

WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA

THE MAGAZINE



International Women's Day

Alina Bzhezhinska
Amy Gadiaga
Annie Chen
Arlette Hovinga
Barka Fabianova
Charlotte Keeffe
Charu Suri
Cindy Blackman
Enid Farber
Isabel Marquez
Judith Tick
Kim Cypher
Lara Eidi
Lauren Bush
Liane Carroll
Monika S Jakubowska
Nikki Iles
Patricia Pascal
Paulette Jackson
Sarah Jane Morris
Stephanie Stein Crease
Tatiana Gorilovsky
Wendy Kirkland

and so much more!

MARCH 2024



**COVER PHOTO: AMY GADIAGA
BY BENEDIKT ACHMED**

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We are always grateful to our many partners that support our work and would like to give special thanks to our guest contributors for this edition:

Enid Farber, Nick Lea, Mark Lemieux, Barka Fabianova, Patrica Pascal, Ron Milsom and special shout out to Dr Bradley Stone who is fast becoming honorary member of the team!



**International
Women's Day**



PHOTO OF EMELI SANDE BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

CONTENTS

Cindy Blackman: Creating Free Thinkers by Fiona Ross

Right Here, Right Now with Charlotte Keeffe by Isabel Marquez

Amy Gadiaga by Isabel Marquez

Behind the Lens: Patrica Pascal

Sarah Jane Morris and The Sisterhood by Isabel Marquez

Alina Bzhezhinska- Changing Lives by Fiona Ross

In Conversation with Lauren Bush by Wendy Kirkland

Lara Eidi Op-Ed: 'If Nina were alive today, I think she'd be furious...'

Thank you Liane Carroll by Kim Cypher

Behind The Lens: Enid Farber at Jazz Congress

Wendy Kirkland at the Two Piano Steinway Festival

Mark Lemieux Recommends

Behind The Lens: Tatiana Gorilovsky

Nikki Iles: Creating Pathways by Nick Lea

Behind The Lens: Barka Fabianova

Annie Chen and Guardians by Fiona Ross

Feeling Good by Kim Cypher

The Women in Jazz Media Podcasts

On The Bookcase with Stephanie Stein Crease, Arlette Hovinga and Judith Tick

Legends and Icons by Paulette Jackson

On The Playlist by Dr Brad Stone

CONTENTS

ON THE PLAYLIST WITH DR BRAD STONE

Sylvia Brooks

Satoko Fujii

Jill McCarron

Betty Bryant

Margot Sergent

Kirsten Edkins

Kristin R. Bromley

Lori Bell

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Welcome to the 9th edition of the Women in Jazz Media magazine and our 4th International Women's Day edition. Leading the way on our cover is rising star Amy Gadiaga and inside you will find a beautiful array of voices. This magazine is a place to reflect, to be inspired and a space to celebrate. It is also a place where you can take action to support the women in this magazine and you will find links throughout to buy albums, books, photos, book tickets, donate and never underestimate the power of sharing too! Communities are powerful and we appreciate all of your support – we couldn't do any of this without you!

'International Women's Day (IWD) is a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Each year, this day serves as a powerful reminder of the progress made towards gender equality and highlights the work that still needs to be done.

In 2024, the campaign theme Inspire Inclusion emphasizes the importance of diversity and empowerment in all aspects of society.

This year's campaign theme underscores the crucial role of inclusion in achieving gender equality. It calls for action to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and create environments where all women are valued and respected. Inspire Inclusion encourages everyone to recognize the unique perspectives and contributions of women from all walks of life, including those from marginalized communities.'

IWD [#InspireInclusion](#)



International
Women's Day

CINDY BLACKMAN



PHOTO BY CHAD TASKY



CINDY BLACKMAN SANTANA

CREATING FREETHINKERS

Cindy Blackman Santana. Drummer, bandleader, and inspiration. An artist who continually pushes boundaries and strengthens the power of community. An artist who makes you feel, makes you think, makes you want to be the best you can be and helps you find the confidence and belief to know that you can make a difference. An artist who inspires people across the world.

Her portfolio of work is outstanding, including working with artists such as Lenny Kravitz, Cassandra Wilson, Angela Bofill, Pharoah Sanders, Bill Laswell and of course, Santana. Cindy has literally been grooving since she was a small child and is considered one of the greatest drummers of all time. Her dedication to excellence, her kindness, her compassion for the community and her commitment and understanding of the importance of her role in society is stimulating and empowering. She is a role model for us all.

Such a joy and honour to speak to Cindy. Such warmth and honesty. Cindy makes you believe you can do anything, be anything and all the while ensuring we are aware of the importance of our role in society. We explored so much about her career, her music, her role in the world but at the heart of my questions I was trying to dis-

cover the path that led Cindy to be Cindy. That strength, that compassion - and of course that groove!

Artists find their instruments in varying ways and at different stages in their life, but Cindy had that moment - that moment when the kit spoke to her when she was seven years old and the drums have been embedded in her very being ever since. I asked Cindy to reflect on that initial connection.

You know honestly - and especially according to my mom and my older sister - I think I came here with that desire. My mom said that when I was born, I was padding out rhythms on whatever I could find, whether it was on her back or a pan or a table or whatever I could find. I don't ever remember a time that I didn't want to play drums, it just feels like a completely natural flow from the time I arrived here, on this planet, to now. It just feels like this is what I'm supposed to be doing and this is what I want to do.

Known primarily for her jazz and rock work, Cindy is a truly virtuosic musician. Here she is performing a 12 minute drum solo at the Drumeo Festival a few years ago. Incredible.

Cindy was surrounded by music at an early age with both her mother and grandmother being classical musicians. Exploring her technique, Cindy references the piano and her relationship with her grandmother in particular as being very important influences.

My grandmother was incredible. Unfortunately, I only took one piano lesson from her but I learned so many incredible things in that one lesson and I wish I had really honed in on the piano but, I learned so much from her that day! She said she didn't like to use the pedals and if she wanted to sustain a note, she would do it by playing it long and if she wanted to dampen a note, she'd just dampen it with touch, if she wanted to do a fade, she'd say, I play the fade myself. She told me she never let the engineers fade her down and she'd play the fade herself - be able to do it yourself. I didn't really know what she was talking about, I was 8 years old, but it became clear to me later and you know my grandmother, she was an incredible little fireball. She was 4 feet 10 inches and had really tiny hands, so her hands were too small to play an octave, but she figured out how to voice chords, to get the sounds that she wanted with those tiny hands. That taught me that you can figure out and adapt and make whatever it is that you're hearing work, you just have to figure out the method that works for you. You have to figure out how you can make it happen, but you can make it happen. I've carried that with me for my entire life and I really owe a lot to my grandmother because she taught me so much and she was a musician to the core. She was a powerhouse. A teeny little fireball and if she had her mind set on something, she was going to do it. She was a very focused woman and I really love and appreciate that about her.

Surrounded by inspirational women from an early age, Cindy was clearly set up to take on the world from the start and she has done exactly that, becoming one of those inspirational women herself. 'She's Got It Goin' On' released in 2020, from

Cindy's album 'Give The Drummer Some', is a song celebrating strong women. In the studio one day, Cindy was working with fellow drummer Narada Michael Walden and when she walked in, a stunning vision with her full afro, Narada said "Wow, girl your hair looks electric! You've got it goin' on!" He suggested writing a song, resulting in a brilliant ode to powerful women. Cindy explained 'I have a lot of role models in my life who are women—my mom, my sister, my grandmothers, a lot of great friends. They're all beautiful, strong and incredible women, so I just wanted to nod to that.'

Feeling empowered in a world where female drummers have historically been in the minority, is a challenge and although there are many more female drummers being platformed now (although still work needed here), Cindy's achievements are significant and she has - and still does - lead the way for many.

I was about 13, at a gig at a bar, with this funk rock trio, and the gig was really going great, we were having fun and people were digging the music, the band was having a great time. Afterwards some man came over to me and he says: you're not supposed to be playing drums... you're a girl, why are you playing drums? You're not supposed to do that. I was a kid, still a child at 13 and so it hurt me you know? I almost started crying. I went home and I felt really bad. I took my drums back downstairs in the basement, I set them up and I started playing. I forgot all about that guy's comment. Then when I remembered the comment later, I was, wow you know what, I forgot all about that! So that means that whatever somebody else thinks, this has no bearing on my feelings about what I'm doing. The attention to that comment is only stopping myself. If I think about that for an hour, 5 minutes, one minute, one second... that's one second less time that I'm devoting to my progress. That's one hour less time that I'm giving to myself to progress so I'm not going to give that person that, I'm going to give that to myself. There are still stereotypes that happen



PHOTO BY CHAD TASKY

whether it's about age, gender, race, culture or religion and those are intertwined in our society because we are imperfect. We're still growing as a species, still growing as beings. Whether you're black, white, red, yellow, purple, pink, green, gold or blue or if you're a woman or whether you're Islamic or Christian or Bahá'í or non-denominational or a redhead, blonde, brunette or bald, chubby, skinny or vegan or carnivore, a mathematician, scientist, a drummer, a pianist, violinist - we're all coming from that same spark.

The growth that Cindy refers to is a key part to her life and work. Understanding the value of time and experience to not only ourselves and our own growth and understanding, but the role our individual growth plays in the wider community.

I believe that we come here to be examples for other people to learn lessons and so once we get that concept, we start to live that. We're going to break down barriers.

We're going to stop having hatred. We're going to stop hurting people. We're going to stop these wars. We are going to stop all this stuff that is a degradation of society. We're going to stop all that because we'll realise that we are hurting us when we do that. We're all one energy from the same source that's split up and divided up into these little particles which become us individuals, to experience everything that the creator has given us on this planet to go through to fulfil our souls journey, and I believe - and this is just my belief - but I truly believe that once we understand that and once we learn that, we will have a completely different attitude about ourselves. Respect and understanding for trees and birds, rocks, water....because it's all coming from the divine. We have a lot of growing to do as a whole and myself included, I'm not taking myself away from that because I have growing to do as well in different ways to the next person. This is a growth journey that we're on and I look forward to humanity embracing that and then making the changes that allow us to grow together as a whole.

And how can we actually make that change? How can we help people understand their role in developing mindsets?

It starts with each person - you know Michael Jackson and the song Man in the Mirror? It starts with yourself. I have to make sure I am an exemplary example of those qualities, of those actions and of those thoughts. We must remember that thoughts create things, so I'm responsible for whatever I'm creating and being a positive force to help uplift the consciousness of humanity, and once I'm doing that, then I become an example of that. And energy grows! Whatever you're pushing out to the universe, it comes back to you in a snowball effect so what I'm doing, comes back to me bigger and then when I do it bigger it goes out and then comes back to me even bigger, and if we are all doing that, we're going to create this beautiful ball of energy. Rather than these little negative things that are eating at us all and maybe those are going to still be there to some degree, because every soul comes here at a different level of enlightenment and a different level of knowledge. There's always somebody growing. There's always somebody searching. There's always somebody trying to get better, but we must tip the scales to make the weighted side be the side that is the side of positivity for the upliftment of humanity. That's how it starts with each person and then it spreads out.

And music of course has a role to play here...

With my music one element is to promote people to think for themselves, to be free thinkers. There is a part of the music scene, part of its nature, is to corral people to think the same way, to listen to music that same beat, the same chord progression, the same subject matter but I love music that really invites people to use their imagination, to use their minds, to think, to feel, to create because that's what we're here to do. If we're not creating, then we are not fulfilling part of what our destiny.

But then there is also the side that is just to make people feel good because when you can make somebody feel good, when you can touch somebody's soul, somebody's heart, that's going to make them do something that's loving and project energy and vibration and that is uplifting.

Spending time with Cindy for this interview was incredibly moving. Her compassion, her warmth, her energy, her passion all of which is so evident in her music, was so clear to see and so infectious. A true role model for us all.

As this is International Women's Day, to end, I asked Cindy if she had any words of wisdom to women out there who may feel they can't achieve what they want to achieve, that there are maybe too many barriers and perhaps have a lack of belief in themselves.

I would say to any woman to understand that just by nature of what God has given us physically, to be able to be the nurturer and bring in life, whether you want to bring life in or not, whether you do or do not, that's the power that you have been given. So understand that you can create and you can do things and that is your God-given right, so never let anyone stop you from doing something that you want to do and that you want to achieve. Understand that where there's a will there's a way, you just have to figure out how to do it, but you can do anything! God has created beings of power, beings of intelligence, beings of creative force and women are half of that you know? Men have things, women have things and so we just need to use that and not buy into any societal norms that have been created by a patriarchal society that wants to control you. Understand that you can do whatever it is that you want, and it just takes putting time into that thing - playing the bass or playing the drums, piano or violin etc - it takes time. You have to invest in yourself. Invest the time in yourself. It's basically about knowing that you are strong enough and powerful enough to do whatever it is

and powerful enough to do whatever it is that you want to do because you're naturally a creator, you're naturally a nurturer, so nurture yourself into doing whatever it is you want and don't let somebody else with a skewed vision and version of you, decide who you are.



PHOTO BY JIMMY BRUCH

Interview by Fiona Ross

[CINDY BLACKMAN](#)
[SANTANA WEBSITE](#)
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CHARLOTTE KEEFFE



RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW WITH CHARLOTTE KEEFFE

BY ISABEL MARQUEZ

Trumpeter and flugelhorn player, composer, band leader and free improvisation enthusiast Charlotte Keeffe has joined with her **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW** quartet for her new live album 'RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW ALIVE! In the studio...' Keeffe performs regularly as a soloist (Sound Brush) and guides a variety of ensembles and free improvisation workshops, spreading the joy that comes with letting go and feeling the musical moment, right there and then. The **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW** Quartet features Ashley John Long on double bass, Ben Handysides on drums and Moss Freed on guitar.

I was eager to hear about the changes in the compositional process when recording a live album, and how this may enhance the unreserved nature that comes with playing abstract music.

Firstly, could you tell me a bit more about your latest release? What was 'ALIVE! In the studio' all about for you?

I'm proud and excited to share with the world my 2nd album as a band leader, 'RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW ALIVE! in the studio...'

Here's a brief blurb/poem I wrote to describe 'RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW ALIVE! in the studio...' with my **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW** Quartet...

Charlotte Keeffe's **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW** Quartet featuring Ashley John Long (on double bass), Ben Handysides (drums) and Moss Freed (guitar), is a breeding

ground for squelchy, sploshy, splashy Sound Brush playing - music-making!

...Overtly over-blowing, splitting, splattering, squirming, squeaking, and squealing out **ALIVE!** Howling and hooting, chomping, and chaffing...

Dusty, distorted, flimsy, fragile, manic, ghostly, guttural sound strokes rip through whirlwinds and whirlpools of wholesome gooey sound dough!

A turbulent tease, staggering, swaying, abruptly plunging into intentional vagueness...

A messy emporium of raw, raucous realness.

Alive.

Right Here, Right Now.

It is as it is...



Making music is always a precious collaborative experience for me, even if I'm playing a solo (Sound Brush) set! The album cover features live painter Gina Southgate's awesome artwork - she painted **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW** during our first gig at London's Jazz in the Round, back in March 2019. Photographer Seán Kelly's super time-stoppers (photos) are also very present on the album cover - documenting this recording session at Goldsmiths Music Studios.

How did you go about releasing an album based on studio live recordings and how does it differ from your first album? What was the production process like?

Being a freely improvising musician, I play/make very raw/abstract music, which is instigated and inspired by whatever moment I am in, (I also love smothering the venue in distorted, exploratory trumpet cries!)

Music happens and thrives in the moment/right here, right now for me, and I crave the liveness of the music - it can feel beautifully connecting, liberating and ultimately transcendent! I wish everyone could experience that feeling, I want to inspire folks to feel/seek it...

So why do I record and release music if it's all about the 'right here, right now'/live performances for me?!

Going back to my debut album, **Right Here, Right Now**, which is also available on Discus Music, excitedly happened pretty organically! During the lockdown, I posted a clip of my **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW** Quartet playing our first gig at London's Jazz in the Round, and Martin Archer who runs Discus Music, very quickly and kindly reached out to me on the back of watching that clip, to ask if I had any recordings of the Quartet as he'd LOVE to release them! I was (am) super delighted and of course, I jumped at such a wonderful opportunity! However, I wanted my debut album to reflect all of the projects/ensembles/music I make, not just feature my **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW**

Quartet. Thankfully Martin understood this more CV/sample/snapshot approach, and my debut album features some of my solo, duo, quartet, and large ensemble (London Improvisers Orchestra) works. Also, and more to the point, it features mostly all recordings from live gigs/performances - some recordings I didn't even know were happening!

Right Here, Right Now.
You are a precious collaboration.
Pieces, journeys, stories...
Right Here, Right Now.
You are full of improvisations.
A mantra. A practise.
Exploring. Feeling. Listening. Expressing.
Feeling.
Listening
Breathe, Right Here, Right Now.
You are a way of being.
Making music.
Right Here, Right Now.
You are full of connections and connecting... Right Here, Right Now.
You have captured my past;
melodies and compositions I wrote as a teenager,
my 1st freely improvised trumpet solo,
my 1st conduction. Breathe.
You are full of my intentions and un-intentions.
You are raw and fragile.
Right Here, Right Now.
You are when my trumpet seems to play itself. You are as it is.
Let it be.
Be, be.
Right Here, Right Now.
Breathe.
Creative Freedom For All.

PHOTO BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY

It was a quick process to put together/release **Right Here, Right Now** (back in June 2021) - I wanted to leave the live recordings alone, trying to ‘match’ the feelings/energy from the live gigs/moments.

Going back to lockdown, (like so many folks/musicians), my partner and I started to record ourselves at home! I became fascinated and excited about the idea of recording my music/album in a studio - as I mentioned earlier, I’d not been that fussed about doing this before lockdown, because it’s more about the live performance (recordings from gigs) for me! A combination of the above, and receiving very exciting reviews about my debut album, it quickly became clear to Martin (Discus Music) and me that a Quartet studio album was to happen next, and last year, on Thursday 13th April, at Goldsmiths Music Studios in London, we made it happen! We got all the music recorded in one session/afternoon - it was a fantastic, but intense session! I’ve recorded lots of music in lots of studios, but this was my first time leading all of my music-making and boy, I’ve learnt LOTS from the journey/process!

We kicked off the session with a piece called Sweet, Corn, now, in the context of our live performances this is our last number and we always feel exhausted when we play it, so I wanted to play/record this piece without feeling exhausted, but interestingly it just didn’t feel ‘right’ when we played it at the beginning of our recording session (not feeling exhausted), so we all decided to come back to it at the end (as per live performance) and it felt much better, we gave it one blast at the end, when we were all shattered, and that is what you hear on the album! I’m eternally grateful to Ashley John Long (double bass), Ben Handysides (drums) and Moss Freed (guitar) for their powerful musicianship - it’s always more than inspiring playing with them! It is (the music) as it is, and I’m so grateful and excited about how the album is being received!

So, going back to ‘why do I record and release music if it’s all about the ‘right here,

right now’/live performance (recordings) for me?!’ Perhaps it’s obvious to say, but there’s something more composer-like in doing so (as opposed to improviser-like) I feel really inspired and compelled to explore more of this composer part of me! I think of music as a liquid/water. I’m fascinated and curious as to how musicians/composers create ways (sculptures) to support and/or nurture the flow of that liquid/music! You could let the liquid (music) spread everywhere, you could let it soak up in a piece of kitchen roll and squeeze it out elsewhere, or pop it in a beautiful decorative vase, there are endless ways of holding/guiding that liquid/making music and I’m curious as to how folks choose, or not choose to do it!

