

# WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA

THE MAGAZINE

JAS  
KAYSER

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TAHIRAH MEMORY CHARLOTTE KEEFFE CARMELLA RAPPAZZO

AND SO MUCH MORE...

# INTRODUCTION

COVER PHOTOGRAPHER: MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

## EDITORS NOTE:

2021 has been an incredible year for us at Women in Jazz Media and since the publication of our first magazine in March, celebrating International Women's Day, we have been immensely honoured to work with and support a huge range of inspirational women. It has been a huge challenge to decide on the content for this, our second magazine, which in many ways is a wonderful problem to have. There are so many women across the world, that we want to support and shout about and in fact do so on all of our social media channels as much as we can.

The front cover of our last magazine featured the legendary Dee Dee Bridgewater, photographed by Tatiana Gorilovsky, celebrating the continuing legacy of powerful, independent women in the jazz world. For this edition, we feature Jas Kayser on our cover to celebrate not only the growth of the new generation of powerful jazz women but the increased platforms now being given for female instrumentalists. The cover photo was taken by Monika S Jakubowska, the only female photographer for the world-famous Ronnie Scott's Club in London. Photography has been a focus for us this year and we were thrilled to help facilitate the inclusion of the first female photographers in the National Jazz Archives in the UK- Tatiana Gorilovsky and Monika S Jakubowska. You will find this magazine filled with their stunning captures along with Jess Rose who we were thrilled to work with at our LGBTQ+ event organized by Jess's wife Lara Jones, as part of the London Jazz Festival. This trio of inspirational photographers fill this magazine with **beauty, joy and truth.**

I hope you enjoy our second magazine and its purpose - to highlight a very small selection of incredible women working in the jazz industry. This magazine is interactive, so do click away and it will take you to the artists pages. Please do support their work.

*FIONA ROSS*

FOUNDER, WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA

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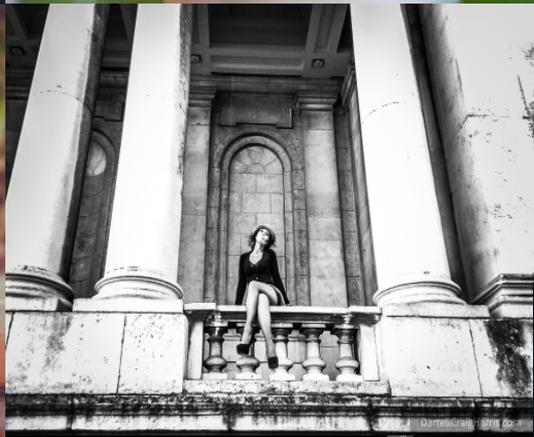
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**BLACK  
LIVES IN  
MUSIC**



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MS MAURICE PHOTOGRAPHY BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

# AMI OPRENOVA

## ENJOYING 'PRECIOUS DAYS'

INTERVIEWED BY KIM CYPHER





PHOTO BY NOLAN REGENT



Ron Milsom  
PHOTOGRAPHY

**B**ulgarian jazz vocalist, band leader and composer Ami Oprenova kicked off a UK album tour at London venue Toulouse Lautrec on Sunday 26th September 2021, presenting arrangements of original tracks from her new album 'Precious Days', released on 5th November. Ami has previously toured Europe and already has two albums under her belt: 'Introducing Coco 'n' the Fellas' (2016) and 'Some of our Favourite Tunes' (2017).

'Precious Days' is Ami's third album, although it's the first album in her own name. It really gives a true sense of the honesty and passion behind this unique artist, almost a window into the soul of Ami. The album is based on life experiences with a positive, feel-good vibe, combining everything Ami has learnt from playing Gypsy Swing, Blues and Bebop together with her childhood upbringing of listening to Soul, Balkan Folk & Gospel.

Ahead of a collaborative gig with Ami as part of the tour, I had the pleasure to catch up with her and delve deeper into the workings of this intriguing, unique performer whose passion and performance I truly admire. I asked Ami what had inspired the album and what we can expect?

*"This album means so much to me! Each track has a unique story behind it and has been composed after a deep personal experience."*

# "AFTER THE PANDEMIC, STRESS AND PRESSURE WE ALL EXPERIENCED, I FEEL THE IMPORTANCE OF APPRECIATING EACH DAY WE ARE GIVEN EVEN MORE.

*My vision for the album was to create a positive, feel-good atmosphere combining everything I've learnt. I started working on the album almost 3 years ago. It is an all-originals album with 3 of the 9 tracks co-written with incredible guitarist Daniele Ciuffreda. The other band members (Joe Perkins and Havard Tanner) were also heavily involved in shaping the pieces and creating the sound of the album together with some incredible guest musicians and producer John Merriman.*

*It was a time in my life when many changes were taking place. Many opportunities had arisen and I had taken the first step into having a solo career as a jazz artist. John really helped me round up my ideas and encouraged me to keep going with what I wanted to write. The whole team at Crown Lane Studio are just the most amazing and talented bunch. I'm so pleased to have been able to record there."*

KC: You trained as a classical violinist at The National Music School of Sofia in Bulgaria and then studied a Bachelors in violin and composition at the Birmingham Conservatoire. How did this evolve into becoming a jazz vocalist?

*"I think I always knew I wanted to be a vocalist but pursued it quite late in my musical journey as a teen. I owe the initial spark of interest to my incredible uncle who was the first person to sit me down with a bunch of jazz CDs and educate me on the styles of jazz. I was so intrigued by the scatting I heard for the very first time when I was 15, I was hooked forever. My parents aren't musicians however, they did their best to give me an opportunity to develop my skills. It was then up to me to find my path and the style I loved the most...Jazz!*

KC: You have been tutored by some of the very best jazz vocalists including Cyrille Aimée, Liane Carroll and Anita Wardell. How have you brought together everything you've learnt into your own style?

*"What I learned from these incredible jazz artists has directed the way I perform and the way I work with other musicians. But when it comes down to style, I strive to be true to myself. I want each person who's taken the time to listen to me to go back home happy. I just try to share my love for music, and hope the audience enjoys the music with me.*

**'My duty as a performer and recording artist is to entertain the audience with my music'**

KC: Your improvising appears to be totally natural and spontaneous, often inspired by nature (a sunset or bird song etc). Are you expressing whatever comes into your mind or are you drawing upon on a bank of phrases and melodies you have created and stored?

*"Well, we all have our favourite lines and phrases stored somewhere and they always seem to creep up, even when we don't want them to, but I have recently discovered that the present is more powerful than anything in the past and more exciting than anything in the future.*

*That's helped me draw awareness of all the amazing things that can influence our improvisation skills. I believe it's not only down to what harmony is playing behind us, but what nature is doing, or what mood we are in that day. That's what makes improvising exciting and different every day!*

**KC:** Tell me about your trademark scatting; how it has evolved, what/ who have been your biggest influences and how have you developed your unique style rather than a generic technique?

*I first began by studying all the greats and transcribing each note they sang. Ella Fitzgerald was of course my absolute favourite, but I also studied a lot of Cyrille and Liane's work. That said I have had the amazing privilege to play with many guitarists in the Manouche style specifically. I would often learn guitar solos and sometimes write out duo solos. I love learning instrumental solos because they challenge me to sing in a completely different way. I love trading with an instrument and working out on the spot what I can take from their solo and develop even further.*

**KC:** You have a beautiful baby boy, Theo. How have you found juggling music and motherhood? Has Theo inspired any of your music?

*Yes, I became a mummy last year and a wife the year before. I had a difficult birth and my baby was born two months early but he is perfectly fine, making us laugh daily! Juggling music and concerts is extremely difficult, but thanks to our incredibly supportive relatives and my amazing husband, getting back to performing has been possible. I've had some inspiration to write about my little family but this is the most personal my music has ever been, so I'm not sure when I'll be ready to share it with anyone...*

**KC:** You have been performing a series of 'Jazz in the City Sessions' live from Sofia in Bulgaria. Tell me more...

*I have been living between UK and Bulgaria the last year. In Sofia, where my family is from, I had a vision to start a jazz event series. With the support of many around me we had started regular events, which are Live from Sofia and streamed for free through Facebook. It's a very new project and I've only had a few musicians guest with me so far, but I think the next one will be around Christmas and I have to admit I am very excited.*

**KC:** I absolutely love the 'Coco 'n' the Fellas' music and videos. Do you have plans to do more with this band?

*Coco 'n' the Fellas was a pure joy and came out of an experiment for my final project at the University. Only by chance did we get a gig right after which turned into an amazing run of tours over 3 years. I truly love the fellas as my brothers, but it was time to move on to new projects. Thanks to them I've matured as an artist and I owe them so much of my career. But I think we have all grown away from the style we were doing then and we are now spread around the world involved in such different but wonderful things. Nevertheless, I secretly hope I'd be able to convince the boys for a reunion concert in the future.*

**KC:** What are your plans for the future?

*My plans for the future are to see what doors open ahead for me. I am a person of faith so I'm not often worried about the future. I am looking forward to some new projects coming up and spending this precious time with my family. And to be honest I'm planning to buy my first ever Christmas tree! That's the best future plan, ha-ha.*



Ron Miskow  
PHOTOGRAPHY

I couldn't agree more with Ami's appreciation of life, truly valuing each day we are given - precious days indeed. It is clear that Ami has poured her heart and soul into her new album 'Precious Days', spreading positive, feel-good vibes. The music is totally infectious and her performance is captivating. There are wonderful melodies and heartfelt lyrics clearly derived from Ami's experiences in life. I know Ami continues to be inspired by life experiences so it will be very exciting to see where her creativity takes her next.



