

Carmen Bradford Home With You

Azica Records

By [Christopher Loudon](#)

Nine years ago, marvelous Carmen Bradford knocked me sideways with her soaring *With Respect*, and, in 1997 she made it a one-two punch with the equally sublime *Finally Yours*, which suggested her as an obvious heir to the Sarah-Ella throne. Then, apart from the odd guest spot here and there, nothing (or at least nowhere near enough). Now, after seven too-quiet years, Bradford is back with the multi-shaded *Home With You* (Azica), still sounding like a million bucks as she traverses a standards-heavy assortment of 13 tracks in the graceful company of pianist Shelly Berg. From the sweetly contemplative "My Shining Hour" and the gorgeously plaintive "My Ideal" to a peppy reading of the Marvin Gaye anthem "How Sweet It Is" (a terrific showcase for Berg's elegant artistry) and a blistering ride aboard Ellington's "A" train, Bradford remains a force to be reckoned with—a virtual tornado of talent and imagination. Most satisfying of all is the gentle title track, with music by Berg and lyrics by the wonderful Lorraine Feather, which is as warm and comforting as cocoa.

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