What have been some highlights after releasing the album?

We’re delighted to have received lots of awesome, precious radio plays and very exciting, moving reviews for **‘RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW ALIVE!’** in the studio...! I’m so grateful for all of the support in spreading the music!

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW are fresh from playing to a full house at London’s awesome Café OTO celebrating the release of **‘RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW ALIVE!’** in the studio...! We were joined by 5 special roaming (in the audience) guest musicians from the London Improvisers Orchestra and beyond; Ivor Kallin, Douglas Benford, Jonny Martin, Anthony Osborne and Alex Wardill. The audience joined in with their precious voices too, it was a seriously special, wholesome, connecting evening - I’m still smiling and buzzing about it all now...

I have the live recordings from this gig, so watch this space!

Do you have any exciting gigs or events to highlight for 2024?

I’m thrilled to be playing Germany’s Saabrüken Free Jazz Festival very soon

as part of musical wizard Alex Ward’s Item 4 Quartet! And **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW** are over the moon to be playing Cheltenham’s Jazz Festival on Saturday 4th May, we’ll also be playing Jazz Northeast/Newcastle’s The Globe on Sunday 30th June, and a UK tour is taking shape for later on this year and into 2025 with precious gatherings/gigs in Wakefield, Sheffield, Leeds, Brighton, Bristol, Lincolnshire, Wales... We’ll be exploring some new music/material! I’m also very keen to set up a UK Improvisers Orchestra - bringing new audiences/folks together and spreading the powerful word/music! I’m always up for collaborating, so if anyone wants to collaborate/play please get in touch via my social media, and/or my website!

The Right Here, Right Now quartet was amazingly featured on BBC Radio 3’s Freeness programme (twice!) Can you tell me a bit more about this experience?

Yes, wahoo, the wonderful Freeness producers kindly reached out to record **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW’s** set at the mega Manchester Jazz Festival last May, I was delighted! On the day of the gig, it felt like there was hardly any time to sound/line-check, (which can often be the case on festival gigs anyway), but I felt slightly distracted throughout the whole of this performance as to whether or not we were being recorded, thankfully (phew) we were, and our whole 70 mins. set was excitedly aired on BBC Radio 3’s awesome Freeness show in June! I’m so grateful for such mighty support in spreading the music! I was thrilled to be interviewed again by the Freeness team in October about **‘RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW ALIVE!’** in the studio...! I love Corey Mwamba (presenter of Freeness) to bits and talking to producers Silvia Malnati and Phil Smith was such a special JOY! They were (are) all so passionately interested and supportive of the music, I hope they know the significance they have on the community! It was a really special, unforgettable experience sharing the music with them!

Have you observed any shifts or changes as a woman in this scene?

Yes, and no - speaking very broadly and more about the Jazz scene, I’ve recently noticed that I’ve gone from being the only woman in the large ensemble/Big Band rehearsal/gig to being perhaps 1 of 2, or 3 women, which is a step in the right direction, but still a way off from a more 50/50 gender balance, but I do understand that these things take time... Maybe this time next year I’ll look around the room and I’ll be 1 of 6 - WAHOO! Sadly, almost daily (!)I still see all-male line-ups being announced on social media, or pictures/videos of all-male large ensemble projects rehearsing and gigging - I wonder what’s happened for the entire Big Band, or gig/event to feature no women, was it a case that no women were available, or was no woman sadly asked/invited to play, of course, without asking the bandleader I don’t know why this is the case, it remains frustrating and upsetting to see, but as I mentioned, perhaps I’ll be 1 of 6 in the room by next year!

CHARLOTTE
KEEFFE LINKS
CLICK HERE -
RIGHT HERE,
RIGHT NOW



PHOTO BY SEAN KELLY



AMY GADIAGA

Up-and-coming sensation, Amy Gadiaga is the epitome of everything new and fresh in today's jazz scene.

Bassist, vocalist, composer, arranger, and band leader hailing from Paris, bringing her years of musical exploration to the London jazz circle, Gadiaga fuses her art with multiple influences and styles, amounting to something incredibly special. Bringing the more traditional styles of jazz into the 21st century, combined with social commentary which touches on current-day issues, Gadiaga is using her voice and music to share her message.

All Black Everything, her up-and-coming EP set to release on Jazz re:refreshed records on April 5th 2024, is an all-embracing 5-track work of art. The EP explores themes of self-worth as a Black woman in a time of racial inequality, along with narratives stemming from the Black Lives Matter Movement. Gadiaga beautifully transforms any self-doubt into self-empowerment through her musical storytelling, heard in her first single release from the EP, Paloma Negra.

Paloma Negra is a tribute to black artists as they contribute to shifting culture all over the world... I wrote it during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement at a time when I was really into Mexican folk music. The title means Black Dove in Spanish and it's a recurring theme in Mexican folk songs. - Amy Gadiaga for B:M 2024

We first heard this stunning single at Gadiaga's London Jazz Festival performance with Women in Jazz Media in November 2023. The whole performance was one to remember. Gadiaga's charisma and endearing stage presence when performing a combination of jazz standards and original tunes, including On Green Dolphin Street and her haunting single Nephi. The song touches on the subject of self-awareness and identifying her insecurities such as her dark skin tone, the fear of disappointing her parents, or the anxiety of holding anyone back (particularly black people).

'I've been black, I've been back.' - Nephi, 2023, Amy Gadiaga.

I had the honour of chatting with Amy Gadiaga about her debut EP and what it means to her to be starting this musical journey.

We are so excited for the release of your debut EP, 'All Black Everything'. Can you tell us a bit about how the EP came together and what inspired you?

Thank you so much! To be honest most of the songs were written 3-4 years ago when I was still at the Conservatoire. It took a long time to get out, so I don't even remember.

Your first release from the new EP 'Paloma Negra' is jam-packed with rhythmic

contrasts and various musical styles. How did you go about writing this piece? What is your usual process when writing a new composition?

For that one, I was writing a minor blue, and the melody was supposed to be played on trumpet. I was singing the melody, and these words came out naturally in Spanish. At the time I was very much into Lola Beltran and some other Mexican folk singers. With the years, the song changed a lot.

What has it been like working alongside jazz re:refreshed to release this EP?

It's always nice to work with people who care.

Are there any glimpses on this album of your experience growing up in Paris? What was it like starting your career in Paris? What has it been like since you moved to London?

I guess the title track and Paloma Negra uncover a bit of what I felt growing up in the outskirts of Paris. There's a huge African diaspora there and our young lives were always stigmatised by the media.

I did have the best childhood though and one thing about outskirt people is that we're insanely proud of who we are and where we come from.

You talk about the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement on your musical creation. Can you tell us a bit more about this?

Around the time of the writing of it, the BLM movement was at its peak in the media, and I had a conversation with some of my teachers at the Conservatoire. As black people who themselves went on to study jazz at the conservatoire decades ago, their challenges were the same as mine and we were shocked that nothing changed. Most of my conversations at the time were about this, so naturally the songs I wrote also took this register.

How did you go about choosing the musicians to play with you on this EP?

I never change the people I play with, to be honest. The musicians on the EP are my close friends so I didn't have to think about it.

Amy Gadiaga- Double-bass/ Vocals
Luke Bacchus- Piano/ percussion
Joseph Oti- Trumpet
Simon Lamb- Drums/ Percussion
Tom Waters- Alto saxophone
Christ-Stéphane Boizi- Trombone

Mixed by Giles Barrett and mastered by David Holmes.

Is there a track on the EP that particularly stands out to you?

Paloma Negra is my favourite.

What can we expect from you next?

More writing and more visual work hopefully. Before music, I was an art kid and I've yet to use those two mediums cohesively! Also, more dancing :)

Interview by Isabel Marquez

[AMY GADIAGA](#)
[LINKS CLICK HERE](#)



JUDI JACKSON BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

BEHIND THE LENS

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

You will find stunning photography throughout this magazine and we are hugely grateful for the inspiring photographers that allow us to publish their work and truly bring our magazines to life. In this edition we are proud to feature the following photographers:

Patrica Pascal

Monika S Jakubowska

Barka Fabianova

Tatiana Gorilovsky

Enid Farber



Patricia Pascal shared some of her incredible photos featuring some of the new and exciting Tomorrow's Warriors.

HANNAH
CLIFTON

TRUMPET



KEZIA POLLENDINE

VOCALS





EMILY TRAN
VOCALS/PIANO



HOLLY REINHARDT
DOUBLE BASS

TAMI
ADEBANJO
GUITAR



MALI SHEARD
SAX AND VOCALS

PHOTO BY RICCARDO PICCIRILLO

SARAH JANE MORRIS



SARAH JANE MORRIS AND THE SISTERHOOD

BY ISABEL MARQUEZ

Sarah Jane Morris, a musical icon and legend. From her discernible work as lead singer of the Communards, with their number one single 'Don't leave Me This Way', to her unfolding musical project 'The Sisterhood', Morris' career is one built on highlights. Now based in St Leonards on the English south coast, Morris is focussed on rebuilding the arts after the struggles of the pandemic and spotlighting the vital work done by women in music throughout history.

Alongside Tony Rémy on guitar, Morris has written ten songs, telling the stories of 12 women across music genres and throughout time. These women include: Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Miriam Makeba, Janis Joplin, Aretha Franklin, Joni Mitchell, Rickie Lee Jones, Kate Bush, Patti Smith, Annie Lennox, and Sinéad O'Connor. Morris uses words and musical form to reflect the writing style and musical idiom associated with each musician.

The album was premiered at Cadogan Hall on Friday 6 October 2023, and will now be released on International Women's Day, March 8th, 2024, with launch concerts at the Tung Auditorium in Liverpool on the Friday 8th, and Alexandra Palace in London on Saturday 9th.

In conversation with Morris, I wished to uncover her motivation behind the project and why she feels like a sisterhood is so important in this musical age...

Firstly, how did you come up with the

idea for The Sisterhood? What influenced this project?

I've been thinking about projects to celebrate Women and our contribution to the history of song for more than 20 years now. This at last is it. I haven't had a television for 15 years, which means I read a lot and like to research people's lives to write them into song. My husband and I read a lot to each other. In the second lockdown I asked my husband Mark Pulsford, who is a visual artist, if he'd mind me reading him autobiographies and biographies of female singer songwriters, so that I could understand better the journeys they had had. I initially made a list of about 50 but took it down to twelve. We both fell in love with the women we were reading about, and who had paved the way for myself to be the singer songwriter I am today. Between us we made notes and went back and forth with ideas and wrote the lyrics together. Once lock down was lifted my right-hand man Tony Remy, the incredible guitarist and versatile musician and friend came to stay, and I explained the project to him. Together we both decided that it would make the project particularly interesting if we wrote the music in the genre the artist was known for. This stretched us and called on everything we had ever learned about music.

What led you to choose this particular list of women to focus on?

The list of singers I chose are personal to me and aren't everyone's choice.



PHOTO BY RICCARDO PICCIRILLO



PHOTO BY SARA LEIGH LEWIS

Through these songs I acknowledge my musical tutelage and identify the women who mean so much to me. There are many that should be on this list, so I dedicate this project to all my musical sisters, to those that went before and those still making music. I want to thank them for blazing the trail, for fighting for us all with their irresistible talent and passionate resolve.

My list is: Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Miriam Makeba, Aretha Franklin, Janis Joplin, Joni Mitchell, Patti Smith, Rickie Lee Jones, Annie Lennox, Kate Bush, and Sinead O'Connor. In the end I saw this project as the passing of the torch from one generation to another. I dare to see myself after Kate (she is one year older) passing the torch to Sinead who was many years younger.

How did you go about writing the lyrics and music for this album? Was it lyrics first or vice versa?

The lyrics were written first, after much respectful research and listening to the songs of the various singers to better understand them. Tony Remy and I wrote the music once the lyrics were written. I tend to write this way with lyrics then music.

How has the fundraising process been? How did you anticipate this project would go before starting and has it surprised you since?

We realised about halfway through the writing and demoing of the songs that this was a very inspired project and it needed to be heard. Brexit had damaged my career badly as most of my paid work is in Europe. Covid had come along shortly afterwards and stopped all earnings. I run my own label and manage myself, so I finance my projects, but the coffers were empty. This meant I had to think outside the box to get the project realised. I started by visiting a studio I'd recorded in for my last album, in the next town, to discov-

er how much I'd need to raise to pay for four days' lock out. Once I had the figure in my head, I went about trying to raise that money. I went around to all my friends and neighbours who I knew had a spare room and asked them if they'd be prepared to rent the room for £50 a night, if I provided the breakfast. I then knew how many places I could offer via an advert on Facebook, to ask people if they'd like to come to the seaside (I live in St Leonards on Sea) to learn three-part harmony backing vocals, to several of my songs, that they would then come and sing on stage with me at Ronnie Scott's, a few months hence.

Because I've never studied music (I went to too many schools to ever be able to choose it as a subject, and then to Drama School), I've always felt a bit of a fraud. I was pretty terrified at this stage, but I knew it was my way forward as many, many people had asked me to teach them to sing over the years. I put the advert up and was so wonderfully surprised when it sold out very quickly.

The masterclass was a huge success, and we were all so uplifted by the occasion. I rented my friend's studio to do this, and a friend's PA, and my husband Mark did the cooking for a sit-down lunch and evening meal. Tony accompanied me on guitar. This paid for the first four days in the studio where we laid down most of the tracks. I bartered studio time with Guy Chambers for vocal sessions and I made clothes and sold them on Ebay and Facebook marketplace, on a gifted sewing machine, and anything I couldn't finish, my dear friend and neighbour, the wonderful DJ Wendy May helped me with. This provided the money to pay for backing vocals and extra musicians. Tony and I did residential song writing weekends in my home, and Mark my husband did visual art weekends. Mark drew pen and ink drawings of each of the singers which we sold. I did many more masterclasses, which eventually led to 25 coming to sing on stage at the world premiere of 'The Sisterhood' at Cadogan Hall in London in October.

I am about to do another masterclass to 40 people next weekend and those people will come and take part in our album launch at Alexandra Palace Theatre, London on Saturday March 9th. I set up a 'Go Fund me' where I offered the song writing weekends, and art weekends, and pre orders of the CDs. This raised the money to pay for myself, Tony and my brother Rod Morris, (a filmmaker) to go to South Africa, to record and film The Soweto Gospel Choir on the day she would have turned 90. I think this was the most exciting and moving part of the whole album project. People's generosity with time and accommodation and support for this project has been life affirming!

Your career has been filled with inspiring and life-changing projects. Has there been a point in your career that you look back on most fondly?

I have been very fortunate with my own musical journey as it has been challenging and continually changes. I didn't choose an easy path by becoming a writer of the human story, but I find it very fulfilling. My time with 'The Happy End' a 25-piece political big band in the 80s was definitely a highlight. It was a mixed band of male and female musicians, some learning their instruments on the job. The band was led by Matt Fox and Glen Gordon, both no longer with us. Claire Hirst, Sue Norton, Sue Lynch, Rachel Bartlett all played sax at some point in this wonderful band. With the lyrics of Kay Sutcliffe, a Kent Miners Wife, we recorded 'Coal Not Dole', which became the anthem of the strike. This was a very moving period of time and we felt like we were making a difference. Performing with 'The Communards' for a sell-out week at L'Olympia in Paris, where such greats as Piaf performed a generation before, was another highlight. Being given the 'Freedom of the City of Verona' when I performed at The Verona Arena in 1989, was another huge highlight. Duetting with Gil Scott-Heron on 'Many Rivers to Cross' at an Artists Against Apartheid concert at the Academy Brixton was another. Being

asked to sing at Quincy Jones 80th was pretty cool alongside the likes of Jacob Collier.

What is it like now since the pandemic? Do you think the music industry is healing?

It feels like musicians and the arts are at the bottom of the list. So many venues closed forever as a result of covid. I've noticed that fees haven't returned to normal. It's still a tough time to survive in the arts. What is next for you and the Sisterhood Project? Do you have any other future projects you have been thinking about? I'm hoping there are many offshoots from 'The Sisterhood' that keep the project alive for a long time. There are more singers' lives to write about. I'm writing a 12-part 15- minute radio series for 'The Sisterhood' and I'd love it to become a documentary, as we have documented every part of the project so far. I see this as a Theatre/Music project telling some of my own story alongside. I'm writing some of the stories of my own journey as some of it has been very interesting. I hope to carry on writing with Tony as he is the perfect co-writer and co producer, and I hope to hear from the living singer songwriters we have written about. Rickie Lee Jones wrote to me and said "Sarah Jane Morris, thank you. You have gone right into my heart, like a convertible GTO at a drive through car wash. Except the top was down and everything got all wet. Moms' gonna kill us. Thank you for my truth. I dig it and I am honoured". It doesn't get much better than that does it!

[Listen to The Sisterhood here](#)



Go see Sarah Jane Morris and The Sisterhood!

Saturday 9th March

[For tickets, click here](#)

ALINA BZHEZHINSKA



PHOTO BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY

ALINA BZHEZHINSKA: CHANGING LIVES

Alina Bzhezhinska, the award winning jazz harpist, composer and founder of HipHarpCollective is a truly unstoppable force. Two years ago today, I was sitting at Ronnie Scott's watching her debut performance at the club and in my review my words and the emotions of the night are still clear in my head - I have never witnessed anything like it. If anyone was ever in any doubt about the power of music, Alina and her incredible musicians made it very clear. Her performance was days after Russia had invaded Alina's homeland Ukraine. She shared with us the reality of her fears and experiences, her family, her friends and her country. She spoke of her frustration and of feeling helpless and her tireless work, organising fund-raising events and raising money to help those that are still there in the Ukraine and those who are fleeing. Alina told us that music was her weapon and she showed us the real power of music with beauty, grace and staggering resilience.

It has been almost exactly 2 years since your incredible debut performance on the main stage at Ronnie Scott's. Your performance was shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine and the emotion throughout the night was palpable. You have been performing, supporting, sharing, raising awareness ever since. Looking back from that night to today, how do you feel?

When I was booked to play Ronnie Scott's on 8 March 2022 I was so delighted, it was such an honour to lead my band HipHarpCollective on the International Women's Day at such legendary club and celebrate the start of the tour for my album Reflections (BBE Music). What I didn't know was that a week before the concert Russia would invade my country Ukraine, my

brother Ilya, a prominent architect, would join the army to defend his home, all women in my family would refuse to go to the West for safety staying by their men in our city of Lviv to do any work as volunteers to help the army and stop the aggressors. So, it felt natural that the stage at Ronnie Scott's on that special night, would become my platform for speaking out about the atrocities of war and pleading for support for my people. It was a very emotional concert and I remember how much it took of me not to cry through it. In the last two years I learnt how to be stronger and only show my emotions in my music.

I cannot even begin to understand how the war must affect you and your resilience and passion for using your artistry to support Ukraine is so inspiring. The power of community is something that gives many of us strength and belief in change. Are there any particular moments that you feel are important to share?

Of course, the war has affected me tremendously but it didn't stop my creativity or make me lose my voice. I am still raising money and organising concerts for Ukraine.

There were many moments I would love to share but it's impossible to mention all of them. I will never forget the trip to Ukraine in April 2022 when me and my friend Sheldford Pereira drove from London to Lviv, western Ukraine, to deliver a vehicle to my brother's regiment. It was heartbreaking to see my beautiful UNESCO heritage city all in protective screens and bags of sand... but people were determined to defend their





land and you could see it everywhere. Every cafe in Lviv would donate some profit to the army, the unity of people was incredible.