**Ami is very much an artist of my own heart. No wonder I enjoyed performing alongside her so much!!**





ALINA BZHEZHINSKA  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY







# KEYNA WILKINS

COMPOSING SOUNDTRACKS  
TO SOME OF THE BIGGEST  
ISSUES OF OUR TIME

BY FIONA MACTAGGART

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAWFIK ELGAZZAR



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHYLLIS WONG

It was earlier this year and thanks to covid concerns, Sydney was required to enter lockdown, when twice finalist of the Australian Art Music Award, Australian/ British flautist, pianist and composer Keyna Wilkins joined a refugee advocacy group on a social media platform. There she became acquainted with Jalal Mahamede, a poet, artist and Ahwaze Arab refugee from Iran.

Speaking with me recently by Zoom, Wilkins explained

*“The first thing I noticed was that his poetry was very, very powerful, very gripping, very raw, very, very inspiring - and I hardly ever get that response from poetry! Everything he says is very, very clear, very to the point, very concise.”*

The level of artistry was all the more startling as, since arriving by boat in Australia in 2013, for the previous 9 years Mahamede had been incarcerated by the Australian government, mostly at the notorious Christmas Island detention camp and more recently due to deteriorating health in a Brisbane detention centre.

Wilkins went on: *“He read his poetry and I thought, wow, he’s got this really beautiful musical kind of voice, a musical lilt. And then we had some jams and I was playing piano and he was speaking his poetry and I thought: this is it, that is just like magic when it’s put together!”* The word spread quickly and soon nineteen musician colleagues had joined the project, not to mention Wilkins’ own children and their friends. A powerful and subsequently widely praised album Set Me Free was launched on 17th November in Sydney with representatives from Amnesty International offering their support. A book of Mahamede’s poems, enhanced by his startlingly candid illustrations, is to be published soon.

Wilkins’ transcultural sensitivity might be understandable given that she was born in England to an English father and an Australian mother, over the years living and studying her craft, initially mostly Western classical music, in England, Germany and Australia where she now lives and works. Key moments in her musical development include, while still in her teens, some lessons in Sydney with a Tibetan monk musician, Tenzin Choegyal, after which she felt enabled to branch out into jazz, flamenco and free improvisation. Then following the birth of her children, Wilkins describes the feeling strengthened: that it was right to pursue those big issues that really fired

her interest, no matter that these might traverse musically disparate areas. Indeed, Wilkins’ recent music has been characterised variously as Art Music, Space Jazz and Indigenious-Jazz Fusion, with five of her pieces now published in the Australian Jazz Real Book, a respected publication dedicated to the preservation and distribution of quality Australian Jazz.

Another big theme Wilkins has in recent years found herself attracted to is space and astronomy, and with her Ephemera Quartet she has released two albums (one of which is a double album): Orbits and Riffs and Blackholes and Modulations. Wilkins enthused: *“I had a perfect group of musicians... I found a big catalogue of NASA space sounds: some of them are actually live recordings from space, and some of them are electromagnetic waves put through a spectrograph to be made audible. And so, there’s literally images of space and planets and nebula and galaxies... so it’s like a total experience!”*

A third area that Wilkins has, in typical energetic fashion engaged with, is the music of Australia’s First Nations, her collaborator in this being didgeridoo player, singer and expert animal-voice mimicker, Gumaroy Newman. Wilkins sings his praises: *he’s “a very, very, very charismatic, virtuosic, fantastic player, very generous with his cultural knowledge... there’s only really one other didgeridoo player in Australia who’s doing this kind of thing and his name is William Barton and he’s a fantastic player too”.*

She went on: *“There are over 700 tribes in the whole of Australia, each have their different language, different rituals, different instruments, but the most important thing is the connection to the land... You know with the West, it’s like: I own this tiny little square of land, that’s mine, end of! But the way Gumaroy explains it is: you can never own land. You can belong to the land, but you can never actually own it. So, you know, it’s a whole different way of living!”*

The two musicians quickly formed the bi-cultural duo Yulugi (meaning in Gamiloroi language to play, dance or have fun), Wilkins describing their modus operandi as *“pure improvisation, we plan nothing.”*



## **IT'S THE MERGING OF THE SOUND WORLDS...**

*The feedback I got was that this is actually one of the reasons that I was finalist for a big award in Australia last year [2020], The Australian Art Music Awards.”*

In 2020 the duo distilled their distinctive sound into the album *Chasing Stars To The Mother Tree* and also impressively co-composed a didgeridoo concerto, *Celestial Emu* for The Metropolitan Orchestra.

Indeed, notwithstanding the increasing improvising, Wilkins continues to be a prolific composer, recently completing *Smoke Trails*, a clarinet nonet about the bushfires and global warming. A second didgeridoo concerto is in the making, as is a solo cello piece “about the polarization in politics”. This latter is for cellist Kathleen Perez who is based in Spain and part of this work will also include some of Mahamede’s poetry.

Although covid will doubtless limit touring in the near future, Wilkins hopes to be able to tour through Europe including the UK in two years’ time, saying she would love it if people reading this article can recommend venues.

**Her passion for the big issues, vision for a better future and cross-cultural sensitivity will surely make her welcome when she does return to Europe.**

To end, some bittersweet news. Jalal Mahamede was released earlier this month, after spending nearly ten years in detention. The album *Set Me Free* could well have been a contributing factor to his release. Meanwhile between 200 and 300 refugees continue in detention in Australia or offshore.



*'THERE ARE OVER 700 TRIBES IN THE WHOLE OF AUSTRALIA, EACH HAVE THEIR DIFFERENT LANGUAGE, DIFFERENT RITUALS, DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THE CONNECTION TO THE LAND'*







PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAWFIK ELGAZZAR

# WO-ART BY FAUSTA JOLY

There's a woman in Zanzibar,  
Who builds sandcastles in the sky

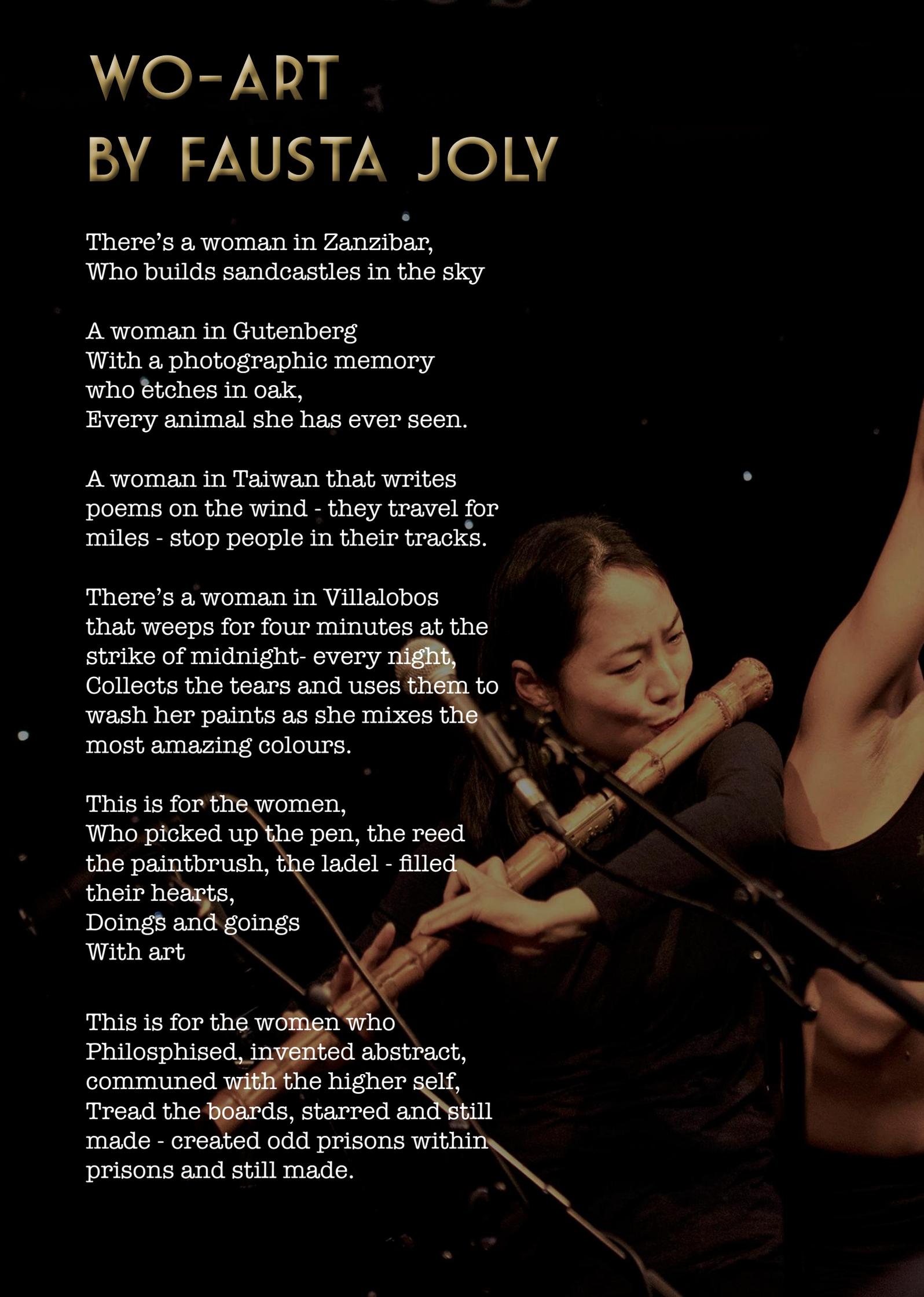
A woman in Gutenberg  
With a photographic memory  
who etches in oak,  
Every animal she has ever seen.

