

Liner Notes by **Scott Yanow** (jazz journalist/historian and author  
of 12 books including *Life Through The Eyes Of A Jazz Journalist*)

Ron Aprea and Angela DeNiro (who have been married since 1985) have had many rewarding musical experiences together through the years. But up until now, their 1997 recording *Swinging With Legends* ranked at the top. With Aprea providing most of the arrangements, that memorable album featured the beautiful singing of Angela DeNiro accompanied by a big band filled with notable musicians plus three giants as guests: vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, tenor-saxophonist Frank Foster, and tenor-saxophonist Lew Tabackin.

During the pandemic, Ron Aprea (who is also an impressive alto-saxophonist) used the unusual amount of free time to author his colorful and insightful memoirs (*The Era I Almost Missed*) and to do a great deal of musical writing including 35-40 vocal arrangements. "As soon as things settled down a bit, the union opened up for rehearsals and I put the big band back together. The music sounded so good. It was a combination of hearing the arrangements for the first time and finally getting to experience live instruments again. I felt inspired and knew that we had to record this music. Angela and I felt that a *Swinging With Legends 2* was long overdue."

For this rewarding album, Ron assembled a 16-piece big band (eight brass, five woodwinds and three rhythm) to join Angela. As far as picking out three legends to use as guests, he called up trumpeter Randy Brecker, clarinetist Ken Peplowski and his old friend Lew Tabackin; he and Lew had first worked together back in 1968 with Les Elgart's orchestra. All three giants were enthusiastic about being part of the project.

"Our goal was to top the last recording," remembers Ron. "We had two rehearsals and then recorded 14 tunes in two three-hour sessions, a total of six hours. We all had the craving to play music again, it was in a great studio, and everything just worked out perfectly." Angela adds, "I don't move much when I'm singing on stage, but I was literally jumping around during these performances, which I normally never do. It was an amazing musical experience." The high energy and excitement felt by all of the musicians are very obvious throughout the performances.