Another highlight was the concert I played last Summer in a beautiful Ukrainian city Odesa, with the Estonian band lead by jazz guitarist / composer Jaak Sooaar. We were the only artists from outside Ukraine who went to give a concert in Odesa during the war and the atmosphere in a totally packed music hall was incredible. We made friends for life there and established a good relationship with Ukrainian volunteers. We also met musicians from the army jazz band that was performing in the park to citizens' delight just in between the sirens. There were many young women in the band. It was a little strange seeing them in military uniforms playing Duke Ellington and George Gershwin tunes but this was also a reminder that there was a war.

Coming back home to London I felt very inspired and got into writing new music. Some of it is dramatic and dark but some is healing and peaceful. Through my music I can express how I feel and what I am hoping for, and of course it's the victory for my country and peace.

You have been raising money since the beginning of the war through concerts and events. How much have you raised so far and can you talk me through where this money has gone, the people you have worked with and what it has been used for?

My first charity concert for Ukraine was spontaneously organised in February 2014. It was the time when Ukrainian people went on a peaceful demonstration in a capital city for Kyiv to put pressure on their government to make the steps of joining the European Union, but the response of the pro-Russian regime was brutal. Over 100 people were beaten to death, shot, kidnapped, and tortured. Many were injured and families with small kids lost their parents. But the journey of freedom had started. I went there during this turbulent time and with my sister volunteered to work in the hospital and with

food supplies. I spoke to many people, and I admired their bravery and their strong will to be free. There were many wonderful women who inspired me. My mother and my sister were among them. I had to do something, and I decided that my small contribution would be through my charity work.

Now, 10 years later, I still try my best to help people of Ukraine and the last two years of war have been very intense and painful, but I feel very strongly about the charity work and I can see how it can change people's lives.

From the beginning of the Russian invasion two years ago, I've played over 70 concerts with so many musicians from UK, USA, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine, raising money for several charities and simply for people who needed help - musicians and artists who became soldiers, children who became orphans. From donations and merchandise that have been sold at the concerts we collected over £50 000. At the beginning of the war we bought 3 cars, medical supplies and clothes for the army as people went to defend their homes with almost nothing. At the same time I started supporting my artist friend Tetiana Mialkovska's charity "Tepli Doloni" - "Warm Palms" - in Lutck, Volyn region, that helps refugee children to recover from war experiences through Art Therapy and recently I am also supporting the charity in my home city of Lviv "Shelter - Domivka", that rescues animals from the front line areas.

I do have a dedicated page to Ukraine on my website. People can read about my activities and also donate to support the charities:

[Click here to find out more and donate](#)

Nina Simone famously said "It is an artist's duty to reflect the times" and music is a powerful tool. What can your fellow musicians and people in the jazz community do to support?

Yes, Nina Simone is my biggest inspiration. I totally agree with her on this and I do use the stage as my platform for expressing the truth about the world we live in, and I do believe it is my duty not to be silent about injustice or wrongdoing. If people of good will can put our forces together - we will become a powerful voice and we can make a difference. Jazz is the music of freedom, and it is very natural for my fellow musicians to join me to support me in raising awareness and protest against the war.

I would like to take the opportunity and express my deep gratitude to everyone who contributed, especially the Cockpit Theatre, London, Harp Column USA, BARNET Arts Club, Crowmarsh Jazz, Hales Gallery London, The Adimno Edinburgh, POSK London, Ognisko London, Jazz in the Round, SOAS University, B:JazzFestival and Wolverhampton Ukrainian Club. I am thankful for the support of many artists and musicians who gave their time and talents to support the cause: Tony Kofi, Mikele Montoli, Joel Prime, Vimala Rowe, Niki King, Muriel Grossmann, Shabaka Hutchings, Gina Southgate Art, Tatiana Gorilovski and many others.

What can anyone else - the general public - do to support?

I've been experiencing a lot of support from the public - people donate money, buy our Ukrainian T-shirts and my albums on my Bandcamp (AlinaHipHarp Bandcamp) or after the concerts; sometimes they just come to talk to me sharing the stories how they help Ukrainians in their communities. And it also helps me to feel that what we do is not in vain- our support for Ukrainian people is not just a support for them but actually a support for our own peace too.

You have a new album Altera Vita coming out in April, with the brilliant saxophonist Tony Kofi. Altera Vita mirrors the human experience, from conception through to the inevitable end or new beginning.

Can you talk me through the concept behind this album and the human experience you explore?

I am very excited about the upcoming album Altera Vita (BBE Music). Both Tony and I wanted to make some music that will reflect the world in this complicated and uncertain time, a time when people are looking for more serenity, spirituality, and peace. This album is a spontaneous response to the world around us. From this vulnerability, we tried to create beauty that guides us through the turbulence and discord.



Where can we see you perform over the next few months?

I would like to invite the readers to support my two fundraising concerts for Ukraine - on 8 March at Ribble Valley Jazz and Blues and on 19 May at the Cockpit Theatre in London.

The HipHarpCollective project can be



PHOTO BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

heard on 16 March at 91 Jazz Club, London and at BBE showcase at The Jazz Cafe on 7 April.

The album launch for Altera Vita will take place at Kings Place, London with some additional dates:

*12th April - Turner Sims, Southampton,
13th April -The Bear Club, Luton and
25th April - Norwich Art Centre.*

The power of a community, as you know, can be life changing and as this is International Women's Day, what would you like to say to the women out there?

When I was a young girl growing up in Ukraine under a communist Russian regime, I never liked celebrating the 8th March. I felt like the tendency of celebrating this day was to look at women like we were fragile creatures who needed to be taken care of. I always felt that none of the women around me were actually like that. We were strong, independent, and outspoken. And that's what I always wanted to celebrate. I can only say that I am very proud of women and of their amazing works in many fields, especially when working in predominantly male environments. I would like to wish all my sisters to be proud of who we are and celebrate it every day.

Interview by Fiona Ross

PHOTOS TAKEN BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY
THE COCK PIT, LONDON



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PHOTOS BY ANDY PORTER

LAUREN BUSH



IN CONVERSATION WITH LAUREN BUSH

BY WENDY KIRKLAND

Renowned for her charming musical storytelling, Lauren Bush stands as a contemporary Canadian jazz vocalist based in London, UK. Lauren's highly anticipated 'Tide Rises' album was released on 6th October 2023, her third release after her debut 'All My Treasures' and her 2021 release 'Dream Away'. The eagerly awaited collection of 10 tracks, including three penned by Lauren herself, promises to be a defining chapter in her artistic evolution...

Your album Tide Rises – was out in October 2023 on Mighty Quinn records. Could you tell me a little about the concept or the theme of the album, and how it came about?

When I started there wasn't really a theme, but I'd met the label chief, Jerry Roche at JazzAhead. Previously, his suggestion of me putting something out hadn't happened for whatever reason, so we decided to revisit this. He gave me the brief of writing 3 songs in the same style of the ones I like to sing. It pushed me to try and find ways to achieve that. I spent a long time going through voice notes I'd sketched. I'm not really a songwriter, I sing by ear, I like to hope I'm a musician but not really a composer, however it was something I really wanted to explore and develop. It was because of his trust that I could do it, which gave me the confidence to get started.

I began by writing a melody to a poem (The Tide Rises), shared it with Liam Dunachie, the arranger of all the tracks on my albums, who fleshed it out. For the second, I created my own vocalese from the Chet Baker trumpet solo on his version of 'Do It The Hard Way', entitling it Happier On My Own. The third, 'Easy Does It', was a development of a song some of my friends wrote during lockdown.

We also recorded Joni Mitchell's Circle Game. As a fellow Canadian, steeped in the tradition of Joni, I think it's fitting to pay tribute to such a great artist. Then when coming up with a title for the album, I noticed that there were a lot of references to tidal and cyclic themes in the pieces, so that gave me the title of the album – it just suddenly came together!

Your albums have been listed by Be-bop Spoken Here (Parliamentary Jazz Award Winner 2018) as part of his top ten albums of the year – twice!

Yes, Lance listed my previous album 'Dream Away' as part of his top ten for 2021 and 'Tide Rises' for 2023. Although there are so many great albums out there, I'm obviously thrilled to be listed. Lance is a great supporter of vocalists and I'm so thrilled to be included in his annual review.

Could you tell me a little bit about your influences as a singer?

Influences as a singer: my dad (Greg Bush) is a jazz trumpet player, so I have influences ranging from him to Chet Baker, whose playing is instantly recognisable and his singing very instrumental; his voice is his second instrument. Probably my favourite vocalist is Sarah Vaughan, also Carmen McRae, not forgetting Ella Fitzgerald of course.

Current favourites of mine include DeeDee Bridgewater, she comes from a musical theatre standpoint, there's a lot of heart and emotion in what she does. I feel she brings cheekiness, an edge to her interpretations of jazz. Also, Nnenna Freelon; the music comes out of her so naturally, the performance can almost be felt, even if you aren't watching, just listening.

If you could play any instrument, in addition to singing, what would it be?

I do play piano, but not confidently enough to perform at the moment. So I guess I would develop that in the long term. I also have a yen for playing the trombone, which can make so many interesting sounds as well as music! I defy anyone not to.

You sang live on BBC Radio 3, on Christmas Day 2023! That must have been so exciting. How did that happen, and how was it?

I have become friends with singer Ian Shaw, who always gets invited to the programme on Christmas Day, and he was looking for a 'girl' singer to do it with...it was such a treat to be in the studio, taking the little elevator that so many other great artists have taken there. Performing Christmas music on Christmas Day was rather special...knowing that all my friends



and so many other people would have been listening in!

Now let's talk a little bit about your tour this year. You are taking in the UK, Canada and Europe.

There are so many concerts I'm excited about, to be back home in Canada the same year as getting married will be a highlight. I'm really looking forward to playing in Europe and the dates and venues for this are being organised as we speak, and will definitely include Germany, this will be announced very soon. All my dates are listed on my website, which updates regularly, as they say!

16/03/2024 Nottingham, Peggy's Skylight

29/03/2024 London, Toulouse Lautrec

30/03/2024 London, Toulouse Lautrec

04/04/2024 Guildford, Electric Theatre

26/04/2024 London, Piano Smithfield

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[LAUREN BUSH LINKS](#)
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LARA EIDI

" We went into the words, carrying our instruments , with the simple idea to set up a live recording surrounded by nature's magical playground. What started out as a mantra I wrote for myself, became a kind of prayer I needed to sing. Dedicated to the children of war, I thought of nothing but them , in this performance, and from now on ".



PHOTO BY VALERIA ISAEVA

"HOW CAN YOU BE AN ARTIST AND NOT REECT THE TIMES? THAT TO ME IS THE DENITION OF AN ARTIST." – NINA SIMONE

If Nina were alive today, I think she'd be furious. She'd be downright appalled by the overwhelming deafening silence with artists. She'd be smashing the ivory keys with the kind of passion you'd imagine at a Martin Luther King speech, or, for purposes of our time, at a protest for peace and ceasefire in Palestine.

Then again, that's the irony of it all. Nina was living in a segregated, racially divisive society and she was a woman. But that didn't stop her from using her voice. There was, of course, no social media pretext to hide from, or occasionally throw in a few empty words disguised as commentary on the world's events. No amount of dangerous neutrality that seems to be trending these days amongst musicians with an online presence, could sway the mighty Nina from making her voice HEARD. For her, it was about justice. About universal truth. She used her music, and her words, to call for peace, for quality, for recognising humanity's biggest folly: hate. She didn't need any justification for her dedication to using her craft in ways that as she famously said, 'reflect the times'.

Years later, the world, our industry, decided that Nina was a figure of utmost importance in the fight for 'cultural and social justice'. Her importance as a jazz musician (albeit British conservatoires have yet to give her such acceptance) as a black woman heralded the reminder that jazz music really was a large part in the humanitarian call for equality. Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald echoed these sentiments, and countless others.

Thankfully, raising awareness for humanity doesn't just lie in jazz music. Ireland produced legends such as the late Sinead O'Connor. Was she praised in her time?

No, quite seldomly. She faced the same backlash, with audiences now shifting to online commentary as feeling 'uncomfortable' with truths. She challenged notions of the Catholic Church that her male contemporaries were too afraid of addressing. Whilst she was still regarded as a vocalist virtuoso of her time, she soon adopted the stigma of a 'sensitive' and 'mentally' unwell persona. So did Nina.

I won't address the dangerous indulgence of attaching negative stigma to mental health and misuse of the term when it comes to universal truths; I will instead bring us back to the recent Grammy Awards'. Aside from Tracy Chapman blessing us with honest songwriting and grace with her performance of 'Fast Car', and an emotional performance of Joni Mitchell herself with 'Both Sides Now', there was only one other performance which felt right for the times we find ourselves in.

I'm speaking, of course, of Annie Lennox's tribute to O'Connor. Shortly after delivering one of the most profound tributes to an artist and social activist I've ever seen, she was the only artist to publicly call for a ceasefire. Raising her fist in the air, she cried 'Cease Fire Now. Peace.'

I wept, for three reasons. The first reason being that I felt for a fleeting moment, that at long last, Palestinians were seen. That my roots as a Palestinian, were seen. That the people in Palestine who are undergoing a genocide unfolding in real time before our very eyes, are seen and heard.

She recognised that it is appalling and shocking that few artists have spoken openly, raised awareness, and used the word 'Palestine' as a symbol of peace and hope. That she recognised that this industry has silenced ours and their voice, and she was one of the few brave souls to speak out. The second reason being: it's about time. The silence in some of my peers has been too overwhelming to accept. After being triggered and experiencing what Western society calls 'collective trauma', I felt a glimmer of hope that Annie Lennox deliberately through music, using her voice and Sinead's, said enough is enough.

The third reason was the realisation that this would undoubtedly bring about backlash. Instead of all the developments we've seen, as aforementioned with social media, access to education, and the vital importance of humanity in the arts, we still are fed the illusion that we can't speak up for truth.

How is it possible, I ask, that we've failed as musicians and artists? And I use 'we', because we collectively can raise voices for peace, for truth, for justice. Yet when the opportunity presents itself (and let me be very clear, 'opportunity' should be changed to the here and now) artists have mostly chosen to stay silent, aside from the few protests and attempts to raise awareness from music. You don't have to be from the region to understand this; we've seen this in other shapes and forms, and if you've made it this far into this piece, I've mentioned them in as much detail as possible.

I say this: artists, we live in times where if you don't think that what is happening doesn't matter to you, I implore you, look further. Look at the messages of all the artists you know and love, and I guarantee you will find the answers.

This is a piece which took great strength to write, only because I can finally admit that what is occurring has triggered a

sense of justice and peace in me which has been dormant for a long time. So, in my own way, I will continue to share the voices of those who can't. I will use my music wherever I can to spread messages of equality, peace and ask those to call for a #ceasefire. I will use the word Palestine, because this is a symbol of hope and peace.

Don't let that hope die. You may think that we are exempt from feeling any compassion, and I've heard countless retorts of 'must keep your spirits up'; this doesn't concern us, but we understand'.

Do you, really?

Not unless you contemplate one of the main reasons you've chosen to be an artist; musician; poet; photographer. You are sharing a piece of humanity's greatest story: peace.

Thank you for listening.

**Humbly,
Lara Eidi.**

PHOTO BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY



LIANE
CARROLL

THANK YOU, LIANE CARROLL!

BY KIM CYPHER

International Women's Day is a day to celebrate and share the achievements of amazing women. I have embraced this opportunity to express my gratitude and say thank you to one of my absolute jazz heroes, the much-loved and hugely respected piano/vocalist, Liane Carroll. Liane has travelled the world with her music, has an impressive discography, received countless awards, performed at prestigious venues including Ronnie Scott's, London's 606 Club, Glastonbury Festival, Dizzy's Jazz Club in New York and worked alongside some of the very best in the industry, with credits including a charity single in 1998 with the Peter Kirtley Band, on which Sir Paul McCartney sang backing vocals! Yet, Liane stays firmly rooted to those people and places she holds most dear in life, a quality that really resonates with me and sincerely touches my heart.

I remember the first time I saw Liane performing live at The Daffodil in Cheltenham as part of the Cheltenham International Jazz Festival. I was immediately drawn to her warmth, friendly connection with the audience and her humorous, often hilarious repartee. Then she started to sing and play. Wow, I feel that emotion even now. Sitting in the audience at a time in my life when I had just embarked upon my own journey as a full-time professional jazz musician, a little apprehensive about the road ahead, I remember feeling such admiration for Liane's finely-honed, perfected craft. There was something so natural, so raw about her performance. It was an 'experience,' and it was incredibly inspiring. I was fascinated by the seemingly effortless synergy Liane has between her piano

playing and vocal improvisations. I later learned that Liane's dear late mum, herself a professional singer, used to sing to Liane and suggested Liane sing along when performing her piano exercises. No doubt this contributed to the incredible skill Liane has developed.

I set out to listen to more of Liane's music and to see her performing live whenever / wherever I could. This led me to see her at London's 606 Club, the Jazz Arena at Cheltenham Jazz Festival, Bishop's Cleeve Tithe Barn as part of Lee Noble and Christian Finn's Cleeve Concerts plus numerous other venues.

In 2018, I found out that Liane and I had both been booked to perform at Guiting Music Festival in July, myself with my band and Liane with her trio featuring bassist husband Roger Carey and Russell Field on drums. A day or so before the festival, I reached out to Liane to say how excited I was to be on a double-bill with her. I was blown away when she asked me if I would like to join her on stage for a number with her trio. So, after my own performance, I nervously waited in the wings to join her at the end of her trio set for a performance of Stevie Wonder's 'Lately'. That shared moment will always be a personal and professional highlight for me. Although I was nervous, I loved every single minute on stage with Liane and her incredible trio. I remember coming off stage afterwards feeling very emotional, thinking "I just performed with Liane Carroll!"

Leigh Tarrant of Skooch Media was at the festival to film my band's performance and it is fabulous he also captured myself and Liane performing together:



PHOTO BY RON MILSOM



© Charlie Chan

6 months later, I heard Liane was booked to perform for Vonnies Blues Club in my hometown of Cheltenham in January 2019, so I decided to let her know I was coming along. I secretly wondered if (hoped) she may ask me to bring my saxophone along...she did! I spent the evening captivated by her performance whilst also trying to manage my nerves for our impending joint performance, which happened to be an unrehearsed song (which I didn't know) at the end of the evening. The performance was a blur for me, but, thankfully, it was very well received by the audience, and I felt very happy indeed. Among the audience was cancer surgeon and highly acclaimed photographer Charlie Chan. He captured my happiness beautifully.

When initially embarking on my journey as a full-time professional jazz musician, I considered myself to be primarily a saxophonist. Although I always loved to sing, I never regarded myself as a vocalist. However, listening to Liane's version of 'Old Black Magic' on her 2005 album 'Standard Issue', I felt inspired to sing. So, I learnt the song, rehearsed it singing along to the album, and it became the first song I ever performed publicly. I'm sure I destroyed it, but it was the starting point for my journey to gain confidence as a jazz vocalist. So strong is the power of others to inspire and motivate.