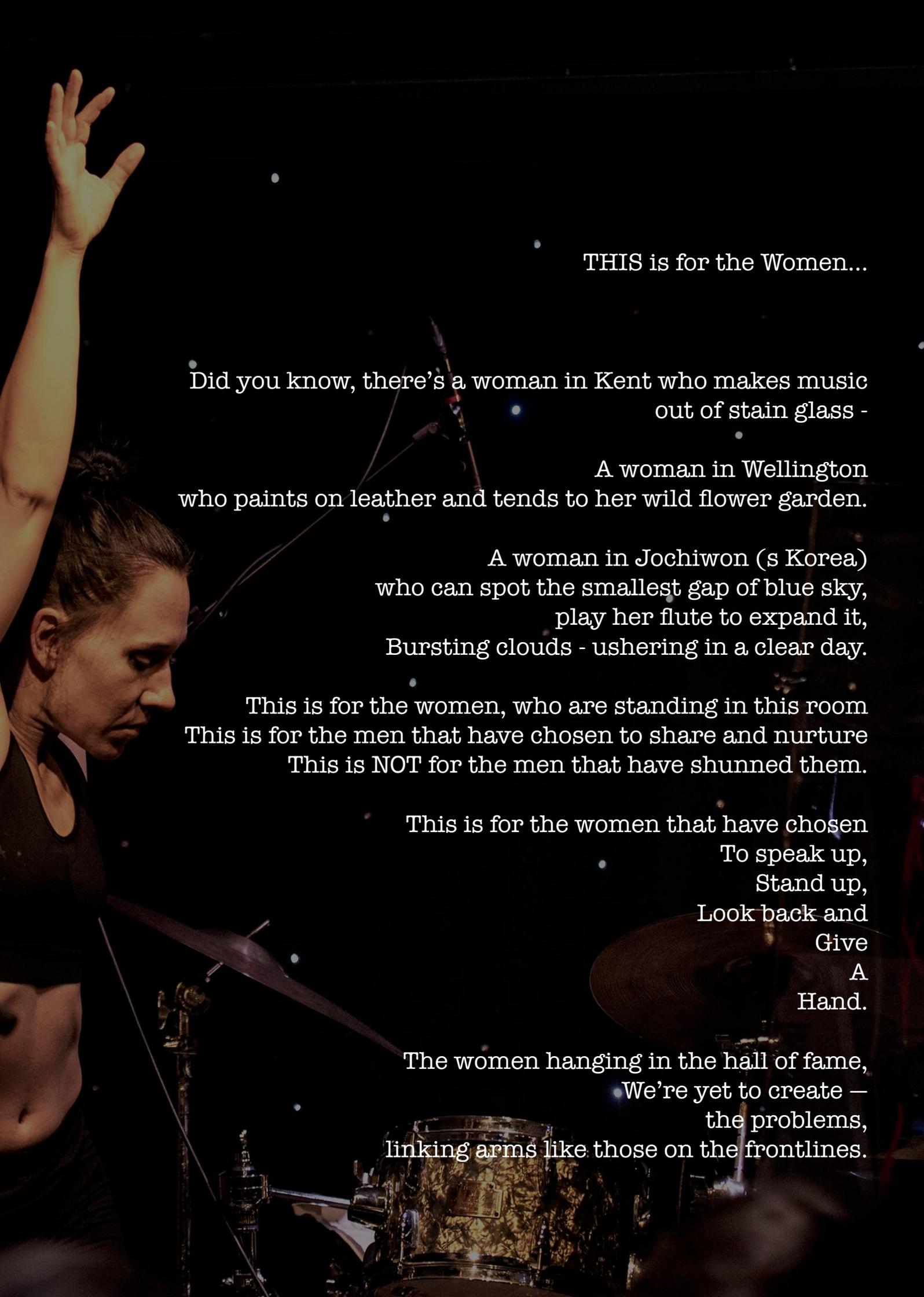
A woman in Taiwan that writes  
poems on the wind - they travel for  
miles - stop people in their tracks.

There's a woman in Villalobos  
that weeps for four minutes at the  
strike of midnight- every night,  
Collects the tears and uses them to  
wash her paints as she mixes the  
most amazing colours.

This is for the women,  
Who picked up the pen, the reed  
the paintbrush, the ladel - filled  
their hearts,  
Doings and goings  
With art

This is for the women who  
Philosphised, invented abstract,  
communed with the higher self,  
Tread the boards, starred and still  
made - created odd prisons within  
prisons and still made.





THIS is for the Women...

Did you know, there's a woman in Kent who makes music  
out of stain glass -

A woman in Wellington  
who paints on leather and tends to her wild flower garden.

A woman in Jochiwon (s Korea)  
who can spot the smallest gap of blue sky,  
play her flute to expand it,  
Bursting clouds - ushering in a clear day.

This is for the women, who are standing in this room  
This is for the men that have chosen to share and nurture  
This is NOT for the men that have shunned them.

This is for the women that have chosen  
To speak up,  
Stand up,  
Look back and  
Give  
A  
Hand.

The women hanging in the hall of fame,  
We're yet to create —  
the problems,  
linking arms like those on the frontlines.

There's a long, long, line -  
that could cover the circumference of the globe many times over,  
of all the women who have birthed new ideas, offered solutions to  
the problems,  
linking arms like those on the frontlines.

The secretive notions of revolution:

Sometimes

having to be fierce like a grenade

others, still -

holding

the still,

projecting,

wanting,

and affecting

the purest outcome.

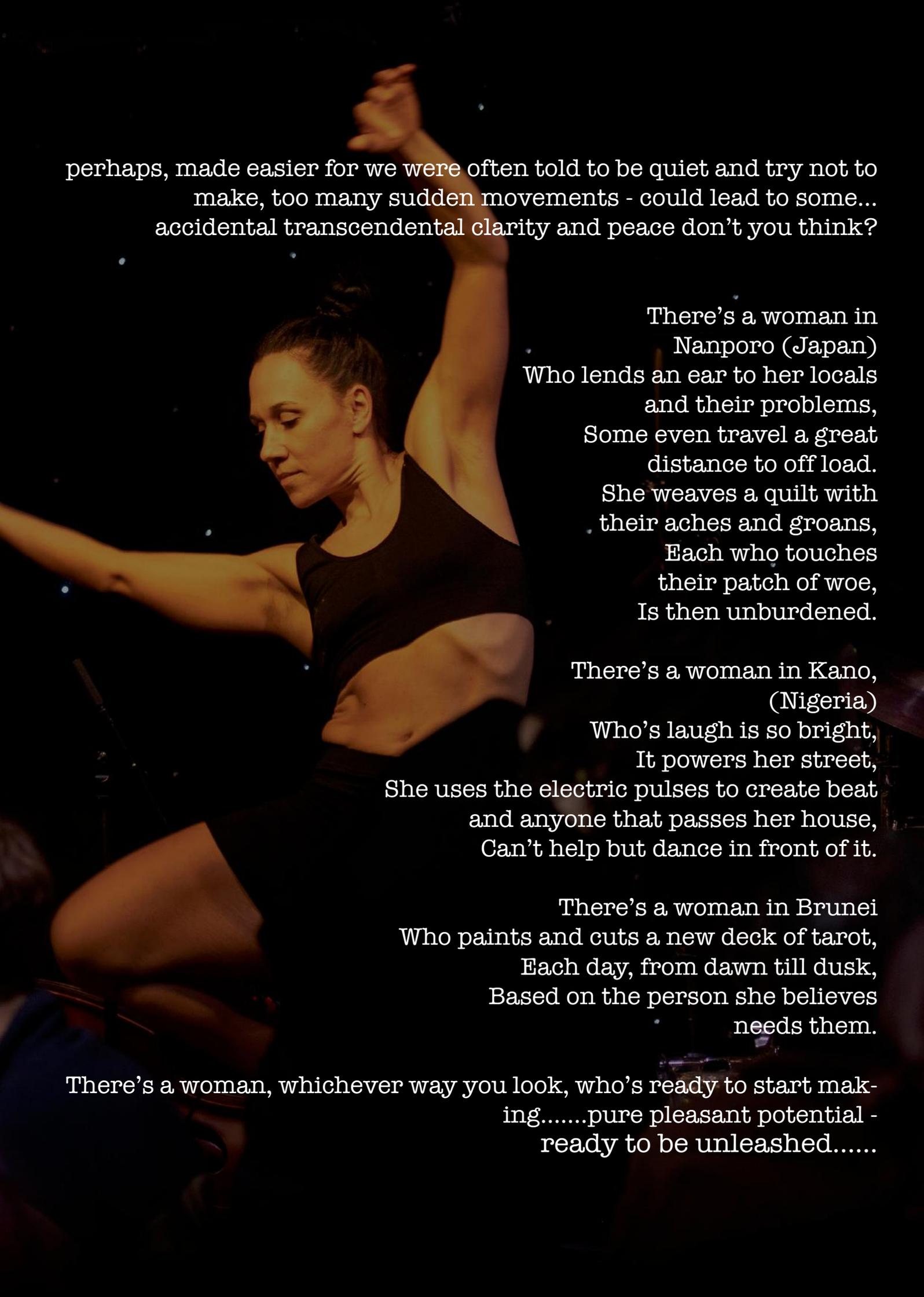
calm

centre,

We've all had a chat, there's a stop to the apology, a stop to the slug -  
**WE'LL BE TAKING UP SPACE NOW,**  
Looking around at our other sisters  
and seeing how we can help NOW-  
asking better of not just us but allll of us, NOW.

