, An Evening of Ahrens & Flaherty*, 2018. Make Them Hear You originally from the musical, *Ragtime*, 1996; Keep On Standing originally from *Rocky the Musical*, 2012 Piano & arrangement: Alex Rybeck, Bass: Mary Ann McSweeney, Electric Guitar: Sean Harkness, Drums & percussion: Rex Benincasa

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8. *Snow*³ by Irving Berlin, from the movie, *White Christmas* (1954)
Piano & arrangement: Alex Rybeck, Drums & percussion: Rex Benincasa
 9. *Berlin Monologue*³ Piano: Alex Rybeck
 10. *Free*³ by Irving Berlin, cut from the musical, *Call Me Madam*, (1949)
Piano & arrangement: Alex Rybeck, Drums & percussion: Rex Benincasa
 11. *The Power of One*² by Mervyn Warren & Mark Chait, from the movie *Pokémon: The Movie 2000* Piano & arrangement: Christopher Denny, Bass: Mary Ann McSweeney, Drums & percussion: Rex Benincasa String orchestration: Tom Kochan, Violin: Robin Zeh (CM), Paul Woodiel, Joyce Hammann, Viola: Katarzyna Bryla, Cello: Deborah Assael
 12. *Time in a Bottle*² by Jim Croce, from his 1st album, *You Don't Mess Around with Jim*, 1972 Arrangement: Wendy Cavett & Ann Kittredge, Piano: Wendy Cavett, Bass: Mary Ann McSweeney, Accordion: Robbie Kondor
- Bonus: Edelweiss*^{2,3} by Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II, from *The Sound of Music*, 1959 Vocals: featuring Steve Ross, Pianos & arrangement: Steve Ross & Christopher Denny, Keyboard: Alex Rybeck

Recorded at:

1. 2nd Story Sound, NYC, Engineer: M.P. Kuo;
2. Dubway Studios, NYC, Engineer: Violette Furton;
3. Samurai Recording Studio, NYC, Engineer: David Stoller

Produced & mixed by Paul Rolnick, Zevely Records, Inc.

Mastering: Alan Silverman at Arf Digital

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Liner Notes

As a professional actress and singer, Ann Kittredge has devoted herself to a life of “imagining.” This acumen has successfully taken her to Broadway, off-Broadway, regional theaters, films and television. When the pandemic and its subsequent lockdown happened in 2020, Ann devised an online cabaret series, *Virtual Shorts*, as a way to keep live, collaborative music active. The journey from monthly stream to recording studio proved inevitable. And so, welcome to reIMAGINE, the album presently in your hands. The selections on this debut disc are eclectically culled from Broadway, the movies, contemporary pop, and, in one case, a century old operetta. As the title proclaims, these songs have been re-imagined -- newly conceived and inventively arranged. Employing three ace musical directors and a small group of top-notch side players, Ann Kittredge provides you with a listening experience that is fresh and intimate.

The album boldly opens with a reimagining of Natasha Bedingfield’s mega-hit of 2006, “Unwritten.” Although Bedingfield was only twenty-three when she recorded it, Kittredge’s interpretation proves that any lyric, with the proper perspective, can be ageless.

Jim Croce was also a young singer/songwriter who rose from obscurity to superstar status in 1972. Sadly, his song, “Time in a Bottle” became number one only after his untimely demise. Here, backed by a trio including accordion, Ann preserves the song’s purity and honest sentiment.

Another songwriter who shared Croce’s “common touch” was the highly prolific Irving Berlin. In 1950, Berlin was out of town with a new musical, *Call Me Madam*, and his song, “Free,” meant to be the show’s eleven o’clock number, wasn’t delivering. It was ultimately cut but re-emerged with a new lyric four years later as “Snow,” for the movie, *White Christmas*.

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Ann presents both versions in order for you to appreciate Berlin's own talent for "reimagining."

Another musical film, *Lili*, gave us "Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo." When Ann was growing up in New England, she listened to Roger Williams piano version as it was her mother's favorite song. It wasn't until later that she heard the rueful words married to the hurdy-gurdy tune. In 1961, *Lili* became Broadway's *Carnival!*, where the song "Love Makes the World Go 'Round," filled the same musical slot. Here, Ann elegantly swirls the two "Lili" inspired songs into an ornate musical tapestry. (By the way, Ann's mother approves of this arrangement.)

White Christmas and *Lili* opened in the 1950s when Hollywood was still turning out original movie musicals. 2016's *La La Land* was a return to that tradition. The movie's opening song on the L.A. freeway, "Another Day of Sun," has here been stripped-down so that we are no longer battling rush hour, but enjoying some dirt road below Topanga canyon, fingers snapping all the way.

One of the more unusual inclusions is from 2000's *Pokeman: The Movie*. The song "The Power of One," immediately became a part of Ann's playlist when her kids were growing up. Allow me to quote Ann on this track: "Chris Denny's gentle arrangement invites you to hear the limitless possibilities, that we can, in this very moment, reimagine our lives, our community, our expectations, and soar. Yet still, it will forever be for my kids." Amen.

The CD's earliest entry, "Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life," was written over a century ago for Victor Herbert's *Naughty Marietta*. Although such a chestnut would seem ripe for satire, you won't find that here. Instead, an artful rippling guitar accompaniment (a la "Everybody's Talkin'") provides a contemporary musical match made in heaven.

In 2019, Ann devoted a cabaret evening to the Tony award winning team, Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. Over the years, Ann has worked with both writers, separately and together. She has particularly

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admired Steve and Lynn's fearlessness in finding musical ways to express social injustice. This album includes a medley from that cabaret tribute, "Make Them Hear You"/"Keep On Standing," written respectively for *Ragtime* and *Rocky The Musical*.

Unlike Irving Berlin's dropped "Free," this album showcases three songs that were late additions to their respective scores. "Before I Gaze at You Again," from Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot* (1960), went in just two days before the Broadway opening. Jerry Herman's "*Hello, Dolly!*" also went through an extensive rewrite, including a new first act finale, "Before the Parade Passes By." Ann's rendition replaces that song's march beat with a slow three four figure, building to an expansive Latin feel relocating this parade from 14th street to Rio de Janeiro.

From the Boston tryout of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* (1959) comes "Edelweiss," the last song these two musical giants would ever write together. Ann is vocally joined by her special guest, the inimitable Steve Ross. Steve performed "Edelweiss" with Ann on one of her *Virtual Shorts* broadcasts and it was the most viewed video in the series. On this album, it has been included as a "bonus selection," but, there's nothing superfluous about its inclusion. It generously brings reIMAGINE to a deeply moving and satisfying conclusion.

Barry Kleinbort

New York City, 2022