Liane has an innate ability to fill songs with absolute heart and soul and bring them to life with pure emotion, something that is important to me as a performer. A couple of favourites for me are Liane's performance of 'The Briar and The Rose', plus her stunning version of 'Bring Me Sunshine' on the 2015 album 'Seaside' is a masterpiece.



SEASIDE
LIANE CARROLL

For this reason, as part of my most recent 'Brighter Tomorrow' project, a commitment I made to pay tribute to those working in The Arts, I composed a selection of original music for my forthcoming new album, due for release later this year. One of these pieces is a very poignant, emotional song called 'Tomorrow's Song'. The lyrics of the song require delivery with absolute heart and soul. In my mind, there was only one lady for the job. So, I set my heart on asking Liane to record the song with me.

Here's the thing, in this business, you are always filled with self-doubt and feelings of unworthiness (I think it's a creatives' thing). But sometimes you must chance your arm and create your own opportunities, so I asked her. It turns out that she was only too pleased to come onboard with my project and so we headed to London's 606 Club to record and film a live version of 'Tomorrow's Song'. Another of life's highlights for me...I'm still pinching myself!



PHOTOS BY RON MILSOM

followers commented, "I would pay to see you walk down the stairs."

I think we all feel the same. We hang on to every word Liane says, mesmerised by this incredibly special aura, a wonderful quality that surrounds Liane.

We all want to be part of Liane's world, a world of humble brilliance, heart and soul and a whole lot of laughter.

Huge respect and thank you to Liane Carroll, one of life's true gems.

**LIANE CARROLL
LINKS CLICK
HERE**

**KIM CYPHER
LINKS CLICK
HERE**

Liane and I just gelled. We both performed from the heart and allowed ourselves to get lost in the emotion of the music and lyrics. We also laughed a LOT!

I am so grateful to Liane for influencing my life in such a positive way and I feel honoured to have this opportunity to express my thanks to her as part of International Women's Day. I feel it is also relevant to mention that both Liane and I have a very special place in our hearts for our dear late mums. I certainly wouldn't be the person I am today without the support and the loving relationship I shared with my mum. I know Liane has treasured memories of time spent with her late mum too, particularly birthday celebrations shared at Liane's annual Ronnie Scott's gig. So, here's to our mums too on International Women's Day!

Liane has reached great heights in her musical career and is a much-loved performer on the UK jazz scene. Yet, despite her brilliance, she remains totally down-to-earth, humble, and devoted to her roots. She openly expresses love for her "beloved Por-

ters" in Hastings, where she grew up and where she performs regularly. She clearly still loves performing in the small, intimate venues and feels blessed to do so.

Liane openly expresses how proud she is of her family and her devotion to husband Roger Carey. It's no wonder I feel such a strong connection to Liane, we share the same life values.

I consider Liane to be one of the very best piano/vocalists on the UK and worldwide jazz scene, with a sincere, natural, and genuine raw ability. Her achievements are huge and vast yet there remains a humble modesty that keeps her firmly rooted and connected to those people and places she holds dearest. I feel blessed to have taken inspiration from Liane and to have grown to a point in my own career where I can now take pride in having performed and recorded alongside her.

When you are in the company of Liane Carroll you truly feel you are in the company of jazz royalty. A recent comment I saw on social media summed it up for me...following an accident which left Liane with an injured arm and unable to play piano at one of her forthcoming gigs, one of her devoted



**Jazzmeia Horn and D.D. Bridgewater:
Sassy Stories, Celebrating the Sarah Vaughan
Centennial**

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS:

ENID FARBER

**AT JAZZ CONGRESS
2024**





**Jay Hunter, Brad Stone, Susan Brink
and Willard Jenkins**

jazz congress



Terri Lynne Carrington and Guthrie Ramsey, (Re)considering InnovaKon, TransformaKon and Genius, Through The Lens of Jazz, Gender and Justice

Lonnie Davis and Melissa Walker, Leading Your Own Organization, How to Bring Jazz to Your Community Through Education and Performance



**Lakecia Benjamin and China Moses,
2024 Bruce Lundvall
Visionary Award Recipient**



jazz congress 2024



**Esperanza Spaulding,
Winter JazzFest
20th Anniversary Panel:
The University of Jazz**

**Dee Dee Bridgewater,
2024 Bruce Lundvall
Visionary Award Recipient**



**John Paatucci, Buster Williams, Esperanza
Spaulding and Marcus Miller, Wayne Shorter:
Life of a Legend**



**Dee Dee Bridgewater,
2024 Bruce Lundvall
Visionary Award Recipient**



WENDY KIRKLAND



PHOTO BY MARK LUDBROOK

WENDY KIRKLAND AT THE TWO PIANO STEINWAY FESTIVAL

The Steinway 2-Piano Festival is coming to London's Pizza Express Jazz Club, Soho with a stunning programme of nearly 40 renowned pianists from across the world performing, from March 21st to 27th. With some fascinating and unique pairings, this is set to be something very special.

Performing on March 24th are two outstanding pianists and composers. One of the UK's most well known and loved artists, Wendy Kirkland partners with the New York based award winning Charu Suri. Both artists bring their own unique artistry in different ways. Charu with her pioneering genre bending compositions, combining traditional Indian music with jazz, and Wendy with her love of Latin and exhilarating improvisation. This event is set to be something very special and it was a pleasure to speak to Wendy about this upcoming partnership and more.

The 2024 Steinway 2-Piano Festival will be the largest ever, with a total of 36 different pianists in 20 different shows. Are you excited to be part of such a wonderful event?

I'm absolutely thrilled, not only to have been included, but also to be doing it with the amazing, award-winning US pianist Charu Suri! It will be a first for me in so many ways although I did play the festival in 2019 with the incredible Steve Melling. That was very special and, of course, a huge honour to have worked with him at this iconic venue and festival.

Not many jazz clubs have Steinways for pianists to play and this festival is of course celebrating their world-renowned pianos. What has been your experience, as a

pianist, of performing and recording on Steinways?

Two of my three albums have been recorded on the same gorgeous Steinway model B at Spencer Cozens' studio near Grantham. Spencer is a brilliant pianist himself and designed the studio around the piano, not the other way around - the humidity and temperature are set to a constant level to provide the optimum tone. All the details for the piano enthusiasts are [here](#)

When performing at a venue, I'm always put at ease if I know the piano is a Steinway - there are some other really good pianos out there that I enjoy playing too, but of the most refined I think Steinways are in the majority.

'Together Wendy and Charu will provide a genre-busting set including raga, jazz and song, to entertain and entrance.' You are performing with the brilliant Charu Suri with what sounds like an incredible set. What can the audience expect to hear and how did you decide on the set?

Charu's latest album Rags and Ragas which features Steve Gadd, Joe Lastie and John Patitucci, is a wonderful blend of Indian raga music and her own brand of jazz. We decided to put together a blend of our own music which reflects our own personal style, and highlight where these styles overlap, and where they are different. I've played from ragas before but not immersed myself so completely in this music. There are ragas for different times of day, evoking different feelings, and we will be organising the set to reflect this.



PHOTO BY MARK LUDBROOK



You are based in the UK and Charu in New York, how has the process been for you to prepare for the performance?

It's been done entirely remotely! Through WhatsApp and file sharing, and of course remote meetings. We'll have time to run through the set in person before our first concert, but personal preparation is just as important as a rehearsal, and of course we've both been doing this in earnest.

Your last London performance was returning to Ronnie Scott's where you regularly sell out. You were nominated for the Parliamentary Jazz Award for Lockdown Innovation for your Latin Lockdown project, and I believe your Ronnie's set is equally Latin inspired, which clearly the audience loved! Can you tell me about your love of Latin?

I suppose for me it started with the acquisition of an Astrud Gilberto album back in my teens, there was a resurgence in jazz and bossa nova in the UK charts. I'd heard some of the music before through my dad playing Jobim occasionally at the club he worked at - I used to regularly request Wave and he said "you do realise the audience will hate it because it's jazz?" but he played it anyway, for me! He had a Jobim book and I worked through all the classics, Desafinado, Samba do Aviao, Insensatez etc. and loved the rhythmic nature of the music. Fast forward to meeting and working with my husband Pat - when we first met as musicians in 2006 we quickly established both of us were really into Brazilian music but he was, as a guitarist, more leaning towards Toninho Horta, Joyce, Nelson Faria etc so he introduced me to many other styles of Brazilian music.

I've always enjoyed learning languages and I think Portuguese is one of the most beautiful languages to sing in, and I try, but I always apologise to any native speakers in the audience first! On the occasion there have been Portuguese or Brazilian people in the audience, I've always had a very positive response from them.

The Latin Lockdowns we broadcast on Facebook from March to August 2020, 86 in total, were listened to by people worldwide. We had some of our most positive comments from places like Sao Paulo in Brazil, Mexico and Costa Rica - of course we included some other South American music in our set, it wasn't exclusively Brazilian...but I suppose that's what we knew best at the time, so most of it was.

When you released your first album, the critically acclaimed Piano Divas, you said that 'my own path to this point has not been conventional - through engineering and teaching and being the product of an incredibly musical family, I've created music in just about every genre there is, but I've always returned to my real love - jazz and the beauty of improvisation. With now three critically acclaimed albums - Piano Divas, The Music's On Me and Latin Lockdown Live - how do you feel that your unconventional path and love of jazz and improv has shaped your work?

That's a tough one! I suppose it's the corniest answer out there, that is - just the love of the music that keeps me going. I know it's the same for a lot of other people, we tell each other that regularly, because there are so many other challenges in this business that makes it not for the faint hearted. I will say I think having a previous background in industry is a benefit rather than a detriment - understanding funding, the way things work in businesses such as venues and other providers of work for musicians, can help with expectations and exploring other ways of working rather than relying on the same sources as everyone else.

As well as your own gigs, you also run the hugely successful Chesterfield Jazz Club. Can you tell me a little bit about this and some upcoming artists?

Pat and I started the club in 2012, partly as a means to do more concerts, partly to provide our town with something it didn't

PHOTO BY LAURA WHEATLEY

really have – that is a regular jazz night where music fans could see top UK, and occasionally US and other international artists. We figured working with the best people would also up our musical game and get the word out that Chesterfield was a new venue which provided top quality live music. It's been a great experience and we continue into our 12th year now, with plans to further develop. Watch this space! We have a great line up!

[Click here to buy tickets for Wendy Kirkland and Charu Suri at the Steinway 2-Piano Festival](#)

[Click here for the full line up and ticket links](#)

The multi award winning artist, journalist and our founder Fiona Ross, talked to pianist and composer Charu Suri recently on her Thoughts, Conversations and To Do Lists podcast series. Click on the image to listen!



New episode
Thoughts,
Conversations
and To Do Lists
with Charu Suri



MARK LEMIEUX RECOMMENDS!

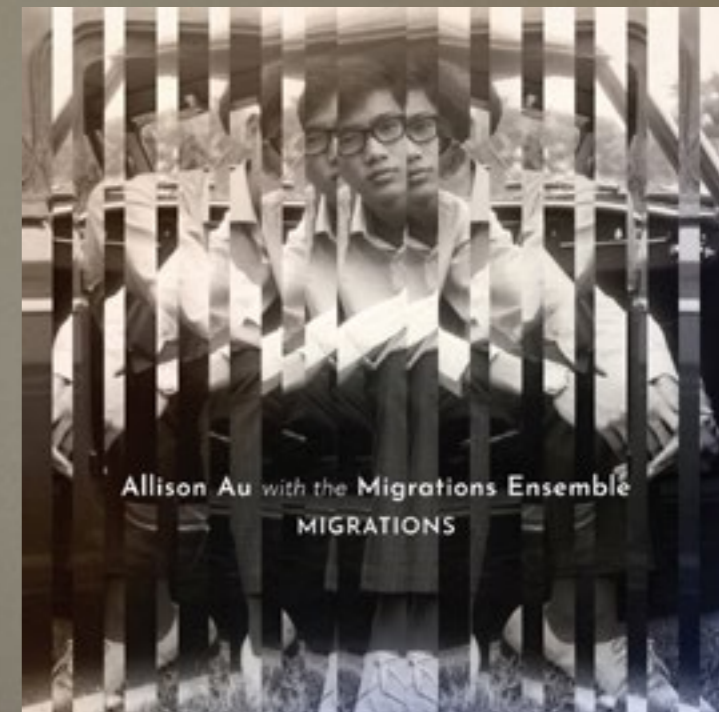
10 Fabulous Women in Canadian Jazz
Actually...

9 Fabulous Women and 1 Fabulous Women's Band in Canadian Jazz!

Multi award-winning Canadian singer-songwriter and pianist Laila Biali has toured with Chris Botti, Paula Cole, Suzanne Vega and Sting. She has headlined festivals and venues spanning five continents including Carnegie Hall. Since 2017, Laila has been the host of CBC Music's "Saturday Night Jazz" national radio show.

Her accolades include ranking 4th in DownBeat Magazine's 2023 annual Readers Poll - Female Vocalist Category, currently nominated for her 2nd JUNO Award - Vocal Jazz Album of the Year - for her album *Your Requests*, a 2019 JUNO Award - Vocal Jazz Album of the Year -, "SOCAN Composer of the Year" and "Keyboardist of the Year" at Canada's National Jazz Awards 2018.

"And while Laila continues to earn high honors, her unique genre-bending sound is what sets her apart as she "masterfully mixes jazz and pop, bringing virtuosity and unpredictability to songs that are concise and catchy." ~ Washington Post



Allison Au (pronounced "ow") is a JUNO award winning saxophonist, composer and arranger. Highly regarded for her distinctive and imaginative voice, Allison has been lauded as "a new jazz ambassador" for Canada.

A 2016 JUNO Award winner for Best Jazz Album – Group, Allison is a four-time JUNO Award nominee, including her current nomination for her most ambitious compositional work yet, the musical suite, *Migrations*.

Au was born to Canadian immigrant parents. *Migrations* is a wonderful exploration of why people leave their homes to pursue life in a new land, and the reverberating impact it has on future generations. Says Allison, *Migrations* is one of the most important pieces I have created, as it is so personal. It speaks to my identity and delves into subject matter that I previously attempted to articulate, but never found the project through which to do so."





With over twenty-five major awards to her name, to describe pianist and composer Lorraine Desmarais's 40-year career as "multi-award winning" would be an understatement. As Canada's pioneering first lady of jazz piano, and as with aforementioned Jane Bunnett, Lorraine can also be considered Canadian jazz royalty. Recognized throughout the world for her solo, trio and big band performances, Lorraine has also performed with symphony orchestras. She has twelve albums of original compositions, her latest release being, *Street Beat Suite* (2023).

In 2013, Lorraine was appointed to the Order of Canada for her contribution to Canadian music. She has shared the stage with several artists of worldwide renown. They include Chick Corea, Oliver Jones, Jacky Terrasson, Joe Lovano, the Brubeck Brothers, Paquito D'Rivera, Marian McPartland, Jane Bunnett, Ingrid Jensen, Christine Jensen and Kenny Wheeler and many more.



Five-time Juno Award winner, soprano saxophonist, flautist, and leader, Jane Bunnett has turned her bands and recordings into showcases for the finest musical talent from Canada, the U.S. and Cuba. In addition, she's been nominated for three Grammy Awards, and has received The Order of Canada.

Internationally acclaimed, Bunnett's study and exploration of Afro-Cuban melodies along with her ability to embrace the rhythms and culture of Cuba has been ground-breaking. As Canadian jazz royalty, Jane has toured the world, bringing her special sound to countless festivals, concert halls and jazz clubs alike.

With her all-female Afro-Cuban group Maqueque, Bunnett has created something phenomenal in the world of jazz. What started in 2015 as a project to record and mentor young, brilliant Cuban female musicians, has become one of the top recording and touring groups on the North American jazz scene.

Jane Bunnett and Maqueque are: Jane Bunnett, soprano saxophone & flute; Joanna Tendai Majoko, vocals; Mary Paz, congas & vocals; Dánae Olano, piano; Tailin Marrero, acoustic & electric bass; Yissy García, drums.



One of the brightest young stars on the Canadian scene, Jocelyn Gould has been called “a leader in the next generation of great mainstream jazz guitarists” (Howard Paul, CEO of Benedetto Guitars.) On an instrument usually associated with men, Jocelyn gracefully weaves the spirit of jazz greats Wes Montgomery, Joe Pass and Kenny Burrell into her own sound.

Jocelyn’s debut album, *Elegant Traveler*, won her the 2021 JUNO Award for Jazz Album of the Year - Solo. While her third album, *Sonic Bouquet* is currently nominated for a 2024 JUNO Award later this month.

Jocelyn has toured extensively since 2022, including a 6-week American tour featuring the music of Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday and Nina Simone. In addition, she is a Professor and Head of the Guitar Department at Humber College in Toronto. Jocelyn is thought to be the first woman to hold a Head of Guitar Department role in a major music school, anywhere.



Dominique Fils-Aimé (pronounced “FEES-em-AY”). Born and raised in Montreal to Haitian parents, this JUNO and multi-award winning singer-songwriter puts the history of Afro-American musical culture into the heart of her work. Reflecting on the social realities that have influenced the blues, jazz and soul music. Her debut trilogy album releases (2018-2021) shed light on the history of these genres, as inspired by icons like Billie Holiday, Nina Simone and Etta James.

Her second trilogy release, *Stay Tuned!* - celebrating jazz - garnered her a 2020 JUNO Award in addition to countless other nationally merited awards and accolades. Her fourth and current album, *Our Roots Run Deep*, is nominated for her second JUNO Award for Vocal Jazz Album of the Year later this month.

In addition to her own performances, Dominique has opened for the likes of Melody Gardot, Diana Krall, Ibrahim Maalouf, and has multiple-billed with Laila Biali and Allison Russell.



Aline Homzy is an award-winning violinist and composer. Originally from Montreal, born to a Québécois mother and an American father with Eastern-European roots, Aline's original music reflects her culturally-diverse heritage.

Beyond composing, Aline is a highly-sought after violinist in the studios of Toronto. Aline is known and respected for her lightning-fast sight-reading skills, her deep knowledge of jazz and improvisation and her overall musicianship.

Aline's quintet, "Aline's étoile magique" was born when she recognized the stark and low presence of women on the improvised music scene. To that, she creatively borrows from chamber music, jazz and folk for a most amazing result.

"The music has such variety, it's unsatisfying to pigeon-hole." says Homzy.

Released in August, 2023 to vast critical acclaim, Aline's étoile magique debut album, *éclipse*, easily broke-into virtually every Canadian "Best of 2023" list!



Caity Gyorgy (pronounced "George") is a 2-time JUNO Award winning vocalist (2022 and 2023), known for singing bebop and swing music. She's performed at jazz clubs and festivals across Canada, the U.S., Mexico and Japan, and has worked and recorded with incredible musicians including Laila Biali, Christine Jensen, Pat LaBarbera, Jocelyn Gould, Ira Coleman and Joe LaBarbera, to name only a few.

In addition to having a warm voice and swinging phrasing, Caity is a skilled songwriter whose originals sound as they may be from the 1950s with modern, and at times whimsical, lyrics. Caity recently received her Masters of Music in Jazz Performance from McGill University (Montreal), under the tutelage of Christine Jensen.

Caity's third JUNO Award nomination in as many years comes on the heels of her album *You're Alike, You Two* (2023), a collaboration between Caity and pianist Mark Limacher. The album celebrates the music of Jerome Kern.



Rachel Therrien is a trumpet and flugelhorn player, composer and producer, working between New York City and Montreal. Recognized for adding her own fiery touch to influences of traditional jazz, afro-latin and global music, Rachel has earned a solid reputation as a versatile innovator and mistress of her instrument.