Communicating through creation - from Nina to Frida, shining  
bright in our art - independent of time - Remembering - notes and  
colours have no race, age or country - they can dance on a page on a  
stage on a wall in any blank space, penetrating any bias - singing out  
to the core - if you look, and you listen.

Imagining, if Hilma Af Klint had a conversation with Alice Coltrane  
- "You got to go within" - "It all came through me" "It comes from the  
heart, the spirit, the soul" both not knowing exactly what was about  
to happen when they approached: the piano, harp, or canvas - both  
conscious of the unconscious -



perhaps, made easier for we were often told to be quiet and try not to  
make, too many sudden movements - could lead to some...  
accidental transcendental clarity and peace don't you think?

There's a woman in  
Nanporo (Japan)  
Who lends an ear to her locals  
and their problems,  
Some even travel a great  
distance to off load.  
She weaves a quilt with  
their aches and groans,  
Each who touches  
their patch of woe,  
Is then unburdened.

There's a woman in Kano,  
(Nigeria)  
Who's laugh is so bright,  
It powers her street,  
She uses the electric pulses to create beat  
and anyone that passes her house,  
Can't help but dance in front of it.

There's a woman in Brunei  
Who paints and cuts a new deck of tarot,  
Each day, from dawn till dusk,  
Based on the person she believes  
needs them.

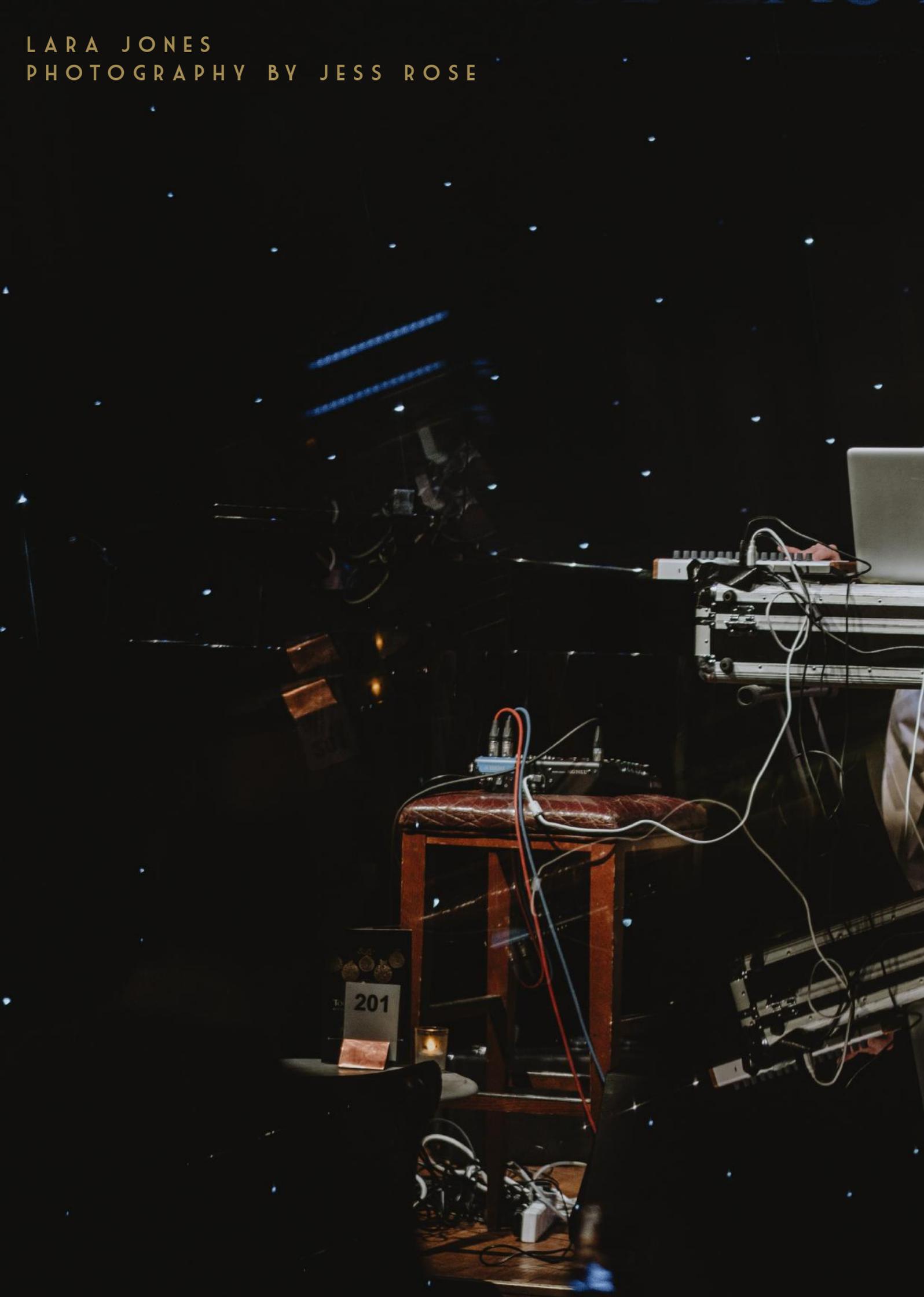
There's a woman, whichever way you look, who's ready to start mak-  
ing.....pure pleasant potential -  
ready to be unleashed.....

PETRA HALLER AND HVELIM KIM  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA GORIOVSKY





LARA JONES  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESS ROSE





# THE GENEROUS BEAUTY THAT IS HIROMI

INTERVIEW BY FIONA ROSS





PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARI AMITA



It is no secret to those who know me that Hiromi is a huge inspiration to me and having the opportunity to interview her about her new album, was an incredible honour and an invaluable chance to gain an insight into her processes and talk about her new album.

Hiromi's new album 'Silver Lining Suite' written for piano, two violins and cello is the first time she has recorded in Japan and with this instrumentation. Although I didn't really want to explore lockdown too much, it is hugely relevant to this album and as Hiromi is an artist who truly thrives from performing, I was very curious to see how she adapted to the situation.

*I was doing a bunch of shows at Blue Note Tokyo last year because I started this series called 'Save Live Music'. Most of the musicians who play there are international musicians and they had cancellations for almost four whole months where nobody could travel, so they had to remain closed and since my tour cancelled. I was like, what can I do, you know, to just keep the club going and open? Then we came up with this idea of doing a show and from August to September in 2020. I did 16 days and 32 shows solo.*

*We then started my second run in December for another four months and after that I wanted to do something else, to play in a different format. But all the musicians I played with in the past, lived overseas, so they couldn't travel again, so I had to really think hard - who do I want to play with?*

**What kind of instrumentation?**

*I remembered the time that I played with a symphonic orchestra in 2015 and I played with the new Japan Philharmonic. I thought of the concertmaster, the violin player, and he was very open to many kinds of different music and the vision he had towards music was really close to mine. He was really curious about improvisation and he was open to it. I called him in and said I'm thinking about doing something with strings, probably piano and a string quartet and that kind of struck me and he said that's a great idea and I'd love to be part of it.*

*OK, so I'm going to start writing the music and that's how it started!*

I have seen Hiromi perform live many times and her energy is truly electrifying. The music and emotions that she releases during her performances, is astounding. I asked her what she did with this extraordinary musical energy during the lockdown.

*I mean, my life changed completely and because I used to just go around the globe, like five times a year, I had to find the way to release my energy somehow. I have so much energy for performing. I was just thinking, what can I do under this situation, what are the options? And of course the only thing I could do was practice and write and I really enjoyed it. I mean, I always enjoy writing but for the first time*

**I FELT LIKE WRITING WAS SAVING MY LIFE BECAUSE I COULD RELEASE MY ENERGY AND I COULD FEEL THAT AT LEAST I'M CREATING SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING BORN RIGHT NOW.**

*It was just so worrying this brand new situation, because you don't even know what you're fighting against and you really feel isolated. Suddenly your life's taken so it was really difficult but I felt like whenever I was writing something, when I was creating something, **I felt like I wasn't defeated.***

I had read somewhere that Hiromi keeps a composition notebook with her at all times and has in fact has been writing down her compositions in a notebook for a long time:

*I first started writing when I was six years old and I always had passion for writing music. Sometimes it's just like melody, sometimes it's just a groove it's just what comes to me that very day.*

Fascinated by Hiromi's compositional notebooks, I asked her if she could talk a little bit about her writing process.

*It depends on the musicians, so for example when I play a duet, I try to leave as much space as I can because of the nature of a duet as I think it should be like 50/50. But for example for this album, because I was playing with a whole group of classical musicians, I wrote all the parts for them. Even for when I'm improvising - how they accompany - I wrote every single note for them. But I asked them - even though it's written, I want you to improvise with how you play. There is no dynamics written for my improvisation part, for example, because I never know how my journey takes me, so I just go with the flow and that's not really what you do in classical music. I might start really loud and then really soft and you have to accompany like that. So just listen and just come with me just like a rollercoaster. That's how I explained to them and I think they did beautifully.*

Hiromi is not wrong. The new album is stunning. But this was of no surprise to me, but I did wonder if she ever feels overwhelmed. She is a significant role model to so many, not just because of her technical brilliance as a composer and a pianist, but her sense of self and her artistry that clearly demonstrates someone who is happy in her skin and knows who she is and what she wants. I asked if she ever feels pressure.

