

BARBARA DENNERLEIN

THAT'S ME

RAY ANDERSON

BOB BERG

MITCH WATKINS

DENNIS CHAMBERS



# BARBARA DENNERLEIN — THAT'S ME

**BARBARA DENNERLEIN** (HAMMOND B3 ORGAN,  
FOOT PEDAL BASS, SYNTHESIZERS)

**RAY ANDERSON** (TROMBONE)

**BOB BERG** (TENOR SAXOPHONE)

**MITCH WATKINS** (GUITAR)

**DENNIS CHAMBERS** (DRUMS)

1. **DANCING SHOES** ..... 9'32
2. **GRANDFATHER'S FUNK** ..... 5'04
3. **THAT'S ME** ..... 6'10
4. **THREE HEARTS** ..... 6'57
5. **MONKOLOGY** ..... 7'53
6. **LOVE AFFAIR –  
THE BALLAD** ..... 6'47
7. **LOVE AFFAIR –  
FOREVER AND NEVER** ..... 8'06
8. **ONE FOR MISS D.** ..... 6'01
9. **DOWNTOWN N.Y.** ..... 6'51



All compositions by Barbara Dennerlein (GEMA)  
except (8) by Ray Anderson (GEMA).

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(DRUMS)

*"THAT'S ME" shows a spectrum of the variety of music I love – supported by fantastic musicians. I want to thank my audience for accompanying me on this musical journey, my parents and my friends for encouraging me to make my way without compromising. Relax and enjoy the moods!!  
With love. B.D.*

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Digitally recorded and mixed March 3, 4, 9, 10, 1992 by Carlos Albrecht, Tonstudio Bauer, Ludwigsburg. Photography by Michael Möhrlein and Ralph Weber (back), album design by Elisabeth Winckelmann, typography by Jürgen Hübner. Producer: Matthias Winckelmann.

- 1. DANCING SHOES** ..... 9'32  
(B. Dennerlein; GEMA)
- 2. GRANDFATHER'S FUNK** ..... 5'04  
(B. Dennerlein; Ed. MAWI/GEMA)
- 3. THAT'S ME** ..... 6'10  
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- 7. LOVE AFFAIR – FOREVER AND NEVER** ..8'06  
(B. Dennerlein; GEMA)
- 8. ONE FOR MISS D.** ..... 6'01  
(R. Anderson; Raybone Music – Ed. MAWI/GEMA)
- 9. DOWNTOWN N.Y.** ..... 6'51  
(B. Dennerlein; Ed. MAWI/GEMA)

## **Also recommended:**

Barbara Dennerlein "Straight Ahead" (Enja R2/4 79608)

Barbara Dennerlein "Hot Stuff" (Enja R2/4 79654)



# AN INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA DENNERLEIN

Why did you call the album "That's Me"?

Which means?

What about friends?

Would life be boring without the stress of touring?

What makes you return to the organ day after day?

Are there any unfulfilled dreams?

How do you achieve that?

"That's me" *is* me, structurally. It covers almost all of the styles I like to play, different grooves and sounds.

Its scope ranges from *That's Me*, a fast, steaming piece, to the sound-tracklike *Downtown N. Y.*, a rocking tune inspired by the skyline of Manhattan. *Dancing Shoes* is a track which you simply got to move to, while *Three Hearts* combines romance and a weird melody line. This many-sidedness, that's me. My music is rooted in tradition but I also go beyond this tradition. I like to play standards but prefer to play my own pieces. After all, a musician is most honest with what he has written himself. I love my music, and live for it.

Very little time for that, unfortunately. I am a tour person, almost always on the road. If I stay home for more than a week, I get restless. As soon as I am back on the road I feel splendid.

Not at all. I am always busy practising and composing. At home I have two rooms reserved exclusively for music purposes. One is for the organ, the other for computers, synthesizers and an electric piano. In my studio, I have more Hammond organs, another electric piano and various synths. All in all, I own one modern Hammond and three beautiful old ones.

The sound of the Hammond and the urge to compose, maybe? Certainly. And ambition, of course. I am a perfectionist, there are so many things I want to improve.

I'd like to be able to play everything that's in my head immediately without practising. And I would like to enhance my pedal work even more.

By composing without any consideration for my technical abilities, especially in the bass area. I don't work with a bassist, and use my two feet instead. When I write an accompaniment, I don't think whether it's actually playable or not. On *Three Hearts* I play a bass solo in three-four. I had never done that before, that's why it was so attractive. I always compose in terms

How many hours do you play per day?

Do you have any role models?

Nevertheless you claim that your roots lie in tradition ...

Tell me something about the other pieces.

of the ideal and, so far, it has always worked out. A certain amount of pressure is an essential part of self-education, I think.

When I am at home, five hours is usually the maximum. On the road, I sometimes practise in the car, with a portable keyboard, while my road manager is driving.

No, none. Particularly not Jimmy Smith, although his individual style made the Hammond organ known to a wider audience. I like to stress this point because, since the time I started playing the organ, people told me "You play like Jimmy Smith". They think that is hugely flattering but all they hear is the sound of the organ and not what I do with it. I have never played like Jimmy Smith.