As both a lead and as a side musician, Rachel has merited several nominations and recognitions stemming from Canada, the U.S. and Europe alike. In addition, the talented trumpeter has performed alongside several renowned jazz and world music artists: Tony Allen, Arturo O'Farrill, the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, DIVA Jazz Orchestra, Ostara Project, Roberto Fonseca, Michel Legrand, Ingrid Jensen, Anat Cohen, Darcy James Argue and many more.

Rachel's sixth and most recent album, MI HOGAR (2023), is an expression of her passion for latin jazz. Recorded in New York City, Montreal and Toronto, the project regroups over 20 of the very best musicians in latin jazz. It's a powerhouse of an album!



Mark Lemieux

Based in Ottawa (Canada), Mark is an active jazz community advocate and administrator who has contributed to assisting various festivals and organizations since 2017.

THANK YOU MARK!!

Spear-headed by award-winning musicians Jodi Proznick and Amanda Tosoff, the Ostara Project is a jazz super-group showcasing the strength and creativity of Canadian women in jazz. Ostara artists are all top-tier musicians, composers and bandleaders who reflect the geographical, cultural and creative diversity of Canada's musical landscape. Membership in the JUNO nominated group is fluid to suit the wide spectrum of projects the ensemble presents: what remains constant is the heart, creativity and artistry that defines the Ostara Project.

In a genre and industry where women have been severely underrepresented, the Ostara Project is a beautiful example of perseverance, community, and a deep love for music. Like the Germanic goddess of Spring the group is named after the music of Ostara creatively rises out of darkness, reaching for light, growth and is propelled by hope.

The Ostara Project Is:

Jodi Proznick: co-leader and bass

Amanda Tosoff: co-leader and piano

Laila Biali: vocals and keys

Shruti Ramani: vocals



THE PHOTOGRAPHERS:

TATIANA GORIOVSKY



Cherise
Hidden Jazz Club
by Tatiana Gorilovsky

Dana Gillespie
606 Club
by Tatiana Gorilovsky

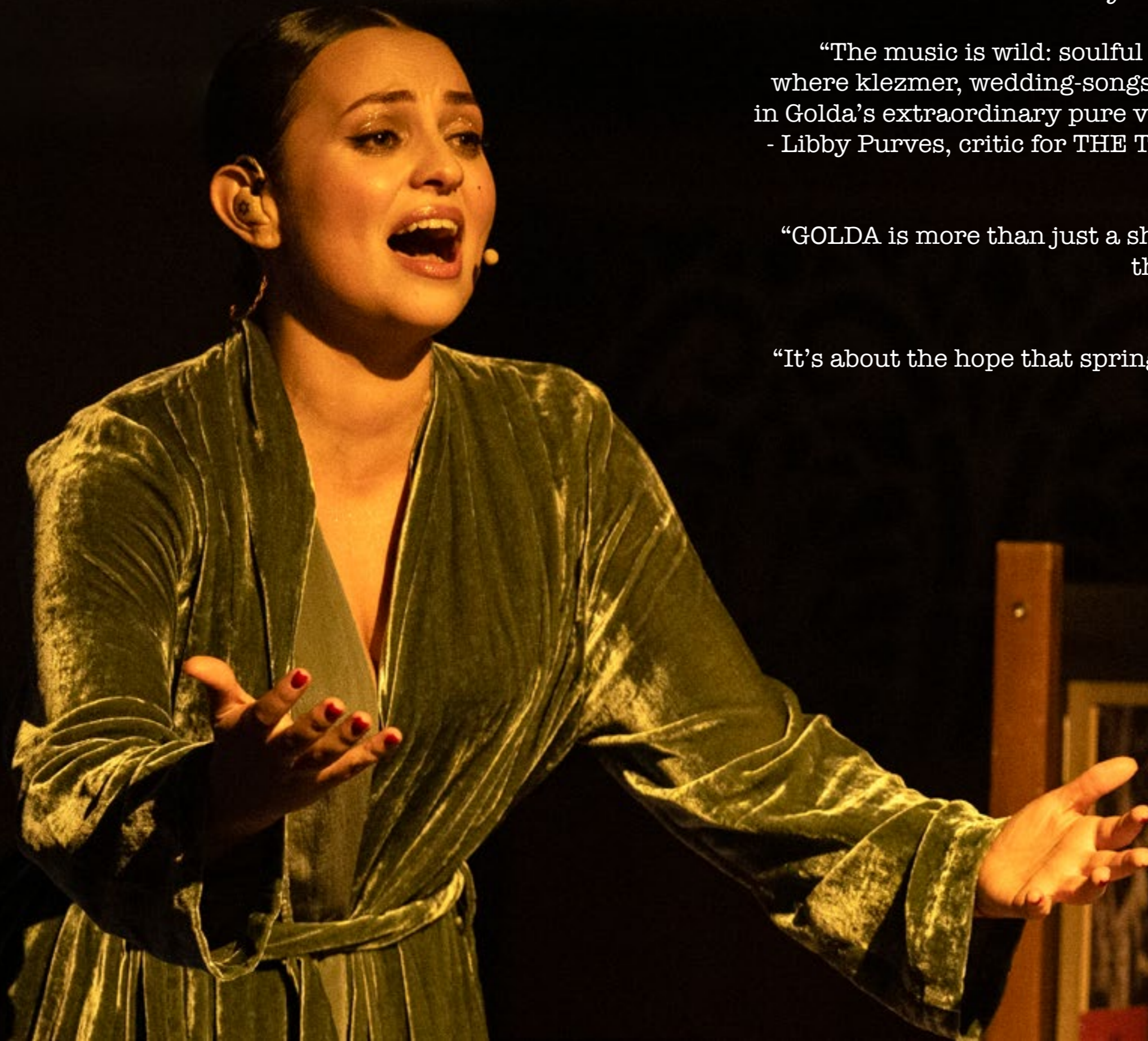


Rhiannon Giddens
Barbican
21st of Feb, 2024
by Tatiana Gorilovsky



GOLDA

A MUSICAL STORY OF LOVE, LOSS AND RESILIENCE'



Golda (Tatiana Amirova), a phenomenal Ukrainian refugee artist has lit a new star on the London Jazz sky. The finalist of the Ukrainian 'The Voice'. Her sell-out musical 'Golda. A Musical Story of Love, Loss and Resilience' telling an extraordinary story about a girl from Odessa, Ukraine, featuring beloved jazz hits as well as her songs has been chosen by UK's ex-Minister of Culture Ed Vaizey for his famous Times Radio show.

“The music is wild: soulful Ukrainian-Russian-Jewish jazz, where klezmer, wedding-songs, ballad and rock meld together, in Golda’s extraordinary pure voice and wild effortless energy.”
- Libby Purves, critic for THE TIMES, THE BBC and THE TELEGRAPH

“GOLDA is more than just a show, it’s a powerful testament to the strength of the human spirit”
BROADWAY WORLD

“It’s about the hope that springs in any room where songs and stories come alive.”
THEATRE CAT

All photos
by Tatiana Gorilovsky

All photos
by Tatiana Gorilovsky



either you start taking your work
seriously right now,



March 17th at Haymarket
Theatre
[Click here for tickets](#)



PHOTO BY TATIANA GORILOVSKSY

NIKKI ILES



NIKKI ILES: CREATING PATHWAYS

BY NICK LEA

We are so lucky that the UK jazz scene has within its ranks some of the most exciting and innovative musicians to be found anywhere in the world. It is also notable and most welcome to acknowledge that many of them are women. Women who innovate, create exceptional music and carve out careers that refuse to compromise their own artistic vision. Women who inspire!

One such woman is the pianist, composer and bandleader, Nikki Iles. Over the course of a career spanning more than thirty years she has always challenged conventions and steadfastly remained true to herself. Her talents have been recognised by some of the greatest names in jazz and beyond, and through associations with Anthony Braxton, Kenny Wheeler, Norma Winstone, Mike Gibbs, Ingrid Jensen, Tina May and Stan Sulzmann her progress has been a constant source of delight.

Just before Christmas 2023 I was fortunate enough to catch Nikki and her band The Printmakers playing a rare gig in the North West of England. Needless to say, the concert was superb and hearing Nikki live, and then having the opportunity to review her new album *Face to Face* recorded in Hamburg with the fantastic NDR Big Band, it once again brought into sharp focus just how fortunate we are to have an artist of this calibre living and working in the UK.

At The Printmakers concert I also had the pleasure of briefly meeting guitarist Mike Walker whose playing made such a valuable

contribution to the group's sound as well as playing some wonderful solos. The guitarist is also one of the featured soloists on *Face to Face*, getting in on the act on no less than four of the compositions.

In a conversation with Mike at a later date, I mentioned to him how much I had enjoyed the album and his contribution, to which he replied "It's great music to contribute to! Nikki creates the pathways we're only too happy to walk down." This thoughtful and perceptive comment stuck in my memory as it speaks volumes about Nikki and her music.

With this in mind, I set about rediscovering some of these pathways that the pianist and composer has been creating over the course of her career, and in doing so took the opportunity to ask Nikki about some of her recordings that she views as important milestones or have a special place in her heart.

One of Nikki's albums that I have enjoyed immensely over the years is *Lush Life* recorded in September 2017 with Stan Sulzmann on tenor saxophone and the great bass player Dave Holland. The music is wonderful and full of invention, and if Nikki was nervous about working in such an intimate setting with Sulzmann and Holland it certainly doesn't show. The album is beautifully programmed with a couple of standards that bookend the set, opening with 'You Don't Know What Love Is' and closing with the title track, and a superb reading of Matt Dennis's 'The Night We



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Called It A Day'. In between there are original compositions by Nikki and Stan that are most memorable and provide ample space for the trio to create some special moments of real empathy in Stan Sulzmann's 'Odonata' and two wonderful compositions by Nikki, 'Iris' and 'Moon-tide', which is dedicated to Norma Winstone.

However, when mentioning the recording Nikki sent me back more than twenty years to listen to *Treasure Trove*, a duo album with Sulzmann recorded in a session that took place in October 1995, and which it appears initially held some terrors for her to overcome. Recalling the album Nikki explains "I recorded this duo album with the great Stan Sulzmann on saxes and flute. I had met him at a well-known jazz summer school in Wales where

we were both teaching. I had heard Stan playing with Kenny Wheeler and John Taylor and he was and still is one of my musical heroes. At the end of one of the teaching days in Wales, we had a play in a classroom, and he asked me if I would like to do a duo album with him. Playing duo was my worst nightmare up to that point! I'd much rather have been in a group as it wasn't so exposing! However, this opportunity changed everything for me, and thanks to him, I now relished the freedom and space that playing without a rhythm section allows."

Treasure Trove certainly lives up to its title with a plentiful supply of music that shimmers like spun gold. On this recording the emphasis is on original compositions with seven of the nine tunes by Stan and Nikki. If the pianist had any nerves about the recording they proved to be ill-founded, as the



music unfolds in a series of wonderful dialogues. One can also hear in Treasure Trove how Nikki's playing is so supportive and aware of the material, and importantly how she can best enhance the moment. Never a flashy player, Nikki instead lets her instinctive feel for just what is required in the moment to dictate what is required of her. Perhaps this is her arranger's mind at work, looking at the bigger picture and the composition as a whole, and surely not a reluctance to step into the limelight herself? One of Nikki's traits that makes her playing, compositions and arrangements so special is that self-editing process.

This can be heard on the exceptional 'Story of a Story' by Nikki that has a delicate lyricism and movement throughout that does indeed have the feeling of a narrative, and the gentle, 'The Poet' in which the pianist's lines flow so effortlessly and with a lightness of touch that lifts the music. Just as intoxicating is Nikki's piece 'Veils' that is arranged for overdubbed saxophones, flutes and clarinet as well as piano, and a tune that Nikki would resurrect for her quintet album Veils that was released in 2003.

If the recording with Stan Sulzmann helped Nikki conquer her fear of the duo it did so convincingly, as in the years that followed the pianist made a musical connection with vocalist Tina May that resulted in a couple of exquisite albums. In a trio with Tina and saxophonist and clarinetist Tony Coe, the album More Than You Know was released on 33Jazz in 2004, and prior to that and Nikki's choice was Change of Sky in yes, a duet with Tina.

"This was the first duo album I made with my great friend Tina May" recalls Nikki. "It was made one dark autumn day in Cambridgeshire and as with all of Tina's albums, tunes were discussed, but never really rehearsed. Tina was a fearless improviser and performer and I learnt so much from her about being in

moment and literally flying by the seat of your pants! It is very intimate and honest recording which I like, and for the listener - an invitation to eavesdrop." And that is exactly how it feels. Perhaps Nikki's most intimate of albums, the music does sound like listening in on a conversation between two close friends.

Again, Nikki's accompaniment is almost kept to a minimum. Not one to over embellish the line, the piano supports the vocal with an incredible empathy. Tina's treatment of the lyrics is completely unique, and she is already an original vocal stylist. The duo's treatment of 'Come Rain or Come Shine' is stunning, and in a set that mixes standards with some contemporary songs the standard is incredibly high, and Tina has the audacity to take on 'Black Coffee' that was immortalised by Sarah Vaughan, giving it a fresh reading. 'My One and Only Love' is another standard that captivates, not just in Tina's delightful lyrics but also in Nikki's understated piano accompaniment in which her admiration for Bill Evans respectfully shines through.

The album is also notable for respect and acknowledgement to the influence of Norma Winstone in covering Jimmy Rowles's lovely 'The Peacocks' which was renamed 'A Timeless Place' with the addition of Winstone's lyrics, and also the delightful 'For Jan' with music by Kenny Wheeler and lyrics again by Norma. The influence and love for the work of both Winstone and Wheeler is a recurring aspect of Nikki's work, as we will discover in exploring some more of her recordings.

As a jazz pianist it is impossible to escape the omnipresent trio of piano, bass and drums and Nikki embraced the line up with open arms in two very special recordings. The first of these is Everything I Love recorded in Toronto in 2003. Explaining the circumstances surrounding the recording, Nikki says "This was a trio in

record made in Toronto with Canadians Duncan Hopkins on bass and drummer Anthony Michelli. I had met them in an Anglo/Canadian project with British alto player, Martin Speake (recording Secret - Basho Records). I loved playing with my new Canadian friends and when pregnant with my daughter, my husband suggested doing a recording, so I would have something to promote and get me back to my music after she was born ... it was good advice!"

Good advice indeed and a session that resulted in a superb album. If the influence of Bill Evans is still discernible, Nikki also acknowledges another great pianist in John Taylor. It is perhaps the compositions of Taylor and Nikki herself that mark the album as something special and have no difficulty in sitting alongside the more familiar standards.

Taylor's tune 'Ambleside Days' is becoming something of a standard in its own right, having been performed by many UK musicians of late, but here Nikki's takes a tough stance as the piece develops in intensity, yet her solo retains her usual decorum and elegance as the lines flow from her fingers. This eloquent nature in Nikki's playing continues through Taylor's beautiful and lightly swinging 'Evansong' with sympathetic support from bass and drums.

Somewhat modestly, Nikki's two originals on the album are also the shortest. There is the abstract impressionism of 'So To Speake' and the dynamic and rhythmically interesting 'Fly's Dilemma' that from a hypnotic theme statement swings hard while retaining a slightly unsettling groove. This is a tense piece of music making that the trio resolve in a most satisfactory manner by the close and is one of the pianist's hardest hitting small group compositions.

With Everything I Love Nikki Iles seemingly nailed the concept of making a great trio record, and this being the case moved on to other projects. It would be seven years before she made another piano trio album,

but the wait was well worth it. In 2010 in the illustrious company of bassist Rufus Reid and Jeff Williams on drums, Nikki recorded Hush.

Again, the programme was made up of standards, a few contemporary pieces and three originals by Nikki, and owes its existence to a New Year's Eve tippie. Taking up the story, Nikki elaborates saying, "I met Rufus on a wonderful project with a smaller off - shoot group of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, called Renga. The classical players had a chance to work with composers from different disciplines, so we were the jazz team alongside Tim Garland and Stan Sulzmann. I loved working with Rufus, and he said if I ever wanted to play to get in touch. So, one New Year's Eve after a few glasses of bubbles I plucked up courage to email him about doing a trio record with the great American drummer Jeff Williams. We had a lovely time recording this in New York."

Rufus Reid's obvious enthusiasm for Nikki's playing indicated in his invitation to play together sometime is perfectly justified in a trio recording of beauty. The recording differs significantly from the earlier trio date with Hopkins and Michelli, yet it is the music that might be less familiar to the two Americans that yields the greatest rewards.

The opening 'Everyone's Song But My Own' by Kenny Wheeler is perfect for the trio as is 'The Glide' by Ralph Towner which Nikki and the trio deliver with a relaxed and easy swing. But once again, Nikki contributes some pieces of her own that challenge the trio to function differently. 'Meditations' is a deliciously taut composition that gradually loosens its constraints on the trio allowing more room to manoeuvre. With Nikki's hand on the tiller the music retains its delicate ebb and flow, and the melody and subsequent improvisation slowly evolves over the sympathetic brush strokes of Williams and Reid's understated bass lines.



The title track is another one of Nikki's tunes that features an enigmatic opening theme that is patiently worked by the trio, and as well as a fine solo from the pianist has a lovely outing from Rufus Reid. Perhaps the most satisfying piece on the album is left until last. Rather than going out with a bang, Nikki closes the set with 'The Incense of Colour' a composition of fragile beauty that has the listener hanging on to every carefully nuanced placed note. The restraint of the performance is breathtaking, and the playing of bass and drums is as quiet as it is integral to the success of the music.

In another life, Nikki also adopts the role of sidewoman playing in the bands of others. Why she does so is obvious. She is simply invited by the leader of the session to participate due to her versatility and good taste, and the fact that she is an exceptional accompanist as well as soloist. Her versatility and ability to interpret the needs of other situations is immediately apparent in this

delightful album by saxophonist Karen Sharp. As Nikki says "This is a group I love being part of. Karen is a fantastic tenor and baritone player and I feel needs more recognition... she's fantastic! I have known Steve Brown for 30 years from my days playing in Manchester and with the legendary Dave Green, who played with Sonny Rollins, Ben Webster, Lee Konitz, they are the Rolls Royce bedrock of the rhythm section!" And Nikki herself is an important part of the rhythm section and staying with the analogy, vital in keeping the Rolls Royce rhythm section purring.

With Karen's assembled quartet, Nikki finds herself playing in a relaxed and swinging straight ahead date that is anything but run of the mill. With the support provided by Dave Green and Steve Brown and the lyrical playing of Karen; Nikki has plenty of room not to just offer up some lovely solos but also to lift the music with her commentary behind the saxophonist. Quite how she does this in what appears to



be a quiet and unassuming way is quite special and a joy to hear. Never one to bully or cajole the soloist, it just isn't her style at all, she doesn't even seem to suggest that the soloist follow a different direction by prompting them with her accompaniment. Instead, she has the knack of providing just the right chords and voicings behind the solos that confirm that the improviser has made the correct choice. By lifting her colleagues and the music in such a subtle manner is a gift that few possess, and even fewer know how to use to such fine effect.