*No I enjoy challenges. I just know and always feel that the time and energy that you use for creating something or building something is never spoiled, it's never wasted. The more you spend time on something, the more the challenges come but the challenges are always something that makes me just keep going as an artist. So I enjoy bumping into things that I can't play. I enjoy listening to amazing musicians who just wow me and there are so many musicians that are so inspiring and it really just pushes me to go in the right direction.*

I was initially drawn into Hiromi's music for its originality - I had never heard anything like it. The combination of simplicity and complexity with almost inhumane technical expertise and raw emotion and joy is something I had not experienced.

*Sometimes students ask me, how can you be original, how can you not sound like someone? I often talk about how babies start to talk, you know because baby's first learn language from their parents, from the people who are around them at the time right? So it starts from borrowed words in the beginning. You learn from listening. When you grow up you meet friends and you meet different groups of people and then you learn new language, a new way to speak. I mean sometimes, parents might not be happy about how you speak and that's exactly how it should be with music. I believe the more you speak and the more you learn...talk to people who are more experienced, educated and you get more confident about yourself and you can just speak - you know, be yourself, free - and then that's when you become yourself. So I think everybody can be unique. So first you start with something borrowed but you just keep playing that again and again and again then it will be yours someday. That's how I see things.*

There were so many questions I could have asked Hiromi, but I allowed myself to approach this interview differently to all my other interviews because I really just wanted to share a moment with her, her process - who she is. Hiromi's first piano teacher used to write on the first page of every new music book 'spend a life full of dreams' and to end my interview I simply asked her, what her dreams are now.

*My dream is being a better musician but being better means more experienced, being a better human being. I want to experience more things. I want to understand about others more, you know? Every year I feel I'm growing up, every day I learn something, I'm inspired by something. I want to be better musician and of course there is so much to do technically but like life you know? Being a musician is living life for me, so I just want to keep experiencing it, as a human being and as a musician and hopefully become better.*

'I NEVER KNOW HOW  
MY JOURNEY TAKES ME,  
SO I JUST GO WITH  
THE FLOW'



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARI AMITA

# 上原ひるみ





HANNAH HORTON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY





# JUTTA HIPPI

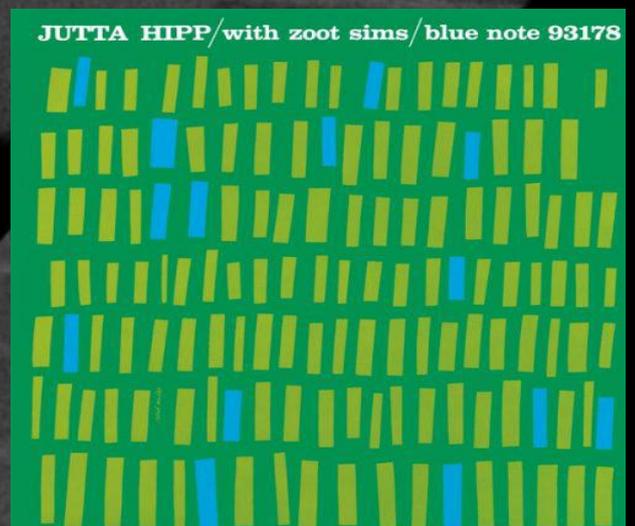
BY WENDY KIRKLAND

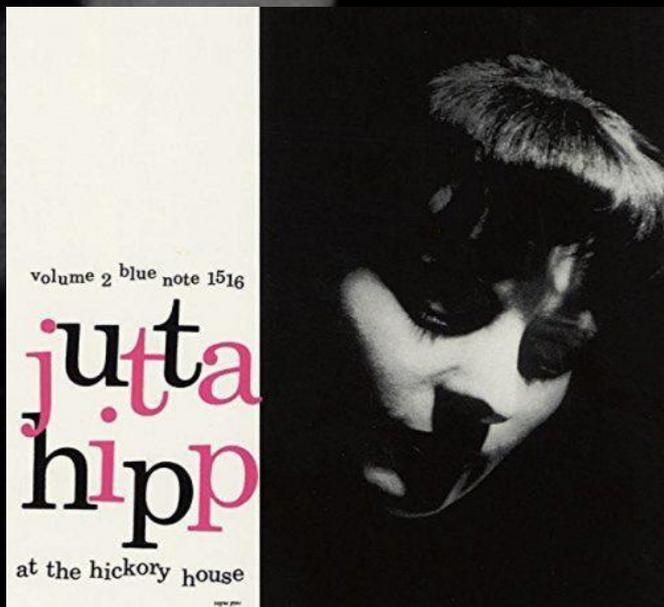
JUTTA HIPPI WAS A JAZZ PIANIST WHO WAS BORN IN GERMANY IN 1925. AS JAZZ WAS NOT APPROVED OF BY THE NAZIS, SHE WOULD LISTEN TO IT IN SECRET, RISKING A HIGH PENALTY, BUT LUCKILY ESCAPED DISCOVERY, USING THE TIME TO TRANSCRIBE MUSIC AT FRIENDS' GATHERINGS RATHER THAN SPENDING THE EVENINGS IN THE SAFETY OF THE FAMILY AIR RAID SHELTER.

Post-war she became a refugee, like so many others at the time, although her pianistic skills may have earned her money or food where otherwise she would have gone hungry. The history around this time is unclear, but it's a well known fact that musicians were able to support themselves in a way that others were not.

In 1948, she gave birth to a son, Lionel, named after Lionel Hampton. The baby's father was an African-American GI; but Hipp gave the child up for adoption as the father was forbidden to accept paternity because he was black. In 1951, Hipp worked with saxophonist Hans Koller, recording in 1952 in addition to working with other prominent jazz musicians such as Hungarian guitarist Atilla Zoller and German trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff.

She was officially 'discovered' in 1954 by jazz critic Leonard Feather, who oversaw her emigration to the United States, where she remained for the rest of her life, playing as resident pianist at New York's Hickory House club with drummer Ed Thigpen (later Oscar Peterson Trio's stalwart timekeeper) and bassist Peter Ind. She played at Newport Jazz Festival the same year as recording for Blue Note; two live albums recorded at the club with her trio and a further third and final album for her, featuring Zoot Sims.





With a swinging, percussive playing style influenced initially by Lennie Tristano, her playing has also been likened to a more minimal version of Horace Silver's, although Hipp is difficult to categorise. She uses tense and crunchy dissonances in some chords, coupled with comping rhythms considered edgy for the time. **She was a pioneer in this respect, as well as being highly unusual for being a female on the NY jazz scene.**

The Daily Telegraph, publishing her obituary in 2003, recounted a story of Art Blakey's deliberate shaming of her on stage, urging her to play piano with him and when she refused, saying she was drunk, physically dragged her to the piano then counted off a number much too fast for her to handle. He then addressed the audience, saying "Now you see why we don't want these Europeans coming over here and taking our jobs!".

Hipp played very little after this experience, returning to her first love of painting, as she preferred to stay out of the limelight; artwork **enabled her to be creative without the trauma of performance**, as she suffered from severe stage fright and used alcohol and smoking as crutches to relieve the panic.

Hipp never married and cut herself off from the music industry, re-emerging in 2000 when Blue Note records finally had an address to send her royalties to.

On listening to her recorded output, it's easy to see why **comparisons with Horace Silver** were made but her playing had a chiming quality as well as the unorthodox intervallic interplay one hears in Silver's playing. It's only a vague comparison and only considered necessary at the time because of her relative unknown status.

A few journalists have debated her reasons for retiring so soon into her career, and one muses that she did not fulfil her potential because she didn't 'stick with it', but to describe her retirement as a cop out without knowing the real factors is perhaps a little dismissive, bearing in mind the huge negative attitudes to women in music at that time.

For this author, one thing is for certain;

**WHEN HIPP'S STAR WAS IN THE ASCENDANT, IT SHONE BRIGHTLY AND NO AMOUNT OF SPECULATION ABOUT WHY HER CAREER WAS SO SHORT WILL EVER CHANGE THAT.**



LARA DE BEDLER AND THE LONDON GAY BIG BAND  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESS ROSE



E LAUTREC JAZZ C



# ASHAINE WHITE IN CONVERSATION WITH

# CELINE PETERSON AND BLACK LIVES IN MUSIC



**W**e are thrilled to partner with Celine Peterson and Black Lives in Music in our new podcast series 'Knocking Down The Door' platforming inspirational black women. The title was inspired by Ashaine's White interview with Angelika Been-er who said: *'Do the work, rise to the occasion as much as you can and then shoot your shot! You'd be surprised who might give you a chance, especially if you are black and especially if you are woman. This is a good time for us to kick in the door.'*

You can listen to the full conversation above, but we wanted to share some excerpts of the interview with you here.

