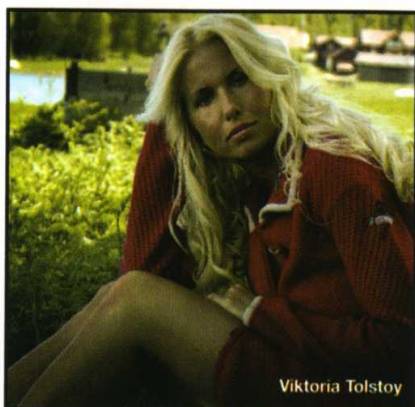


Jazzwise
October 2006

ACT

RE
PRINT



Viktoria Tolstoy

Pictures Of Me

ACT 9712-2 | ★★★

Viktoria Tolstoy (v), Tore Brunborg (saxes, f), Lars Danielsson (clo), Jacob Karlzon (p, ky), Hans Andersson (b), Peter Danemo (d, perc), Xavier Desandre Navarre (perc) and strings. Rec. 2006

On hearing the opening track of *Pictures Of Me* I have to confess my heart sank. The weakest track by a country mile, the mawkish 'Women of Santiago' ('Women of Santiago, feel the southern wind blow, it's time to tango, time to cross your heart') is thankfully unrepresentative of the classy fare that's on offer. Raiding her record collection for inspiration, Viktoria Tolstoy's third ACT release sees the singer successfully mining a pop-jazz vein with material that ranges from Van Morrison's ardent 'The Way Young Lovers Do' to the shuffling groove of Stevie Wonder's 'Can't Help It'. The shifting harmonies, sweeping string textures and Tolstoy's soaring vocal line combine to magical effect in 'South', with pianist Karlzon providing an ecstatic, quicksilver solo. This track, more than any other, illustrates Tolstoy's singular ability to caress the lyric one minute, then metaphorically leap out of the speakers and grab you by the lapels the next. Other standouts include a brace of Prince tunes ('Te Amo Corazón' given a shiny new bossa treatment and a glorious 'Strollin' complete with tricky metric shifts), a pleasingly iridescent 'Two Sails' and Seal's powerful blues belter 'Don't Make Me Wait'. **Peter Quinn**