In a captivatingly diverse set, the Quartet play imaginative readings of Kurt Weill's 'My Ship' and 'Everybody's Song But My Own' that Nikki makes sound fresh and new every time she performs this Wheeler evergreen, but the surprise stars of the album for me feature Karen on baritone saxophone on Thelonious Monk's 'Eronel' and 'Westerly' by Nikki. On the former, Monk's knotty theme is handled with ease by saxophone and piano and it is interesting to hear how Nikki approaches her role as accompanist with the sparsest of touches that are the complete opposite of Monk.

'Westerly' is a beautiful composition and the melody line first introduced by Dave Green's double bass is then picked up by Karen on baritone. The music has a gentle lilt, and Nikki treats it with the same lightness and economy of touch. The bassist gets in a superb solo accompanied by Karen's saxophone, before Nikki takes her solo which is a beauty that sticks very close to the melody. As is her wont, this is another tune that the pianist will revisit in the not-too-distant future.

Nikki's next project was again for another bandleader, or more accurately a collaboration with Kenny Wheeler, Norma Winstone and the 24 voices of the London Vocal Project directed by Nikki's husband Pete Churchill; and also featuring Nikki's group with Mark Lockheart on saxophones, Steve Watts on bass and drummer James Maddren.

An ambitious project that featured a suite of

music composed by Kenny Wheeler and using the poems by Stevie Smith, Lewis Carroll and W.B. Yeats, the music had been written some twenty years ago by Wheeler and perhaps was just waiting to find its true form in the arrangements beautifully captured on Mirrors. As Nikki says "This was a special, unusual recording with my group with Norma, Kenny Wheeler and Pete Churchill's London Vocal Project. Kenny Wheeler set the poetry of Stevie Smith, Lewis Carroll, and WB Yeats to music. Kenny Wheeler was once described as the Gershwin of our times - a fantastic tunesmith and these settings feel amazingly like the music came first not vice versa - the tunes are so strong. Wonderful singing from the London Vocal Project."

The integration of choir and jazz ensemble is brought to life to devastating effect on 'The Broken Heart' in the way the voices and instrumentalists work with and against each other, delivering up real tension. This is followed by 'The Lover Mourns' with the contrasting voices of the choir and Norma Winstone's singular voice. The contribution of Mark Lockheart's soprano saxophone is also a source of delight. Norma Winstone is also quite magnificent on 'Through The Looking Glass' with the text of Lewis Carroll, and the accompaniment of the choir and Nikki's piano is exquisite.

The album is a triumph on all counts, from the writing and arrangements, the playing of the ensemble and choir, and the soloists; but perhaps what is important for Nikki is again what she takes away from the experience. Following her discography from one album to the next one can hear her progress as she learns from each and taking away aspects of each that filter into future projects.

Around this time, Nikki was also planning an album with her own group, The

Printmakers featuring Mark Lockheart on saxophones and bass clarinet, bassist Steve Watts, Mike Walker on guitar, drummer James Maddren and the voice of Norma Winstone, and is a project that is close to her heart. ““This is my ‘family’ band” enthuses Nikki. “I’ve always been a huge fan of inter -generational bands (ranging from James in his twenties to Norma in her 70s). I first met Norma when I was 17 and she has been such a role model for me. Firstly, as a musician, but also at this time as one of the only women I had seen up there making contemporary music, taking risks, being herself and not compromising. Being around her continues to inspire me and makes me realise it is possible to not sell out and be true to yourself in the music. Mike and Mark and Steve have been part of the soundtrack to my life. Incredibly open musicians who in this recording share our love of songs.”

The album by this remarkable band is astonishing and contains music that is once again fresh and exciting. The empathy between all members of The Printmakers is uncanny, and this ensures that the music has that edge of the seat experience for the listener. Mark Lockheart is given free rein in his excellent solo on John Taylor’s composition ‘O’, that after a free introduction settles down allowing Lockheart’s melodic solo to evolve organically out of the ensemble and is immediately followed by a superb outing from Nikki.

The pianist revisits Paul Simon’s ‘I Do It For Your Love’ which she performed as duo with Stan Sulzmann on ‘Treasure Trove’ along with a new arrangement of ‘The Glide’ by Ralph Towner with lyrics by Norma. The vocalist also contributes lyrics to some of Nikki’s compositions resulting in a new version of the title track, the wonderfully understated and subtle ‘Tideway’ and ‘Under the Canopy’. Music of exceptional scope and beauty, the band have been in existence for more than a decade, yet Westerly is the only album by The Printmakers to date; although Nikki has indicated plans are afoot to record again (hopefully) soon.

In the last of Nikki’s selection of her recordings, we jump forward almost a decade to the release at the end of last year of Face to Face recorded with the NDR Big Band in Hamburg. In my review of the album for Jazz Views I made the observation that “Anyone wanting to know about the current state of big band jazz need look no further than this excellent album from Nikki Iles and Hamburg’s NDR Big Band. They have it all, power, grace, drive, swing, some fantastic soloists and the icing on the cake is eight original compositions and arrangements from Nikki for the band to get stuck into.

In a wonderfully varied set, Nikki’s elegant compositions are given their due, and are impeccably played by the big band. The charts are rich in detail, and care is taken that this is not lost in the recording. It doesn’t matter how many times that I’ve listened to the album there is always something I’ve not heard before, a little surprise around each corner if you will.”

Further listening has given no reason to change one’s mind, and while Nikki does not play piano on the album, she hands over keyboard duties to Florian Weber, she does conjure up some dynamite charts. If Nikki can sometimes sound reticent or reluctant to speak out in a small group context, her shyness disappears when presenting these scores to the members of the NDR Big Band who clearly relish playing this music.

In listening to the music of Nikki Iles over the years, and recently at much closer quarters it is a joy to hear how she has developed as one of the finest pianists and composers to be found anywhere. I would also go as far as to say that she is still undervalued and underappreciated and as I have previously written, “It says much for the state of the arts in the UK that that after being awarded a BEM for services to music that Nikki has to seek much of her work away from these shores, and in order to get this wonderful music performed

that she has had to enlist the services of the NDR Big Band in Germany. We can only be grateful that Nikki has the courage and commitment to keep producing such fine works as this, and British labels like Edition have the foresight to release them.”

Having said that, it is perhaps only right that the last word should go to Nikki, and of Face to Face of which she is quite rightly proud she says,

“A hugely significant recording for me and marking a new phase as composer and conductor. This was the result of my first visit to the great Hamburg based NDR Big Band which resulted in my appointment as Composer in Residence in 2023. It also is in sharp contrast to a lot of the small, intimate settings of much of my small band work. Somebody described me as a ‘Quiet Fire’ ... so this is the bigger picture! Interestingly, this has enabled me to explore the roar of the big band - but as Bob Brookmeyer said to composer, Maria Schneider ‘we need more female stories’, which is so true.”

Nikki’s Choices:

Treasure Trove - Stan Sulzmann/Nikki Iles (ASC Records) 1994

Change of Sky - Tina May/Nikki Iles (33 Jazz) 1998

Everything I Love – Nikki Iles Trio (Basho Records) 2003

Hush - USH Nikki Iles Trio (Basho Records) 2010

Karen Sharp Quartet - Spirit (Trio Records) 2011

Mirrors - Kenny Wheeler, Norma Winstone & London Vocal Project (Edition Records) 2013

Westerly - The Printmakers with Norma Winstone, Mike Walker, Mark Lockheart, James Maddren and Steve Watts (Basho Records) 2013

Face to Face - Nikki Iles & NDR Big Band (Edition Records) 2023

Nikki Iles links [click here](#)

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS:

BARKA FABIANOVA

Cléo T

The solo project of French artist Clémence
Léauté mixing alternative music , poetry and
performing arts.



Kastrup Quartet

Kastrup Quartet draws on African traditions and combines them with a typically Brazilian playfulness with experimental directions and classical music references.

Photo from Respect festival in Prague.



Yusra Mansour

A frontwoman of Moroccan-French blues band Bab L' Bluz. The band are devoted to a revolution in attitude which dovetails with Morocco's 'nayda' youth movement – a new wave of artists and musicians taking their cues from local heritage, singing words of freedom in the Moroccan-Arabic dialect of Darija.



Marta E. Miranda

Innovative singer from the Tejo region of Portugal



Camille Bertault

A French jazz vocalist acclaimed for her virtuosic scat singing and innovative reinterpretations of jazz standards.



Rina Das Baul

A prominent Baul folk singer from West Bengal, India, known for her mastery of the Baul tradition's mystical music and captivating performances that preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of Bengal.



Hannah Jones

Accordionist from English Folk
band Lady Miserly



ANNIE CHEN



ALL PHOTOS BY ZHAOYIN WANG

ANNIE CHEN AND GUARDIANS

Vocalist, composer, and bandleader Annie Chen has recently shared her stunning new album *Guardians* with the world. Born in Beijing, but now based in New York, Annie brings a beautifully inspired palette from around the world to her artistry, with influences such as Betty Carter, Abbey Lincoln and the sounds of the Beijing Opera. A story teller like no other, her new album presents a clear vision and message.

Congratulations on your fantastic new release *Guardians*! The inspiration for this album, I believe, came while you were walking in the Acadia National Park and ‘sparked a profound awakening to the intricate relationships connecting humanity, the animal kingdom, and the natural world.’ Can you tell me about that moment?

I like visiting national parks in the winter when it’s the off-season and I feel like the whole nature belongs to animals, without human-beings bothering them. There are three moments during my trip to Acadia National Park that inspired me to write this entire suite.

First, on my very first morning, after a late arrival the night before, I woke up to the beautiful, sunny and snowy view of a small bay my house was facing. Right away, I saw a deer family (mom, dad and their fawns) passing by the bedroom window and crossing the garden, seemingly looking for food, with both parents surrounding the children. It was a very touching and peaceful moment, very contrasting with the city life I’m used to – growing up in Beijing and now living in New York.

Secondly, even though it wasn’t the whale season during my stay, I kept hoping and looking at reflections of the light on the sea, with the wind, and started to imagine them swimming around. It was fascinating to watch the sea every day, but ultimately also sad not to see them for real.

And finally, almost by the end of the trip, when hiking on an icy road in the forest, I suddenly saw a white tail for a split second, that I believe was a fox jumping back into the forest. Those three moments really inspired me to write the whole suite. I really wanted to share the concepts that I have had in mind for a long time, the connection between animals and human-beings, and how these species live in an environment that is constantly threatened.

You have released a brilliant, animated video for ‘The Whale River Song’. Can we explore the concept behind the video and who you worked with?

I’ve always been a big fan of animations, visual arts and films and I’ve always wanted my music to present stories in a visual way. Case Jernigan is an amazing animation artist based in New York and Italy that I’ve recently discovered through a common artist friend. When seeing his work for the first time, it struck me as being very colorful and playful, but also very sensitive and full of evocative imagery and textures which I thought was a perfect match for the storytelling I was looking for with this album. His work uses paint gestures on plastic and various other materials over a series of glass panes. The music from this animation talks about whales in distress trying





to communicate with their loved ones. The video references aqueous organisms, scale shifts, communication, music and musical writing, baleine and despair. He's an incredible artist, you can check him out at casepaint.com

The ensemble you have worked with for this album is beautifully rich and dynamic. Can you tell me what led you to work with these musicians on this project?

This goes back to the idea of storytelling and imagery in my music. It was really important for this repertoire to have access to a variety of sounds and being able to explore multiple instrumentations and colors. Each musician plays at least two instruments and each piece has a different arrangement, using a combination of the 14 instruments used in the album in total. I chose each of the musicians because of their sound, style and various cultural backgrounds but also for their incredible skills as improvisers. Also, the human aspect really mattered, some of the musicians I've known and played with for a very long time, including in my last album Secret Treetop. It was essential for me to feel supported to take chances and for the music to come alive.

You will be performing your new album with a range of exciting dates – visualisation and environment are important to you, so what do you hope the audiences will experience in a live performance of the new album compared to purely listening to your album?

I am a big fan of opera, even though I am not a classical singer at all. I believe performance includes body language and acting. I always will put myself into the story and become the character (maybe the fox, or the whale in this case) to speak and sing to the audiences. The album is a fantastic way to discover the music and drama of this repertoire but there will always be something special about a live performance, something about the raw energy of being on stage with other musi-

cians. Also the many improvised sections of the music can sometimes sound very different from one performance to another. For those of you near New York, our next show will be the actual CD release concert, on March 30 at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music.

You are passionate about sharing music from the New York jazz scene with Chinese audiences and produce the radio show JZ Club. I am presuming you felt that Chinese audiences were not exposed to this music, but can you tell me why you think that is and some examples of the music/artists you play on your show?

I have been a co-host on the radio show 'JZ Club on Air' for several years now. The company behind this show is called JZ Music, the only jazz label in China at the moment. Beside being a label, they also own jazz clubs in different cities in China, host jazz festivals and even started jazz music schools too. They really are doing a lot to promote jazz music to Chinese audiences and so it made sense to collaborate with them for the release of this album. There are very few Chinese jazz musicians and educators based in New York, and I take it as a responsibility to share with Chinese audiences the incredible music that I'm witnessing here. That's one of my goals for this radio show. I was also happy to focus on female jazz musicians only for a few episodes. I want to use my unique position to introduce the best jazz music to Chinese audiences. Some of the musicians based in New York – Brooklyn more specifically – are not always that famous internationally but they're incredibly creative and have had a huge impact on my art. For example Jacob Sacks, Dan Weiss, Yuhan Su, Rafal Sarnecki, Rick Rosato, Marta Sanchez etc. Some of them also happen to be good friends and co-workers.

You began your music career in Beijing, studying classical piano at the age of four, but then came to New York in 2010 to study and I believe have been there

almost ever since. What is the music scene, in particular jazz, like in Beijing compared to New York?

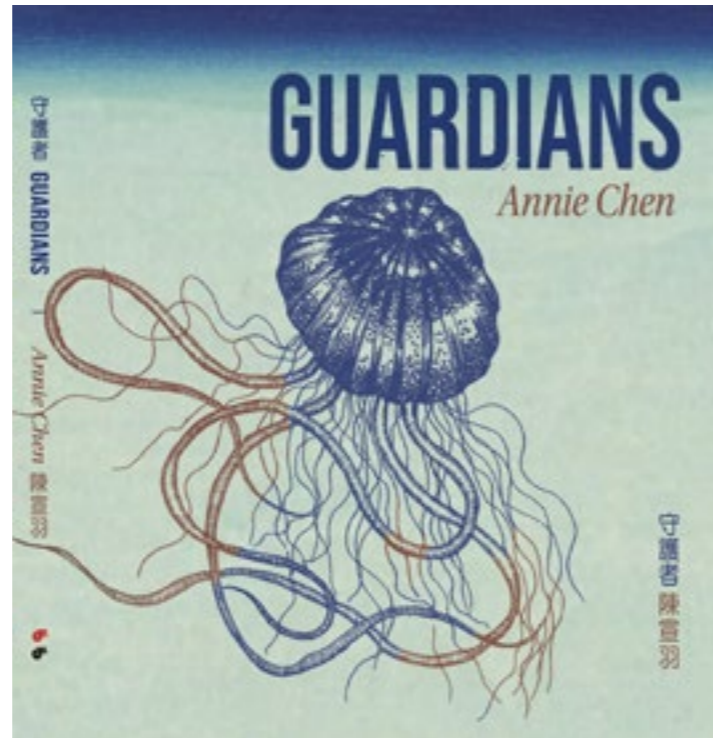
In China, Beijing feels like the best city for jazz, somehow similar to New York in a way; musicians are very passionate and intense in their relationship with music, instead of just treating performance as work or business. I actually went back to China in 2010, then returned to the US by the end of 2012, where I started a master's degree in Queens College and later on decided to stay. Beijing has more than 15 clubs dedicated to jazz, and more that also feature different types of music. They also have their own jazz festival 'Beijing International Nine-Gates Jazz Festival' and some other music festivals that feature jazz bands too. I have performed in these clubs and festivals many times and I really like the vibe there, every musician is very serious about jazz and making progress together. But of course the scene is smaller compared to New York, especially in Beijing where jazz only has had more traction in the past 20 years or so.

You have recently been commissioned by Beijing's Ear King Music Company to produce Jazz Singing Masterclass Vol.1, for students in China. Can you tell me about that project?

I feel China really lacks correct jazz education, I say "correct", because a lot of students study with teachers who don't perform themselves, or don't even seem to have an affinity with the music in the first place and somehow teach unrelated material to students, far away from the jazz tradition. So this company invited me to produce a series of educational videos and share what I was taught studying with legendary singers here, getting as close to the jazz roots as possible, which I believe is essential when you really want to explore jazz singing. The series starts from very basic knowledge, exploring warm ups, swing rhythm, storytelling, diction, repertoire, scatting etc.

As this is International Women's Day, is there anything you would like to say to the women out there? Any words of wisdom?

Most of my students are female singers, I know there are only 8%-15% female musicians who lead their projects in the jazz industry, it's pretty tough out there. But I really want to tell all the women, especially all the young female jazz musicians, to keep doing the things that you love, be brave to sing, play, compose, improvise! You will have so much joy and achievement by the end, compared to these joyful moments, nothing matters that much anymore.



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FEELING GOOD!

A charity jazz night in support of women's charity, Chetana in Nepal and celebrating strong, brilliant, creative and resilient women of jazz

BY KIM CYPHER



PHOTO BY RON MILSOM

On 22nd February, a very special charity jazz night took place at Smokey Joe's in Cheltenham in celebration of strong, brilliant, creative, and resilient women of jazz. I hosted the event together with pianist Alex Steele and my husband, drummer Mike Cypher. We present a monthly jazz session at Smokey Joe's featuring some of the finest UK jazz musicians and it was decided to dedicate this session to raising money for the women's charity, Chetana, based in Nepal. All proceeds were donated specifically towards helping to renovate an old farm building near Pokhara into a safe place to support women and young girls who have been victims of abuse and trafficking.

The idea to host a fundraising event came from Alex's daughter, Hannah Steele. Both Alex and Hannah are actively involved in charity fundraising, and Hannah spent three months in Nepal in 2023, working as a volunteer for local charities and programmes to support women in disadvantaged parts of Nepal. This year, Hannah is supporting the Chetana programmes which provide support for women and girls in Nepal through education, health awareness, skills development and providing a safe house for women who have experienced the impacts of poverty, social deprivation, abuse, and human trafficking.

Hannah says:

"I spent time with the Chetana team when I was in Nepal, and I was so impressed by the passion and dedication of the Chetana team, and seeing the positive impacts they are having on so many women."

The evening focussed on celebrating and paying tribute to some wonderful female performers including Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Astrud Gilberto, Diana Krall, Amy Winehouse, Jo Stafford, Randy Crawford, Annie Lennox, Sarah Vaughan, Peggy Lee and many more. One



of the highlights of the evening for me was performing a stunning piece of music by Carla Bley, 'The Lord Is Listenin' To Ya, Hallelujah'. The whole repertoire of the evening was a truly magnificent celebration of female musicianship.

Joining me for the evening was Alex Steele on piano, Raph Mizraki on bass and Mike Cypher on drums together with two very special guest vocalists - two incredible, strong, creative performers who brought wonderful talent, warmth and fun to the evening, Caroline Mander and Nicole Warfield.

Caroline has an extensive background in musical theatre and spent many years performing in The West End and provincial theatres around the country. She currently directs seven choirs at The Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham. At our event, Caroline performed a stunning vocal and piano version of 'Someone to watch over me', which really captivated the audience and showcased her



highly trained vocal ability.