**I'M REALLY SUPER EXCITED OBVIOUSLY TO HAVE YOU GUYS AS A PARTNER FOR WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA AND I WANTED TO ASK WHY DID YOU THINK IT WAS A SOMETHING THAT YOU WANTED TO GET INVOLVED IN?**

*CP: The idea just spoke to me because I think that now more than ever, for me personally, the importance of having a platform where there are black voices - and black voices in music, black voices in jazz music and jazz media are amplified and it's these stories that are being told. It's so important and I know that you know, growing up and thinking about working with people like me or hearing from people like me, that look like me or may have shared similar experiences, that was not something that was necessarily always readily available in the ways that I was looking for it. So to have an opportunity to be a part of something that will hopefully create that opportunity for other people is deeply important to me.*

*RW: From my perspective, I hear everything that Celine had to say on that question and I echo that but I think for me there's something in addition which is super important. The last 18 months, which has been a really difficult time right across the globe, some positivity has come out of that and of course, it's the zeit-geists, the awareness of black experience and that's around the world but I think one of the other positive things that has come from this time, has been the notion of collaboration and working together. I think that's been something that's always been very difficult for the global majority and how do marginalised communities effectively come together? How do we make it easiest for ourselves to come together and connect with an agenda that we all identify with. It's so important to have voices in the room, to feel mutual support, to work through our problems together and to find desirable outcomes. To come up with actions that effect those desirable outcomes and I think that's one of the amazing things about all of this and working with Celine, working with women in jazz media - I think it's just amazing so, it's a no brainer.*

AW: I think for me personally, I love having people that I look up to and I try to surround myself with people that really inspire me to do better, in whatever I do. I want this podcast, for me as a young black woman in jazz, I want to sit here and be inspired by hearing an inspired story, by telling that story of your hardships or the best moments of your career and inspired by the coming together of voices and

**KNOWING THAT IF WE ALL SPEAK IN UNISON, IT WILL BE LOUDER AND IT WILL BE HEARD.**

**SO, LET'S GO INTO A BIT OF BACKGROUND ON THE BOTH OF YOU. CELINE YOU'RE BASED IN CANADA - HOW IS CANADA RIGHT NOW? HOW'S IT**

*CP: There's some exceptional talent here, there really is. Last night was actually my first time hearing live music and my third time overall since the first quarantine. It felt so good. I was hearing a young vocalist here name Jocelyn Barth play and a fantastic pianist who's very seasoned in our Canadian jazz scene, David Restivo and it reminded me of all the exceptional talent we have here. There's a very long list of really exciting talent here in Canada and of course not enough venues to put people in, not enough opportunities, not enough opportunities for people who are just starting out... there's a couple of small rooms here and then there's maybe one jazz club, so to speak, in a few major cities in Canada and then the rest is smaller bars. So you either get that or you have to be able to fill the massive 1200 seaters... I find that some people don't necessarily take the time to think outside the box and think, ok well if this one individual is clearly not established enough to fill this room, how many people can I bring together who are local who can do it? The most exciting thing and encouraging thing is that there is a plethora of talent and then the biggest hurdle is figuring out how do we nurture it, how do we help them?*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRACEY NOLAN



RW: It's an ongoing issue which unfortunately, I feel gets worse. I'm afraid to say, just because the landscape ecology is really not supporting an upward trajectory in enabling young talent to thrive and to really aspire and to be able to believe and actually be able to achieve as they want to. So many venues have just gone by the wayside and I'm sorry to say that I'm worried about what the landscape will look like once we are really fully out of this pandemic, to see what is standing. So many jazz venues, particularly when you get out of London are volunteer supported and there's going to be real problems.

**AW: I WAS IN MY ROOM SINGING TO MYSELF AND I JUST DON'T HAVE THE ENERGY EXCHANGE THAT YOU NEED FROM GETTING YOURSELF TO A LIVE SHOW AND REALLY BEING THERE... I'M HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE AND THOSE GRASSROOTS VENUES WILL HOPEFULLY BRING BACK PEOPLE. BUT I GUESS WE CAN ONLY WAIT AND SEE...**

CP: I've had a lot of conversations with friends of mine or people I work with, or both, and what's really unfortunate is, the beauty of this music for most people - and I am speaking not as a performer but from a performance standpoint - is this is what you're born to do right? This is not an option. It's not a choice. No one chooses to live a life where you're not necessarily able to feel comfortable in how you're living because you don't know what's coming when. But right now I'm thinking, OK, the audience has this desire, this really strong need to be in the room and to be hearing this music and to be entertained in person. But it's not acceptable that these rates at certain clubs have not changed since the 60s! So, I think the conversation that needs to happen now - one of the conversations - that really needs to happen now is how do we get people to understand that?

**We need to figure out ways to support the artists and some of these venues need to figure out a different way to pay them.**

RW: We've got our report coming out soon and actually we've been looking at all sorts of things including discrepancies in pay between people of colour and white musicians and the correlation between qualifications and white musicians and people of colour as well, so there are all sorts of issues. I think there is a big disconnect between the public the audience more generally and the plight of artists. It's a given that you want to stand up there and play to your hearts content and like money doesn't come into it, like it's not a problem! That you might not be able to afford your rent or pay your mortgage or put food on your table and I think promoters need to be sensitive to that.

I think promoters have got to show more love when it comes to that - everyone's got to eat, everyone's got to survive. More generally we've got to look at how we are programming, making sure programming is representative. That sometimes means taking a risk and promoters need to take risks, that's really important, and unfortunately they don't always do that, to the detriment of the audience experience. They're missing out on some great artists and obviously to the detriment of the artists themselves who have been precluded from being involved because they're not quite well known enough. That's not how it was historically you know, but now more and more we are seeing that sort of direction of travel, so I think these are all really, really important considerations.

We need to make sure that we were able to future proof the success of the art form in future because. When we think about jazz, everyone's got a different idea in their head so if we are only able to see one type of jazz, because promoters are only able to take a risk on one form of jazz, then we are missing out on a whole rainbow of colour in terms of the art form. So I think that's a super, super pertinent question.

**We need to make sure that we are able to future proof the success of the art form.**



MSJ PHOTOGRAPHY

I WANT TO ACTUALLY ASK YOU GUYS BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY, WE KIND OF KNOW YOUR BACKGROUND IN MUSIC AND WHO YOU'VE COME FROM, BUT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHAT INSPIRED YOU AND WHAT SHOWED YOU THAT YOU COULD YOUR PATH.

*CP: Honestly the thing that started me in this particular area of my work, was a wonderful bass player **Dave Young** who worked with my dad and he was the one who said, the things you talk about that you want to do and the things that you're passionate about and the talk about the discrepancies... you talk about wanting to find your own voice - **just do it, just do it!** Here's how you start, you're going to represent me. That's what started it. I have to give him that credit because it meant so much to me that someone, first of all of his calibre, was willing to trust me with what I saw was a huge responsibility and being able to work with Dave and learn from him, opened so many doors for me.*

It's actually also the reason I started working with a dear friend, who I now work quite closely with, **Molly Johnson**, because she was starting a festival out of her feeling that there wasn't a festival for local artists. We definitely have a Jazz Festival, more than one here, but it wasn't giving her what she wanted to see. She sent this fantastic email to close friends of hers, artists in the community and said this is what I'm doing, this is why I'm doing it and I would love for you to be involved. She sent it to Dave and Dave said you have expressed the same kind of concerns and issues, you should send Molly an email. I did and working with her has been so inspiring because:

she doesn't just talk about knocking down the door - she kicks it in and I love that about her.

RW: I guess I just felt I had no options if I'm honest with you Ash. I mean I grew up in a pretty challenging part of London, which at the time was really not great economically speaking, so a lot of high unemployment and a lot of high crime. We all know about the organisations like the National Front and the British National Party but I mean they were right on our doorstep when I was growing up where I lived. I grew up in a very challenging background I guess - single parent family, we really didn't have a lot of money and I was very lucky in as much as while I talk about those dark old days there were some great things that came out of that. We had free music education and so when I was twelve I was given the opportunity to learn an instrument and not having been given anything by anyone outside of my own family up until that point, to be given a musical instrument that was so shiny and lessons and sheet music and we didn't have to pay?!

You know I'm a former musician, but we all know, as musicians, that there's definitely a gene in us that just says you have to keep practising, you have to keep doing what you're doing. You have this inner urge just to get better and I definitely had that and that transcended any concerns or thoughts I had about race or whether I thought music was for me, for someone who looked like me and any of those concerns just went out the door.

AW: I've always found that giving focus to kids that have loads of different options, whether it's that they're really multi talented - you can sing, you can dance, you can act you - if there is a kid that's from a poorer background or has those options to go in, you know, live that life on the other side of the law or whatever they want to do, they have the option of being a guitar player or picking up a saxophone or being a rapper or writing songs or being producer and telling them that, you know, this is you want to do, you can do this. Then they make that decision and they're like, okay, she believes in me, he believes in me, they believe in me, I can do this. I think that's really, really important for kids and another reason why I want to start this podcast because hearing that story, hearing your stories, there's loads of kids that probably didn't know that you can just email people and ask them things and that they might help you. I definitely didn't know that you could go and say this is what I want to do and somebody will be like, OK, let me help you get that, you know?

I want for this podcast to be that, and from somebody that looks like me as well, which is all the more important.

**WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Women in Jazz  
Media

**CELINE PETERSON AND BLACK LIVES IN MUSIC**  
PRESENTS

**'KNOCKING DOWN THE DOOR'**

**A NEW PODCAST SERIES  
PLATFORMING INSPIRATIONAL  
BLACK WOMEN IN THE JAZZ  
INDUSTRY**

**PRODUCED AND HOSTED  
BY  
ASHAINE WHITE**



PHOTO BY STEVEN TILLER



PHOTO BY TATIANA GORIOVSKY

IFELAYO  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESS ROSE







# LARA JONES

## JAZZ IS A MINDSET

BY LARA EIDI

The Women In Jazz Media event drew names from across the UK and International Jazz Scene this past November, and what a glorious festival it was! Each night featured a different artist, and wonderful photo exhibits, artist and music workshops were held. I felt personally privileged to be part of it as a performer, and as an audience member, because it was a festival that for the very first time, highlighted not only women in Jazz Music, but ALL women.

