

## Calabria Foti Interview for Jazz Scene October 2007

JS: Your parents were musicians and exposed you to a wide array of music. Did they explain any of the “business” part of the music industry? Did they have any cautionary tales to tell you about the life of musicians?

CF: No, not really. My parents are great musicians. My mom is a wonderful pianist and my dad is a terrific trombonist, arranger and composer. They were both well-trained Classical musicians and they also knew the pop/jazz standards and played commercial gigs. Primarily, though, they were music educators, and my Dad worked in music publishing, too, for some time. There were no horror stories of being on the road, or anything like that. I really didn't learn about the “music business” until I started working in LA.

JS: You and your husband Bob McChesney embarked on this journey to produce and release your first CD. How has the experience been for you? Are you satisfied with what you were able to accomplish? What was the most satisfying thing about it for you?

CF: Actually, it's not our first endeavor together, but it is the most satisfying one we've done, probably because so much love and devotion has been put into it by Bob, as the arranger and producer, and by our engineer, Mike Aarvold, who mixed and mastered it. We are thrilled about how it turned out, and the firestorm of compliments from music industry giants has made it all worthwhile. It's a big record, meaning, it cuts a wide swath across genres. Not only is it really jazzy, with great soloists, but it's romantic and sultry, and swings all on the same disc. The concept of the CD is the arc of a romantic evening. It's a mood album designed to “put you in the mood!” One really satisfying thing about this journey is that I love working with Bob, who is really a

genius! When I met him in the college practice rooms so many years ago, I figured he was just a fantastic trombone player, which he is. Who knew he had such gifts for string writing and arranging, production and all that goes into making a great CD? I guess the most satisfying thing of all is that, even after all these years together, we're still discovering talents about each other and hopefully bringing out the best in each other.

JS: What are the hardest parts of the project? Is it coordinating activities, musicians, etc? Or is the selling of the CD the hardest part?

CF: One time I asked my father, "What is the most difficult stage of raising kids?", and he answered, "The stage you're IN!" And that about sums it up for doing a CD, or anything else that is of value, I suppose. It's a lot of work. There is, of course, a great deal of joy, too. When it turns out good, it's a great feeling. As for the getting the music out there, we're just at the beginning stages. I'll have to let you know in a year what the most difficult task is. All I can do now is release it into the world and hope that the public embraces it with open arms.

JS: After completing this project, do you feel energized, more ambitious? Does it make you want to search for more material for a future CD, for example? Do you see that you will have to put more effort into your singing career and maybe let go of some of the other things you've been doing?

CF: I'm really energized! When Johnny Mandel and Alan Bergman call you up and gush about your record, it is incredibly exciting! When Johnny Mathis wrote, "This recording is some of the most artistic and beautiful music I've ever heard", I was knocked out and so touched. As for

another CD, I have already begun putting material together, standards with some of my tweaks, and some of my own original songs as well.

JS: Despite all the roles you juggle, as a wife, a mom, and a working musician, do you feel that you have achieved balance in your life? What helps you to forge ahead, to keep going despite a very busy life?

CF: Well, I have my “days”, but for the most part, I am incredibly blessed to be able to perform and record the music I love and have a nice home life, too. It's a good balance...an interesting schedule, but a good balance! I would, however, like to get more music recorded. With the response we've gotten from the CD so far, I'm hopeful that it will get a bit easier to do. What also helps me is the music itself. It sounds weird, but I must sing these songs that those great songwriters wrote. I have a strong connection to these songs and the composers of that time period. I need to stay involved with it because it soothes my soul. What really drives me is expressing the emotions in the music, getting them out of me and connecting with my audience. That's what it's all about.