Nicole has been singing with a variety of bands for many years, including jazz combos and big bands. She studied Music Performance at Dartington Hall, Totnes where she really developed her appreciation of live performance through the unique experience of an alternative Arts campus. Nicole has a very special way with an audience, and she gave her heart and soul in a performance of 'Black Coffee' which was an absolute winner with the audience.

The evening consisted of band performances and numbers featuring myself duetting with Caroline and Nicole, all leading to the grand finale with the three of us singing a 3-part vocal harmony rendition of 'Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy' complete with a rather spectacular bugle call from Raph on his home-made hose pipe bugle!

It really was a very special evening of music, with the wonderful sense of community that the Smokey Joe's jazz sessions evoke.

Hannah was unable to join the evening in person due to her teaching commitments in London, but she joined via a video call to express her heartfelt thanks to all who had supported the event. This was a particular highlight of the evening as Hannah spoke with such passion and emotion, focussing attention onto the charity and the incredible work they do.

Support for the event was quite overwhelming. Every single seat was booked, and you could feel the love in the room. It really was an extra special night which raised £1,022 which is **FANTASTIC!**

Hannah says:



“I know what a huge difference this money will make on the ground in Nepal. Part of the funds will support the ongoing development of a safe house for women, enabling them to live in safety, and access education and training. The remainder of the funds will be used for Chetana’s skills development programmes which help local women generate income which in turn supports education, health care and combats poverty. These funds give women an amazing chance in life, building their independence and resilience, which has incredible positive social and economic impacts throughout the whole community. I know the brilliant Chetana team in Pokhara, led by the incredible lady, Pabita, and I know that they will use every single penny of the funds we raised to make a massive difference to peoples’ lives.”



HUGE thanks to all who came along to support. We love welcoming everyone to our Smokey Joe's jazz community and we hope you will all come again soon. We host fabulous jazz sessions every month and will welcome all newcomers.

Our thanks to all the team at Smokey Joe's for supporting live music.

Special thanks to our regular bassist Mike Green who gave lots of support promoting the event and thanks as always to our fabulous team of friends who help us run everything smoothly - Ceri Steele, Zoë Harmston and Pat Redmond. We honestly couldn't do it without your help and support.

[LINK to Chetana website](#)

[LINK to fundraising page](#)

[LINK to book tickets for Smokey Joe's Jazz](#)

Kim - "It was a truly fabulous night and such an honour to work with fellow musicians who just 'get it'. So much talent, so much love and SO much laughter!"

Caroline - "I absolutely loved joining forces with Kim and Nicole on such a special night and what a night it was!"

Nicole - "I am always learning from inspirational vocalists and musicians and have a huge respect for those sharing their skills to make a difference to others. Every musical encounter is so special! I absolutely loved singing for this very special night."

Our thanks to photographer Ron Milsom who had a night off his usual 'official' photographer duties, supporting this event as an audience member. He still managed to capture some of the special moments!

Ron Milsom
PHOTOGRAPHY

Our podcast series cover a wide range of topics, all created to platform, inform, discuss and celebrate women working in the jazz industry. You can find our podcasts at Number 12 in the top 60 Best Jazz Podcasts in FeedSpot!

We were thrilled to have our 'In Conversation With...' series nominated by the Women's International Podcast awards in the 'Changing the World one moment at a time' category.

Available on Spotify, Apple, Google and Anchor.

THE WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA PODCAST SERIES



IN CONVERSATION WITH...

WITH HOST HANNAH HORTON

Click on the images to go straight to the podcast!

Mary Sho
Germana Stella La Sorsa
Catherine Tackley
J Steps



New episode
**Women in Jazz Media:
In Conversation with
Mary Sho**



New episode
**Women in Jazz Media: In
Conversation with
Germana Stella La Sorsa**



One of our
favorite episodes
**Women in Jazz Media: In
Conversation with J Steps**



From the archives
**Women in Jazz Media:
In Conversation with Dr
Catherine Tackley**



Photo by Tatiana Gorilovsky

STICKS AND THRONES

Shining a light on
drummers from around
the world



Click on the images to go straight to the podcast!

Ciara Chinniah
Abbie Finn



WITH
MIGDALIA
VAN DER HOVEN

THE NOTES BETWEEN WITH LARA EIDI



Featured guest
The Notes Between with Lara Eidi and Sarah Gillespie



One of our favorite episodes
The Notes Between with Lara Eidi and Carmen Souza



New episode
The Notes Between with Nadine Khouri



One of our favorite episodes
The Notes Between with Lara Eidi and Ese Okorodudu



A podcast series about the world of songwriting

Click on the images to go straight to the podcast!

ON THE BOOKCASE



The Women In Jazz Media bookcase is all about platforming female authors from across the world. With almost 100 books, all the books included on our bookcase are also on our physical bookcase and we are very happy to share them with you all.

Our On The Bookcase podcast series explores some of the books on our bookcase and we love speaking to authors about their work. Our guests so far have been:

Jordannah Elizabeth
Maria Golia
Dr Tammy Kernodle
Monika Herzig
Paulette Jackson
Dr Joan Cartwright
Tish Oney
Maxine Gordon

And we are happy to share our most recent guests with you here!

Stephanie Stein Crease, Arlette Hovinga
and Judith Tick

Click on the images to go straight to the podcast!



Featured guest
**Women in Jazz Media:
On The Bookcase with
Stephanie Stein Crease**



Stephanie Stein Crease is a jazz historian, author, editor, and former Senior Jazz Coordinator for the Jazz Arts Program, Manhattan School of Music. Her books include *Gil Evans: Out of the Cool* (2002 ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award), and *Duke Ellington: His Life in Jazz* (2009). She was literary editor for the Grammy-awarded *Duke Ellington Centennial Edition*. She was a 2020 Scholar-in Residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NYPL, and 2018 Berger-Benny Carter-Berger Research Fellow at the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University.

Rhythm Man: Chick Webb and the Beat that Changed America, is a biography of Chick Webb, one of the first jazz drum virtuosos, and the innovative Harlem bandleader whose music helped launch the Swing Era of the 1930s. The book paints a nuanced portrait of Webb's life, from his early years in Baltimore, to top bandleader in Harlem during the Great Depression, and on to national fame as big band swing music swept across the country. Features previously unpublished material that sheds new light on the early jazz and dance scene in Baltimore, New York and Harlem during the 1920s, the Swing Era, and Webb's interactions with his family and many noted musicians.

We are excited to announce that since recording the podcast Stephanie's book has been nominated for Book of The Year by the Jazz Journalists Association. You can find out more here



Out now and ready to listen Women in Jazz Media: On The Bookcase with Judith Tick



Judith Tick is professor emerita of music history at Northeastern University. She has published award-winning books and articles about American music and women's history in music, including *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music*. She lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.

In this first major biography since Fitzgerald's death, historian Judith Tick offers a sublime portrait of this ambitious risk-taker whose exceptional musical spontaneity made her a transformational artist. *Becoming Ella Fitzgerald* clears up long-enduring mysteries. Archival research and in-depth family interviews shed new light on the singer's difficult childhood in Yonkers, New York, the tragic death of her mother, and the year she spent in a girls' reformatory school—where she sang in its renowned choir and dreamed of being a dancer. Rarely seen profiles from the Black press offer precious glimpses of Fitzgerald's tense experiences of racial discrimination and her struggles with constricting models of Black and white femininity at midcentury.

Tick's compelling narrative depicts Fitzgerald's complicated career in fresh and original detail, upending the traditional view that segregates vocal jazz from the genre's mainstream. As she navigated the shifting tides between jazz and pop, she used her originality to pioneer modernist vocal jazz. Interpreting long-lost setlists, reviews from both white and Black newspapers, and newly released footage and recordings, the book explores how Ella's transcendence as an improviser produced onstage performances every bit as significant as her historic recorded oeuvre.



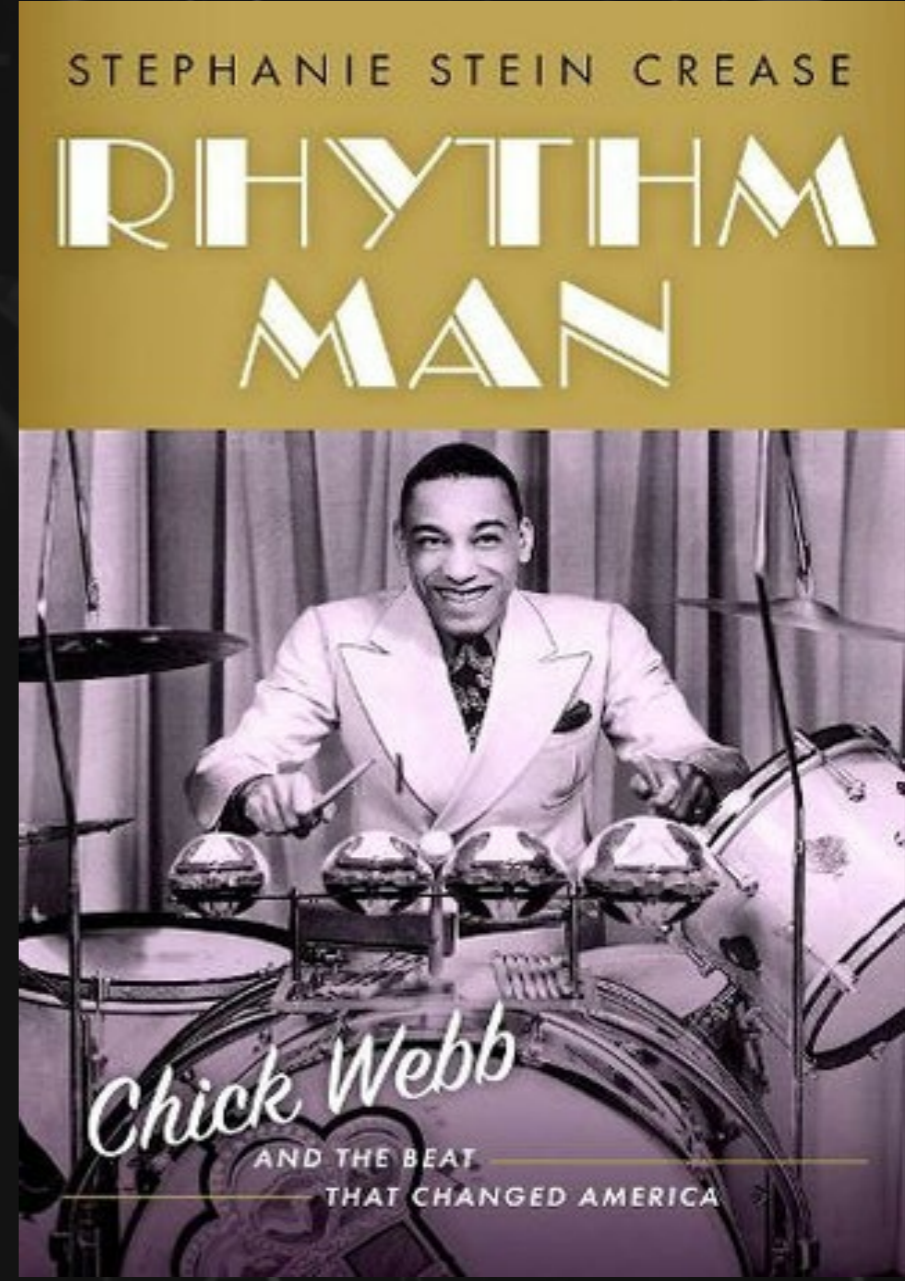
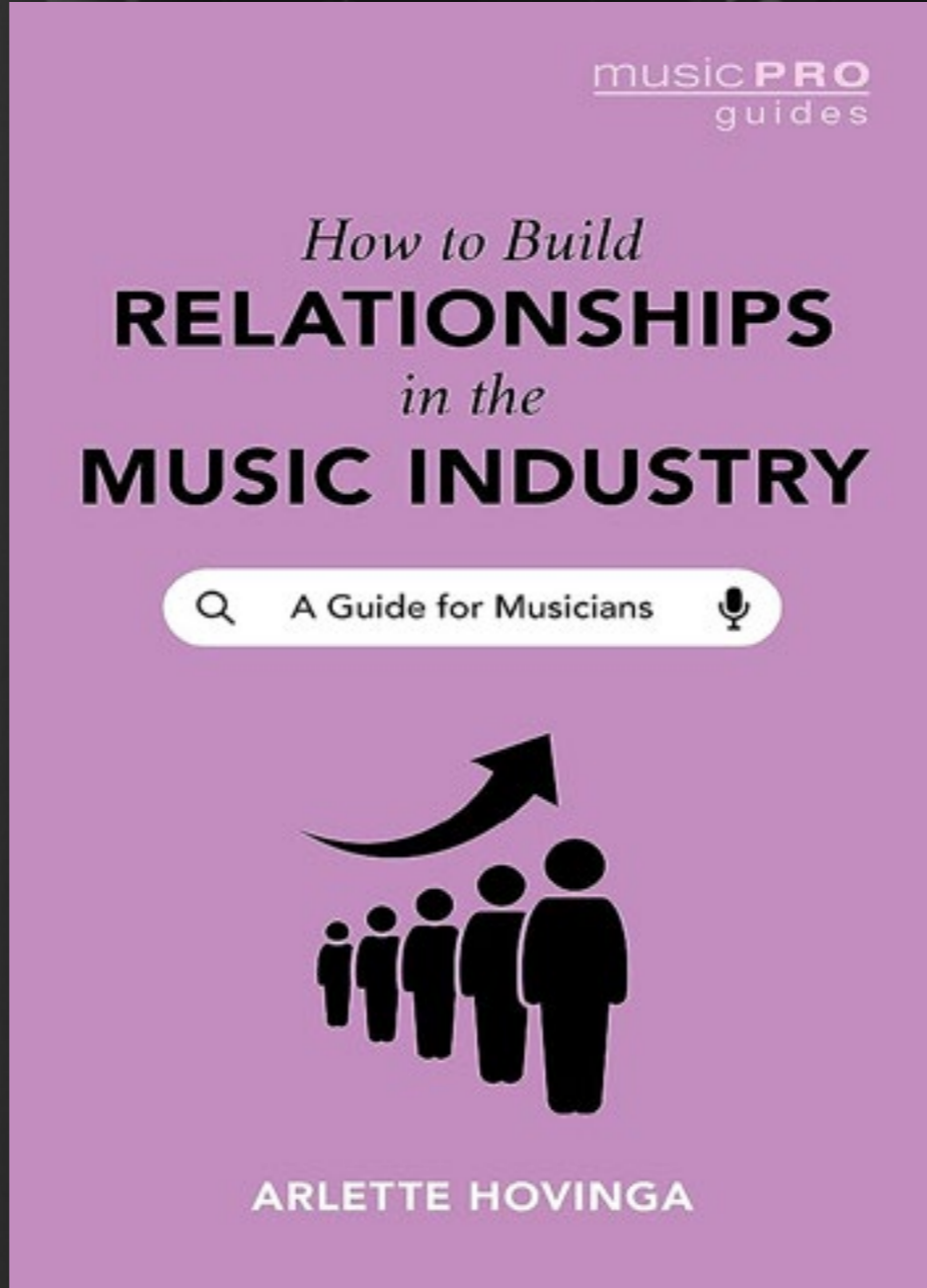
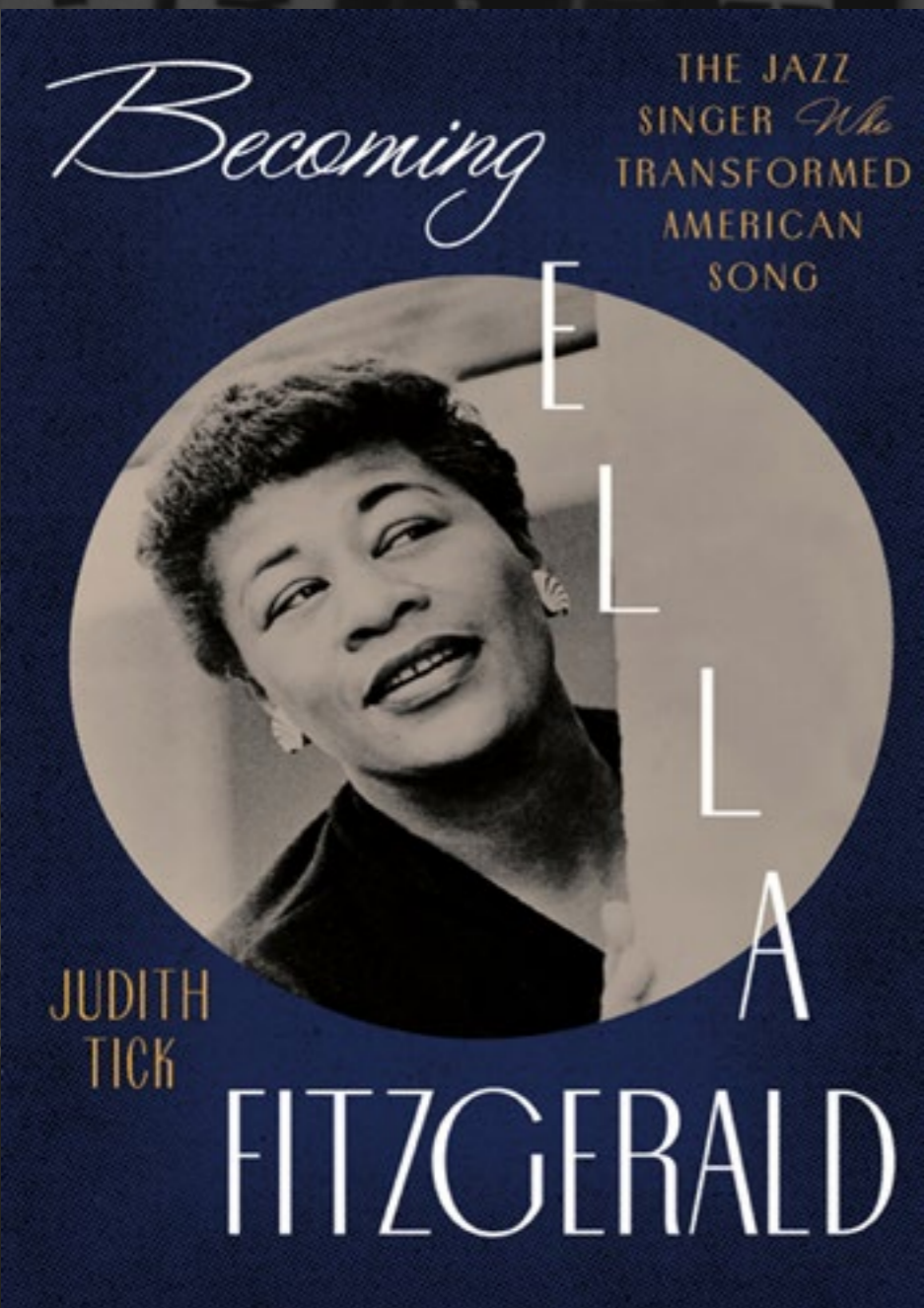
New episode Women in Jazz Media: On The Bookcase with Arlette Hovinga



I'm Arlette, a freelance jazz promoter and media director from The Netherlands.

Originally, I produced and programmed events in The Hague, where I lived most of my life. I've also toured with bands such as The Four Tops and The Temptations. In 2015, I decided to spend more time in The Netherlands than on the road and shifted my focus back to PR and marketing. Since then, I've worked with clients in The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Poland and Russia.