Inclusivity and Diversity are two names that get thrown around a lot in our day and age, begging the question of what it actually means to be held either. Rest assured Fiona Ross, the driving force behind Women In Jazz Media fearlessly and lovingly does not hold back when it comes to showcasing the entire array of wonderful women in music and the arts.

Such a woman, Lara Jones, was a person I had admired for a while now, and I simply felt her particular involvement in the Jazz Festival needed to be shouted from the rooftops. On the 18th of November, Improviser, Saxophonist and Musician Lara curated the LGBTQ+ event for the London Jazz Festival. Together with trumpeter and improviser Charlotte Keefe who led the London Gay Big Band's special women only formation for that evening, Jones demonstrated how as a core team member of Women In Jazz Media, she went far and beyond providing a safe space for everyone involved.

**When we spoke over Zoom, it was heartwarming to see how unbelievably dedicated and articulate Lara is about shaping one's identity in the music industry and it's not what one would expect.**

The battle for persons of the LGBTQ community is still very much present. According to Lara, *'we've come a long way, but there's still room for improvement. That's where the music comes in'*. She certainly has every single incentive and the impressive background to be at the forefront of her scene.

She is an award winning saxophonist, improviser, producer, composer & collaborator currently the recipient of Help Musician's UK's Peter Whittingham Jazz Award, Jerwood Arts Jazz Encounter Fellow and Manchester Jazz Festival's Level Up. She is a member of avant garde trio J Frisco. Having performed at several renowned venues including the Vortex Jazz Club, London Jazz Festival Kings Place, 'Jazz in the Round', Cafe Oto and Servant Jazz Quarters; she has supported artists including Courtney Pine, Novelist, Roller Trio, Portico Quartet, Laura Jurd and Elliot Galvin. She's collaborated with Archipelago, Shiva Feshareki, Seb Rochford, DJ Shlomo and Cleveland Watkiss and performed around Europe at events including Sofar Sounds, London Jazz Festival, Gateshead International Jazz Festival, Manchester Jazz Festival, Tubax International Festival Munich and Cheltenham Jazz Festival.

Her talents extend beyond the realm of a performer, and as a composer she's participated in projects Postcards from Eyemouth (Dr. Jacob Thompson-Bell and Dr. Nick Katuszonek) and Peninsular Arts 'Music of Motions and Presence' (Dr. Federico Visi and Marco Fratini). She worked on a commission for theatre company 'Riptide' in which she composed and recorded the music for an immersive app experience available on the apple app store 'Sonder' and recently composed the music for Kahlo Theatre's new theatre production 'The Other Side'.

Her passion for the arts and identity through the arts is perhaps what impresses me the most about Lara. During our interview, it became clear how sure she is of herself and how much she has overcome and achieved, thanks to her pure talent and stellar moral ground. Her attitude towards the otherwise patriarchal world of jazz, albeit with its exceptions, is wonderfully honest. She is adamant about making female voices heard in the community, and if her curated night celebration for women in the LGBTQ + community is not enough to go by, her interview is.

**Lara, it's a real pleasure to connect with you! It has been an incredible experience to share a week long celebration of women in music, supported by Women In Jazz Media. Each night celebrated the diversity and inclusivity of female artists, photographers, musicians, writers and painters. I was particularly blown away by the event you curated, a night celebrating the artists of the LGBTQ community. How did that come about for you?**

I've known Fiona Ross, the founder of Women in Jazz Media, for quite some time now and she got me involved with curating some events for Women in Jazz Media. She asked if I would curate a night for the EFG London Jazz Festival and naturally I chose artists from the queer scene. I think it's important to platform people that are less visible. They are all incredible artists who happen to also be LGBTQ.

**What defines being an artist in this day and age for you? How have things changed in particular in the UK Jazz Scene?**

I guess how we receive music has changed a lot over the years. We've seen a huge rise in streaming and social media platforms which has of course changed the music industry as a whole. It's a noisy place to be! **But it's the same as it's always been, work hard, make honest music and support your community... and get yourself on Bandcamp!**

**You have a really unique presence on the UK Jazz Scene as someone who completely stands out on her own, both musically and on a personal level. I'd love to know about the journey that got you to where you are today, as such a unique artist?**

I think we are all unique, I think it's important to embrace that. It would be wonderful if I stood out less. I'm far from being the only LGBTQ artist in the jazz and improvised music scene, and I've been inspired by so many incredible artists including Ethel Waters, Pauline Oliveros, The Guest Stars, Arca, Billy Tipton, there are just so many.

My hope is that more young women and other gender minorities keep on taking up more space in the scene. With that shift, we'd see a broader range of sounds and approaches to jazz, coming from those of us who are perhaps less visible at the moment. I'm happy to stand out if it helps, in any way, to share the message that anyone can take up space, and there is and always has been lots of us doing so. For me personally, I knew as soon as I stepped foot onto the jazz course at my College that I might not be able to conform to the expectations that are set for young women.

It changed for me when I started playing with Megan Roe, Jemma Freese and we formed our trio J Friso. It offered us all a musical outlet to create in a totally free, open and accepting space. Ever since, I've collaborated with lots of incredible artists who share a similar musical vision. For me it was discovering and exploring free improvisation, composition and electronics that have shaped my musical voice and I am grateful to all the musicians that came before (and after) me who inspired me to do what I do.

**I've seen the many posts on your social media profiles quite wittingly asking the audience: Is it jazz? What is Jazz to you, Lara?**

***Everything and nothing.***





**Musically speaking, listening to your solo album in particular, it's no surprise that you've taken on quite a role as an improviser creating sonic landscapes that could easily provide the backdrop to a film, a performance and more.**

**What does it feel like to be a genrefluid improviser, musically ?**

I love to use field recordings in my work; instead of collecting memories in pictures, I like to collect memories in sound recordings and use these as the basis and structures of my work. I just love to make what I feel in the moment and put it out into the world when I feel I've spent enough time exploring it. I think a lot of artists work this way and leave it to the listeners and audiences to decide how, where and if they want to define it. It's fun to open up those conversations though; I love to use humour through my social media to show people I don't mind how you define what I do and it doesn't really matter, **just as long as you're always making what feels true to you.**

**You grew up in Manchester, and then moved to London. Was there a particular life experience that made you certain of the musical and personal direction you were headed in?**

I actually grew up in Bath and then Scotland, then near Reading. I moved to Leeds to study. My experiences and connections in Leeds really helped shape who I am as an artist, and I'm really grateful for that time.

I met my wife through a Northern Jazz festival and it made sense for me to move to London to be with her and set up our life together. It was definitely a big step out of my comfort zone, but I've been made to feel really welcome in the London scene and have had the opportunity to work with some incredible artists since being here. We still spend a good amount of time up North, and it'll always have a really special place in my heart.

**What advice would you give to young members of the LGBTQ music community?**

*Never let anyone shame you, or shape you,  
or make you feel like you should have to  
explain who you are. Take up the space you  
deserve and find people who will  
support you, and support them in turn.*

Lara has recently released her brand new single Upside Down on forward thinking record label No Such Thing Records. It comes as the first single from her new EP 'Flow' set to be released in February 2022 and is the result of the Peter Whittingham Jazz Award.

She will also be touring with her new EP 'Flow' which debuts in February, with the EP's feature single 'Pillow(rework)' set to come out late January.

Do yourself a favour folks.  
Continue to support artists  
like Lara Jones.

**SHE'S A BIG VOICE THAT NEEDS  
TO BE EVEN LOUDER.**



## LARA JONES

### FLOW

UK TOUR 2022

FEB 24TH	SERVANT JAZZ QUARTERS	LONDON
FEB 25TH	THE CUBE MICROPLEX	BRISTOL
FEB 27TH	HYDE PARK BOOK CLUB	LEEDS
FEB 28TH	THE PEER HAT	MANCHESTER



VIMALA ROWE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESS ROSE







PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT BANKS

**G**uest writer, [Paulette Jackson](#), is the Founder/CEO of SCORP Radio Network and Jazz Zone Radio, host of “The Classic Soul Music Café”, “The Jazz Zone” and Center Stage” radio shows and a Voiceover Artist for her company, Ms. Music’s Voice. She is also the author of several books including her “The Music In Me”, “The Music Through the Storm” and her latest release ‘My Test(imony)’.

She attended and graduated from the Cleveland School of the Arts as a Dance and Vocal Music Major, 1983-1987 and attended Master Voiceover Classes at Such A Voice, based in Burlington, VT and her love has always been music and entertainment and Paulette has worked in many areas of the business. She continues to work on various artistic and creative ventures and is releasing two more books in the coming new year. We are very happy to publish Paulette’s article on [Tahirah Memory](#).

# TAHIRAH MEMORY

## WHAT TRUE ARTISTRY IS ALL ABOUT

### BY

## PAULETTE JACKSON

I was introduced to Ms. Tahirah Memory's music a few years ago on social media. At that time her debut album, "**Pride**" (2015) had just released but I saw a video of her singing live with fellow artist, Jarrod Lawson and was blown away by how rich and angelic her voice is so, of course I had to do more digging into this phenomenally talented vocalist.

I wanted to see more videos of her singing live and was not disappointed so, I found her "**Pride**" album online and began listening to it very carefully with my headsets (best way to listen to music) and the melodies topped with her smooth vocals took me over the edge, in an effective way. "**Pride**," to me, is jazz and soul wrapped up in an amazing package, a gift for all ages for all times. This album (CD) is one that has become part of my collection and should be in yours as well. Now, since the release of "**Pride**," Ms. Memory has performed live all over the world and continues to mesmerize audiences from all walks of life. That is the kind of pure music that Tahirah creates, she pours her heart and soul into each tune, and it is clearly heard.

