



ROSEMARY CLOONEY

Still on the Road

CONCORD CCD-4590 • 1993, 55:18

Performance ★ ★ ★ ★

Sound Quality ★ ★ ★ ★

Great singers can have several peaks in their careers. The first occurs when a young performer's talent is so vast it overwhelms everything in its path. Think of Barbra Streisand's exuberant debut album. The second occurs when a singer pairs a still-supple voice with deepening interpretive skills. Think of Frank Sinatra during his Capitol years. The last occurs, sometimes, when a singer's voice may be limited but his or her ability to cut to the heart of a song is greater than ever. Think of Annie Ross or Maxine Sullivan.

Or Rosemary Clooney, who clearly has entered the warm September of her years. *Do You Miss New York* (1993) was a paragon, and this exuberant follow-up is nearly as good. A trav-

elogue akin to Sinatra's *Come Fly with Me*, it opens with an infectious big band reworking of Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again." Her sheer pleasure in performing continues with numbers like the wittily arranged "Let's Get Away From It All," and the Hope/Crosby tune "Road to Morocco."

The title tune is a particular highlight. Its description of a singer tired by the rigors of touring—but still in love with it—is tailor-made for Clooney. Thirty years ago, she would have nailed the final high note with ease. Today, that note probably seems farther and farther away, and she has to strain to reach it. It's beautifully naked: That tremulous edge in her voice acknowledges the passing years and, in doing so, triumphs over them.

—Michael Giltz