When I have time, I enjoy having beers with unsuspecting jazz musicians and check out shows at my favorite local jazz bar, Dizzy in Rotterdam. Some Humble pie; I was honored to win a Netherlands Music Industry Award in January 2020, awarded at Eurosonic Noorderslag. In 2021 I joined the 7 Virtual Jazz Club competition as a juror. I was a jazz juror for the first time in 2019, at Jazz Across Borders in Saint-Petersburg, Russia, and enjoyed it very much. I've also had the pleasure of being invited as a speaker at the Why DIY Music Podcast and by Gail Boyd at Alternative Venues for Jazz



LEGENDS AND ICONS

BY PAULETTE JACKSON

When speaking about artists, I believe there is a definite difference between Legends and Icons. The definition of a legend, in terms of a person is: an extremely famous or notorious person, especially in a particular field.

The definition of an icon is: a person or thing widely admired especially for having great influence or significance in a particular sphere.

Now, I have seen and heard the word legend or legendary thrown around a lot when, quite frankly, they should not be. In terms of artists, and this includes actresses and actors, a few come to mind that I feel have truly earned that status. Don't get me wrong, I don't mean in a negative way, I mean that their body of work and longevity in the arts & entertainment industry earns them that status. In the music world, I think of people like Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Nancy Wilson, Sarah Vaughan, Lena Horne and Betty Carter, just to name a few. These ladies are legendary in my opinion (let's go back to the definition) known all over the world for their amazing gift of song and style. No divas here, just legends in their craft.

Okay, let's take another look at the word Icon, on this side, I think of artists like Norah Jones, Diana Krall, more recently, Samara Joy and Cassandra Wilson. Why? They are all fantastic but again, thinking of the definition of icon, they would fit in this status. These ladies are admired and have great influence and following in the genre of jazz music and there is nothing wrong with that. The fact that an artist of any kind can influence the people around them and those who listen to their music, is a true blessing within itself.

Whether legendary or iconic, the most important takeaway here is the gift and how it is received by the people listening and watching and also, the way the artist delivers that gift and how it all makes us feel.

My point in writing this was to make people think about these two words and how I feel that they are sometimes used improperly, and that we all should be a little more mindful of how we use them.

I love music, jazz is on the top of that list and no matter which artists are your favorites, the important thing other than a label we choose to place on them, it is the soul of the music they choose to share with all of us. Music is universal... legendary or iconic, it's all about the mood of it.

I am sure some will disagree and that is okay, this is just my perspective. It's still all about the music.



SAMARA JOY BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

ON THE
Women in
Jazz Media
PLAYLIST



TARA MINTON BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

BRAD STONE

We are thrilled to welcome the award-winning Brad Stone back as our guest curator for our Women in Jazz Media Playlist for this edition.

Brad has been a radio programmer and music director for the past 40+ years and is the host of the brilliant 'The Creative Source' on www.soulandjazz.com which always features a beautifully diverse mix of progressive jazz and fusion, new jazz releases, current artists and original compositions. He is also the 2-time winner of the Bobby Jackson Award for Internet/Non-terrestrial jazz programming, 7-time winner of Jazz Programmer of the Year with Gavin and JazzWeek and winner of the Duke DuBois Humanitarian Award at JazzWeek for lifetime contributions to the jazz music and jazz radio community.

To listen to Brad's 'The Creative Source' show on Soul and Jazz, click [here](#)

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ARTIST!**

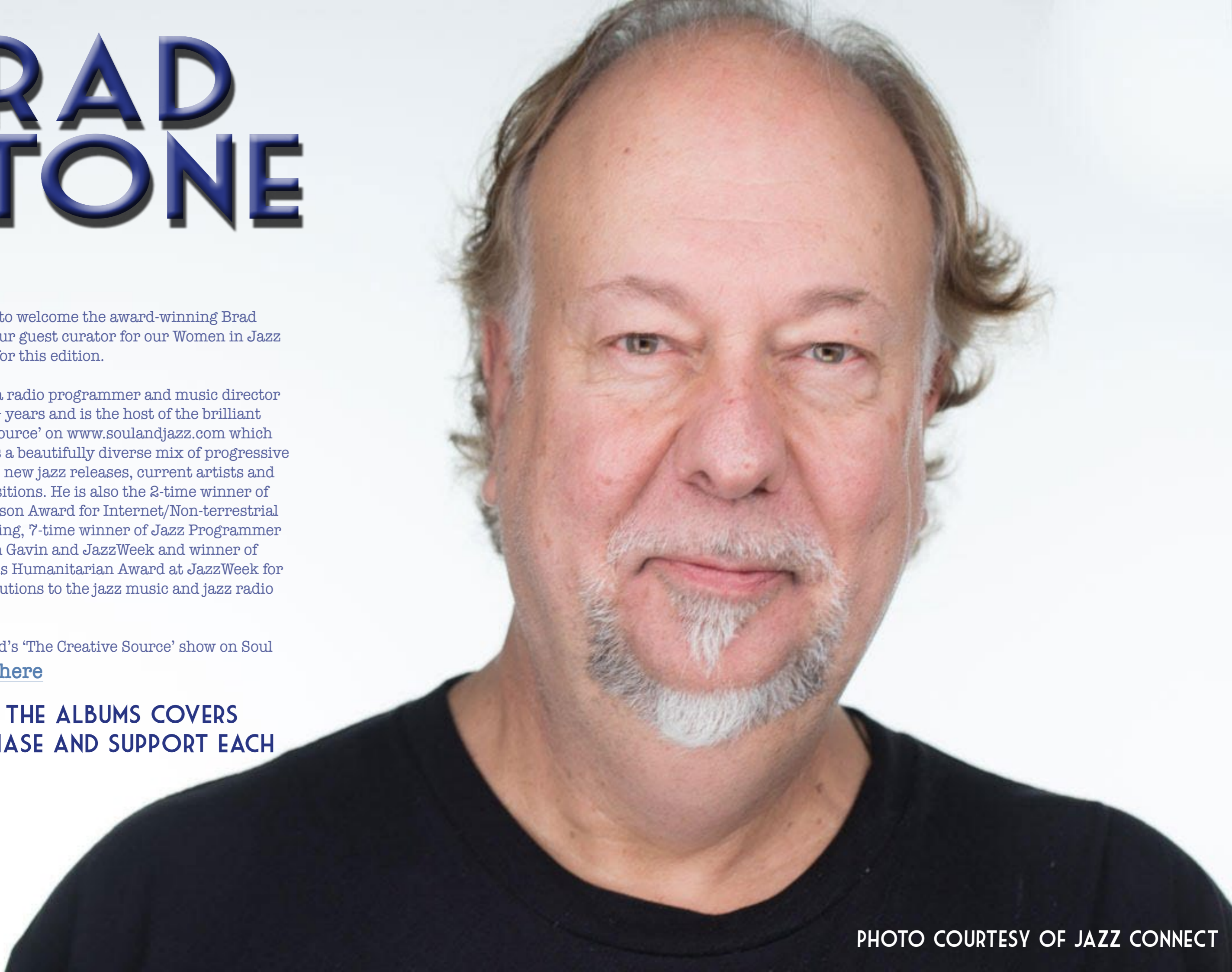


PHOTO COURTESY OF JAZZ CONNECT

SYLVIA BROOKS

SYLVIA BROOKS | LIVE



WITH CHRISTIAN JACOB



Sylvia Brooks
“Live”
Rhombus Records
2023

Recorded live at Herb Alpert’s Vibrato Jazz Grill in Los Angeles, Ms. Brooks teams up with Grammy Award nominated pianist, arranger and music director Christian Jacob for this new set. She is a longtime fixture on the L.A. jazz scene, and Mr. Jacob is well accustomed to working with and accompanying jazz vocalists. The album includes a nice mix of originals by both Jacob and Brooks, as well as notable standards and material by other composers. His arrangements of other composers’ material suit Sylvia’s voice and delivery quite nicely. The inclusion of a song that Brooks and Jacob co-wrote, which appeared on her 2022 release “Signature”, entitled “Holding Back Tears”, is the real standout track on the album for me – simply gorgeous (I have to hold back tears every time I listen to this song). I was glad to get re-introduced to Sylvia Brooks with this live offering!

SATOKO FUJII



Satoko Fujii (with Kaze)
“Unwritten”
Libra Records
2023

Maestra Fujii must be one of the most prolific artists on the planet. You may recall me writing about her in previous issues. This latest release from the group Kaze features both Christian Pruvost and Fujii’s husband Natsuki Tamura on trumpet (Christian also plays flugelhorn, Natuski also lends his voice); Peter Orins on drums and Satoko on piano. 3 tracks only, the longest being over 36 minutes. The music can be at times subtle, at times dense. Abstract, and yes “avant garde”, but alternatively beautifully melodic. This is complex, original music making at its finest – I invite you to pick up a copy and just immerse yourself in it, with no preconceived notions or expectations. A truly amazing aural experience!

JILL MCCARRON



Jill McCarron Trio
“Gin”
Jazz Bird Records
2024

Minnesota born, Canada raised and currently based in New York, pianist Jill McCarron and her trio have released a brand new set, “Gin”. The title track is actually a suite consisting of 3 tracks, Ms. McCarron’s own originals. Harmonically rich and expertly performed, this is one of highlights of the album. Another highlight is her repertoire – the Trio perform compositions by a variety of jazz greats (including George Duke, Don Grolnick and Denny Zeitlin, which I was happy to see), but mostly not the usual standards. Paul Gill and Andy Watson round out the trio on bass and drums. Guest appearances by Vincent Herring, Ada Rovatti and Randy Brecker. Jill is a protégé of Richie Beirach, Hal Galper and Kenny Werner – that alone is impressive. High Standards Jazz quotes her as being “the real deal”. I have to thoroughly agree.

PHOTO BY COURTESY OF JILL

BETTY BRYANT



Photo by

Betty Bryant
“Lotta Livin’”
bry-mar music
2023

94 year old Betty Bryant is still going strong, as evidenced by her latest recording. Not only singing, but expertly playing the piano as well. If you're a fan of the blues and of standards, this one's for you! Some originals on here, too - her “Katydid” now spinning on my current radio program. She's been called a “national treasure” - I might say “international”!

MARGOT SERGENT

Margot Sergent
"Douce France Sweet France"
ZOHO Music
2023

I applaud ZOHO Music for releasing this album. I mean, really I love just about every release that ZOHO puts out – they are one of those kinds of labels. But this one is special. This beautiful release consists of a nice mix of songs sung both in her native French as well as in English – including some of her own compositions. Oh, I should also mention that Margot is also a harpist, and her harp playing is on prominent display on this album. Standout tracks for me include a lovely version of the classic "La Bohème" with Vitor Goncalves featured on the accordion; and the stunningly gorgeous "Dans Tes Bras Mon Ange", which just gives me goosebumps. If you're a fan of the French vocal tradition, this album is for you.



PHOTO BY ALAN BRESSON



Kristen R. Bromley
“Muagsician”
Kristen R. Bromley
2023

This double CD showcases Ms. Bromley’s impressive guitar technique, where she regularly attempts to play lead melody, rhythm guitar, and bass lines at the same time – comping chords while soloing, for example. The title of the album is an amalgamation of Musician and Magician, and her playing exemplifies that quite capably! If you’re a fan of solo guitar, I recommend this – 25 tracks, including originals and standards.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL OLETTA

LORI BELL

Lori Bell Quartet
“Recorda Me: Remembering Joe Henderson”
2023

Flautist Lori Bell tackles 8 compositions by Joe Henderson (plus one of her own) on her latest set of music. She’s accompanied by Josh Nelson on piano, Dan Schnelle on drums and David Robaire on bass. Some virtuosic flute playing here by Ms. Bell and well performed by the quartet, who sound like they’ve been playing together for years. I highly recommend this album for: fans of straight ahead jazz, fans of jazz flute, and Joe Henderson devotees. I’m sure that Joe is listening somewhere, very pleased to hear this release!

Lori Bell Quartet

Recorda Me
Remembering Joe Henderson

Josh Nelson · David Robaire · Dan Schnelle



**Kirsten Edkins
"Shapes & Sound"
Cohearent Records
2023**

Tenor saxophonist Kirsten Edkins is already establishing her own sound on the horn in her young career with this straight ahead, quartet/quintet set. Gerald Clayton provides the perfect accompaniment on piano. She's also establishing herself as a fine composer, as 6 of the 8 tracks on this album are her own, along with a 7th by drummer Chris Wabich. The album was recorded in Kevin Gray's all-valve (vacuum tube) recording facility and mastering studio in California – he states "All-Valve from microphones to cutterhead". Yes, 180 g vinyl is available, and it sounds fantastic!

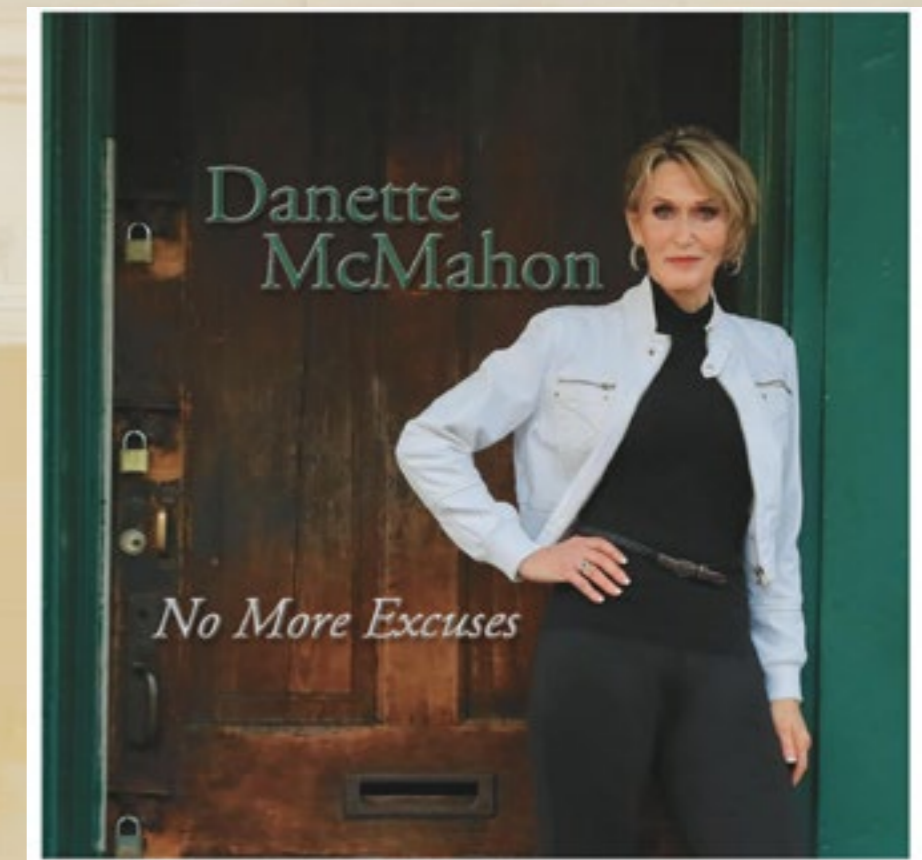
EUNMI LEE

Eunmi Lee
“Introspection”
You&Me Music
2023

Composer and pianist Lee leads an incredible small ensemble - including John Ellis, Tony Kadleck, Alan Ferber, Ari Hoenig, Jon Gordon, Remy Le Boeuf, Vinicius Gomes and Matt Clohesy - plus a very capable string section including the wonderful Meg Okura - in performing her intricate yet gorgeous and highly melodic compositions. I'm overdue writing about Eunmi - this was one of my favorite releases last year! Ms. Lee is originally from Seoul, Korea and is now based in New York. She is a wonderful composer - I'm already looking forward to her next work.



PHOTO BY HYUNGHOO RYU



Danette McMahon
"No More Excuses"
Rockin' Double D Productions
2024

Vocalist and composer Danette McMahon brings us "No More Excuses", a collection of mostly her own compositions. With her on this recording are a number of fine Houston-based musicians, notably including Joe LoCascio on piano and Woody Witt on tenor. Those who know me know that I love the inclusion of Hammond B3 organ - Philip Jones provides that here. Danette also takes a stab at the Oasis hit "Wonderwall" with a very nice arrangement. This is a really good sounding recording, from the performances, the engineering, mixing and mastering. Danette has had quite a career on the stage and a role in a hit Hollywood movie, but it is obvious that music is her passion. She's performed with various other rock and jazz outfits before tackling this, her first release as a leader. An impressive debut, for sure!

JULIE KELLY

PHOTO BY MIKEL HEALEY PHOTOGRAPHY



JULIE KELLY FREEDOM JAZZ DANCE



Julie Kelly
“Freedom Jazz Dance”
Laurelwood Records
2024

With Julie Kelly’s latest release, we have another eclectic collection of songs from a real variety of composers, including such luminaries as Willie Nelson, Joao Gilberto, Caetano Veloso, Bob Dorough, Eddie Harris, Gordon Lightfoot and other great songwriters. My favorite track thus far is her rendition of “Take Me to the Alley” by Gregory Porter (that track spinning on my current radio program, as I type...). Expertly arranged by pianist Josh Nelson, who is one of the very best in the business in accompanying jazz vocalists. A number of other Los Angeles-based first call musicians on this one, along with Josh. Kudos to the recording, mixing and mastering engineers as well.



Lynne Arriale Trio
"Being Human"
Challenge Records
2024

Ms. Arriale has certainly established herself as one of the premier jazz pianists of our time. Alongside her technical prowess on the piano, she's an equally gifted composer. She returns with "Being Human" as a follow up to her previous trio albums, this time with new bandmates Alon Near on bass and Lukasz Zyta on drums. This trio brings us 10 new compositions of Lynne's. The songs are concise statements - none over four and a half minutes in length. At times lush, bluesy, angular, melodic - but all harmonically sophisticated, splendidly performed and compelling listening experiences. Always a treat to get a new release from Lynne - I predict this album will do very well indeed at jazz radio across the U.S. and beyond.





ANDREA SUPERSTEIN

Andrea Superstein
"Oh Mother"
Cellar Live
2024

Canadian songstress Superstein offers this collection of mostly originals, along with wonderfully unique arrangements of Christine McVie's "Everywhere" and Cole Porter's "So In Love". The terms "modern" and "hip" come to mind! Refreshingly original. An excellent cast of musicians, notably Rachel Therrien on trumpet, Jane Bunnett on flute, and keyboard work by Chris Gestrin. A great example of the incredible recordings that occurred during the peak of the pandemic.



PHOTOS BY BRANDON-ELLIOT

WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BLACK LIVES IN MUSIC

MORE THAN A FEW OF US

Inspired by Willard Jenkins book 'Ain't But A Few of Us', the Women in Jazz Media's new mentoring scheme **More Than A Few of Us** is open for applicants!

Specifically aimed at increasing the number of black jazz journalists across the world and supported by Black Lives in Music, who work to dismantle structural racism in the industry and work to take action to create a level playing field for everyone to have an equal chance to succeed, along with award winning legend Maxine Gordon, the mentoring scheme has significant support, not least of which is through the inspirational mentors who are involved.

More Than A Few of Us is open for applicants!

[To apply, please follow this link](#)

#knockingdownthedoors

**BLACK
LIVES IN
MUSIC**

PHOTO OF CAMILLA GEORGE BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

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Tony Barnes being celebrated by Hannah Horton and the audience during our London Jazz Festival event. Captured by Monika S Jakubowska



YAZZ AHMED



PHOTO BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA