

# THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER



CD-83586

*"The clean, tight harmonies and carefully shaded dynamics of members Tim Hauser, Cheryl Bentyne, Alan Paul and Janis Siegel remain impeccable."*

—New York Post

*"[The Manhattan Transfer] swing as hard and blend their voices as exquisitely today as they did on their 1970s debut album."*

—Austin Chronicle

*"...arguably the most respected and honored vocal quartet today."*

*"They brought Brazilian music to American radio stations, brought Bob Marley and the Wailers to American television audiences, and broadened the horizons of music lovers everywhere."*

—Goldmine



It's been more than thirty years since **Tim Hauser** worked as a marketing executive and New York cabby with dreams of creating a vocal group. One night in 1972, Hauser's taxi fare was an aspiring singer named **Laurel Massé**, who was familiar with *Jukin'* an album Hauser had made with an earlier Manhattan Transfer combo. A few weeks later Hauser met **Janis Siegel** at a party. Although Siegel was then performing with a folk group called *Laurel Canyon*, Hauser convinced her and Massé to be part of his nascent group. At the same time, **Alan Paul** was stirring hearts on Broadway, appearing in the original production of *Grease*. When he met with Hauser, Siegel, and Massé, the groundwork was laid for *The Manhattan Transfer*, which was officially "born" on October 1, 1972.

Early on, the group developed a strong cult following, while playing such New York clubs as *Trude Heller's*, *Reno Sweeney*, and *Max's Kansas City*. In 1975 they released their self-titled album, and enjoyed early success in Europe. Their next two albums, *Coming Out* and *Pastiche*, brought them a string of top ten hits in Europe, and their overseas popularity was cemented with the release of *The Manhattan Transfer Live*. Massé then left the group in 1978 to pursue a solo career, and was replaced by **Cheryl Bentyne**, a young singer/actress from Mt. Vernon, Washington. Their next album, *Extensions*, earned them their first domestic pop hit, "Twilight Zone/Twilight Tone," penned by Alan Paul and Jay Graydon. The album featured "Birdland," the piece that has since become *The Manhattan Transfer* signature tune. The most played jazz record of 1980, "Birdland" brought the Transfer their first Grammy award (Best Jazz Vocal Performance, Vocal, or Instrumental), and the award to Janis for Best Arrangement for Voices.

In 1981, *The Manhattan Transfer* became the first pop group to win Grammy Awards in both pop and jazz categories the same year. "Boy From New York City," which broke into the top ten on the pop charts, garnered them the award for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal, and "Until I Met You (Corner Pocket)" earned them a Grammy for Best Jazz Performance, Duo or Group. Both of these appeared on the combo's fifth outing, *Mecca for Moderns*. In 1982, they accepted another Grammy, for Best Jazz Vocal Performance, for their rendi-

tion of the classic "Route 66." They repeated their 1982 Grammy win in the same category for "Why Not!" a track from *Bodies and Souls. Vocalese*, produced by Tim Hauser and released in 1985, was the group's *tour de force*. The title refers to the style of music that sets lyrics to previously recorded jazz instrumental pieces. Jon Hendricks, recognized master of this art, composed all the lyrics for this album, which critics called an artistic triumph. The album scored no less than a dozen Grammy nominations – at the time, second only to Michael Jackson's *Thriller* as the most nominated single album ever. *Vocalese* won in two categories: Best Jazz Vocal Performance, Duo or Group, and Best Arrangement for Voices for Cheryl Bentyne and Bobby McFerrin for "Another Night in Tunisia." Then came *Brazil*, their 1987 groundbreaking re-contextualization of Brazilian music. The album won a Grammy for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal.

In 1991, *The Manhattan Transfer* released *The Offbeat of Avenues*, produced by Tim Hauser. The album won a Best Contemporary Jazz Performance Grammy for "Sassy," a piece boasting lyrics by Janis Siegel and Cheryl Bentyne, and music by Siegel and Bill Bodine. In 1992, Rhino Records released *The Manhattan Transfer Anthology: Down in Birdland*, a two-disc compilation of the group's work spanning their twenty-year career, followed by *The Christmas Album*. In 1994, Rhino released *The Very Best of The Manhattan Transfer*, and *The Manhattan Transfer Meets Tubby the Tuba*, the group's first children's recording (accompanied by the Naples Philharmonic).

In 1995, the Transfer released *Tonin'*, a studio album with Phil Collins, Bette Midler, Ben E. King, Ruth Brown, Felix Cavaliere of the Rascals, Frankie Valli, Smokey Robinson, Laura Nyro, Chaka Kahn, B. B. King, and James Taylor. *Swing*, released in 1997, had its emphasis on 1930s-era swing music. *The Spirit of St. Louis*, released in 2000, was a spirited interpretation of Louis Armstrong's music.

Released in September 2003, *Couldn't Be Hotter* is *The Manhattan Transfer's* Telarc debut and their first live album in seven years.