Of course there are typical organ phrases which you use time and again. The famous two-finger trill, for example, or certain riffs, although I quote them rarely. I am looking for my own improvisational path.

If there is a tradition I can identify with, it is that of Larry Young. He has enriched organ playing. I break up tradition and move into new territory. In order to use synthesizers and samplers, I connected MIDI contacts to the organ manuals and the bass pedals. For the same reason, I sampled a double-bass for my own foot pedal playing. *Downtown N.Y.* is a good example for the problems involved with being your own bassist.

On this track, I play the bass with both feet over a range of two octaves. In the beginning I had some balance problems because both hands and feet are air-borne, so to speak, there was nothing to support myself with. But I managed – by using my stomach muscles!

*Grandfather's Funk* is dedicated to my 87-year-old grandfather. It has the typical New Orleans groove that was held by the snare drum when the band was marching through the streets. Since it is a piece for an elderly gentleman, I combined the sampled bass with an old, dry Hammond bass.

**Are you very close  
to your family?**

████████████████████

Well, yes. I wrote *Three Hearts* for my mother, when she had a heart operation in 1991. The three hearts are also a symbol for the unity in my family. I don't have any brothers or sisters.

**Another dedication:  
Monkology...**

████████████████████

That is, of course, dedicated to the pianist Thelonious Monk, the theme is somewhat Monk-like. Dennis supports it with a really electrifying shuffle groove which inevitably makes your foot tap.

**Part Two of your  
Love Affair is called  
Forever And Never.  
Does that mean  
you don't believe  
in true love?**

████████████████████

First I wanted to call the piece "Forever And Ever" but that is something very rare and precious, don't you think? It's a problem of our times that many relationships only last for so long, and that sooner or later one forgets about the "Forever".

The first part, *The Ballad*, starts with a free organ intro from which emerges a slow latin rhythm. The second part hints at romance, with the tenor and the trombone flirting and circling each other like lovers.

**What kind  
of associations  
does *Dancing  
Shoes* evoke?**

████████████████████

When I composed that tune, I thought about the step-dance scene in "Barclays of Broadway", where Fred Astaire starts dancing in the shoemaker's shop. Its title also derives from the fact that I have to jump around a lot on the foot pedals. I use special jazz-dance shoes for that purpose.

**What makes  
them special?**

████████████████████

They are laced shoes which have to fit very well. I have no use for shoes slipping off my feet when I play the bass. They have a thin leather sole so that I can really feel the pedals, and it is smooth enough to play glissandi without slipping off the pedal.

**You have dedicated  
Downtown N.Y. to the  
hottest jazz town in  
the United States.  
How often have you  
stayed in the U. S. ?**

████████████████████

Not nearly enough. But it was always a great experience. New York is cooking. Of course I don't like the crime rate there and the fact that I can't walk the streets alone at night.

That is tough for a loner like me. I don't like being dependent on "bodyguards". Nevertheless I'd like to spend some time of the year in the United States although I would never give up my home in Germany because my family lives here and I perform very often in Europe.

**What about  
your musicians?**

I first listened to Mitch Watkins, the guitarist, on a demo tape of his and I was so taken by his feeling for different styles and his groove that this is already our third album together. As to Ray Anderson: the idea was to get away from the typical organ/tenor/drums trio. Ray and I are very similar, with one exception: I come from tradition and still like to play swing whereas Ray comes from free improvisation. But we have a mutual aim, to create something new. Ray has discovered a lot of new sounds on the trombone but he can also put them aside temporarily as on **Three Hearts**. On **One For Miss D.**, a funny kind of shuffle which he composed for me, he combines his individual way of playing with a groove that fits the organ very well.

We recorded this piece as a trio, that is, without Mitch and tenorist Bob Berg who is usually an ideal contrast to crazy Ray. Bob plays modern and very structured. I particularly like his powerful sound. He is a perfectionist, he'd rather play a solo twice than put up with a phrase he is not entirely happy with. Drummer Dennis Chambers is able to play even the most intricate rhythms, and always with a hell of a lot of swing. He has an incredible ear, he can memorize phrases in no time.

**And what  
about  
yourself?**

Well, I was born in 1964 and started playing the organ when I was eleven. I never played anything else. People who start on piano tend to play the organ piano-like which makes a big difference.

**You started your  
professional career  
in 1983. Do you  
see being a woman  
as an advantage?**

Yes and no. Women are easier to promote, female jazz players still have this exotic touch which is increased by my relatively unusual instrument. So there is a certain "Let's check this out" effect. On the other hand, it was harder for me to be accepted as a band leader. You won't believe how often I heard somebody say, "Well, she's quite pretty but can she play?" It takes a lot of self-confidence to deal with something like that. You need a lot of ability and a thick skin. My parents helped me a lot and that's why I am grateful to them.

*Interview by Werner Stiefele*

*Translated by Caroline Mähl*

Barbara  
Dennerlein

That's Me

BLUEMOON

See Booklet for writer and  
publishing information

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Produced by Matthias Winckelmann

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