Each time I listened, I heard something even more wonderful than the first. Fast forward, in 2019, Tahirah Memory released another fantastic, more soulful album, "**Asha**". From the first time I heard it, I fell in love with it, had my favorites already picked out but, make no mistake that this entire project is wonder and amazing. Her vocals just keep getting better because, she oozes love of life and music and beautifully intertwine the two, brilliantly.

**They say that artists express themselves through life experiences and project that through their craft, well then it must be true because Ms. Tahirah Memory does just that through her gift of music and song.**

One of the things I have come to love about Tahirah is that she does not have to try hard, no extra frills, no unnecessary filters because she does not need to do all of that, her voice and her passion come through in unfiltered and beautiful ways. She will stand the test of time. Please check out Ms. Memory and all her wonderful music and learn more about this gifted artist! You will not be sorry, and you can thank me later.





WHO  
WHO IN



**WOMEN  
INSPIRE**

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE

JAS  
KAYSER

BY ROGER WILSON  
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS,  
BLACK LIVES IN MUSIC

**BLACK  
LIVES IN  
MUSIC**



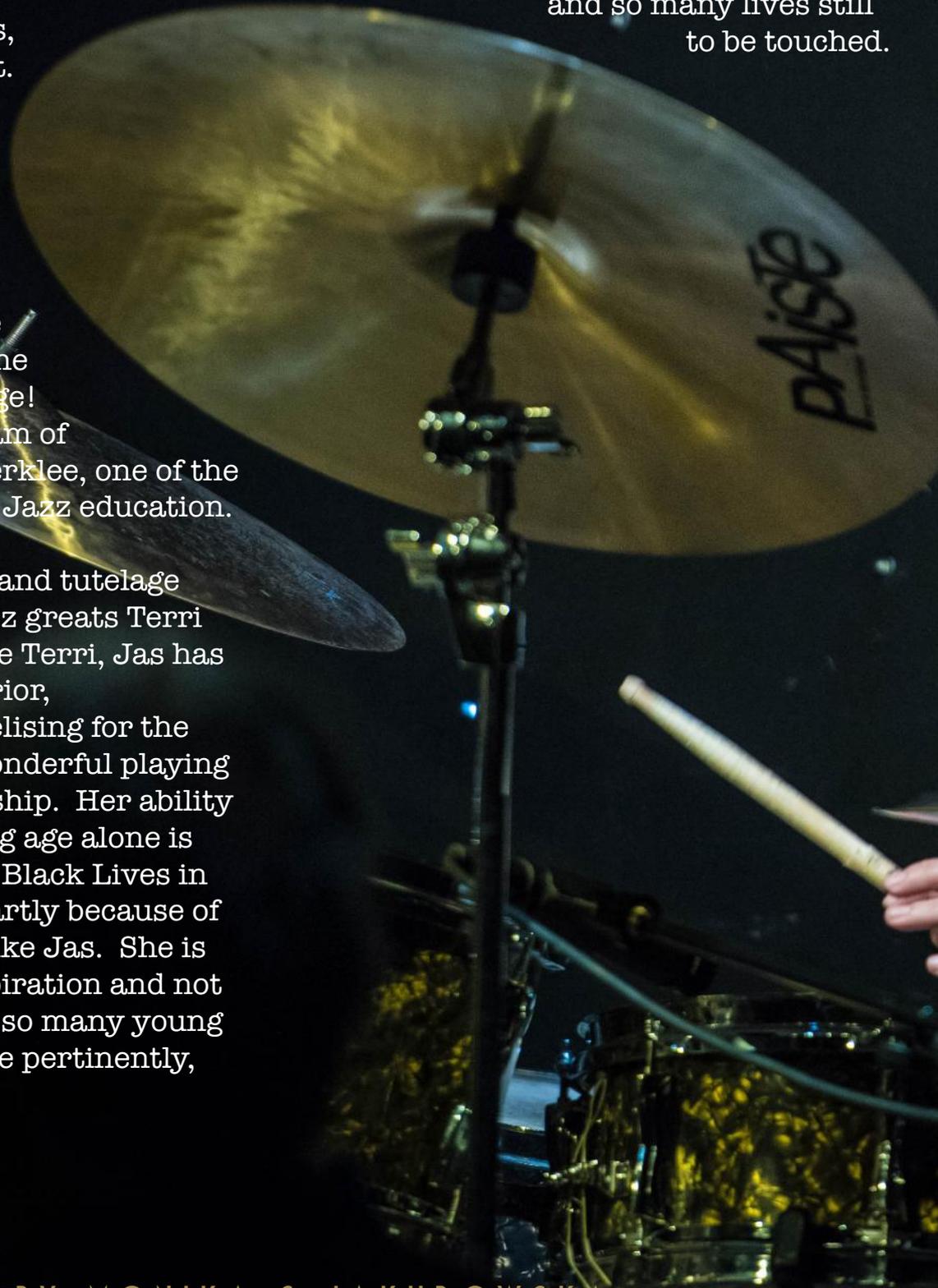
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

**J**as Keyser is one of those rare musical talents that come along once in a generation, and knocks everyone off their feet! Her name has been on people's lips for a few years now. Very much like a weather forecast telling you of a storm coming, you may not yet have heard her play, but you knew Jas was on her way!

When I first heard Jas, she did not disappoint. Her effortless ability to lock in the groove while driving an ensemble with boundless energy are now well known and, I'm sure will soon become legendary – and yet she has not long left college! When I say college, I am of course referring to Berklee, one of the great powerhouses of Jazz education.

Under the mentoring and tutelage of one of the living jazz greats Terri Lyne-Carrington. Like Terri, Jas has indeed become a warrior, crusading and evangelising for the music through her wonderful playing and jazz ambassadorship. Her ability to inspire at her young age alone is something to behold. Black Lives in Music was founded partly because of inspirational people like Jas. She is without doubt an inspiration and not just to me, but also to so many young Black people and more pertinently, young Black women.

Young Black women who are desperately trying to find themselves as they make their way through life. They will no doubt tread the hard worn road of life travelled by so many young Black women before them. That road keeps them in a single lane filled with hurdles – and all on the basis of gender and colour of their skin. It's been amazing to see how much Jas has already achieved. There are many chapters left in the story of her career and so many lives still to be touched.





*' JAS HAS INDEED  
BECOME A  
WARRIOR '*

# WOMEN WHO INSPIRE

TATIANA GORILOVSKY  
AND

MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

Working with the National Jazz Archives, we were absolutely thrilled to be able to facilitate the first female photographers to ever be included in the National Jazz Archive.

Tatiana and Monika selected a stunning range of photos that demonstrate the beauty of the jazz world - and in line with our ultimate goal, the photo selection (just under 100 photos) is gender balanced and diverse. A huge congratulations to Monika and Tatiana for making history!



NATIONAL  
JAZZ  
ARCHIVE

TOULOUSE LAUTREC JAZZ CLUB



TOULOUSE LAUTREC JAZZ CLUB



# WOMEN WHO INSPIRE TATIANA GORILOVSKY

## Women in Jazz



A CALENDAR FOR ANY YEAR AND EVERY MOOD

Tatiana Gorilovskiy  
PHOTOGRAPHY

*'I'm honoured that my pictures are included in the photo collection of the National Jazz Archive. Honestly speaking, I've never divided music and photography on the basis of the gender, race or anything else. But I'm sure that women's eyes can see, capture and add more beauty and creativity to the the photo collection. I'll try!'*

Born in Russia, Tatiana Gorilovskiy is an award winning freelance photographer based in London. She started to photograph jazz musicians around 2008 in Moscow and continued after moving to London with her family in 2015. Tatiana's pictures have been published in Jazzwise magazine, The Guardian, The Times, Financial Times, Time Out and many other printed and digital media. She is the winner of several photographic contests and her photographs have been exhibited in Moscow, Stuttgart and London. Tatiana loves to convey the atmosphere of the gigs with creative shots which use long exposure and multiple exposure. She also often photographs in the studio or outside to create portraits for different promotional purposes and album covers.

Tatiana's Covid innovative lockdown project, a 'Women in Jazz' calendar, presents 125 black and white portraits of female jazz musicians with the QR codes leading to the music for each one.



ALINA BZHEZHINSKA BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY

# WOMEN WHO INSPIRE MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA

*'I am so humbled and honoured! It means a lot to me that our work gets to people and it's appreciated'*

Born in Suwalki, north eastern Poland into an artistic family, Monika S Jakubowska was clearly destined to be an artist. Her mother was a singer and with a bassist for a father, who is also a painter and photographer, Monika took her first photos at the age of 4, always carrying a light meter around her neck and along with her father's camera.

Driven by the desire to change the world, Monika moved to the UK in 2006 with an idea of becoming a photojournalist/war photographer as she 'wanted to change the world for better, by images, giving voice to those who suffer the most but remain unheard'

Instead of going to war - jazz happened. Monika went back to her roots, where she felt sense of belonging and soon started co-working with London Jazz News as a contributor photographer. Since then she has closely working with London Jazz News, Women in Jazz Media, National Youth Jazz Orchestra and numerous bands and artists. Published in The Times, The Guardian, The Independent, The Financial Times, Jazzwise and many other prestigious music magazines and portals, Monika is the in-house photographer for Kings Place and is also the only female in house photographer and the world-renowned Ronnie Scott's.





LANC

S

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE



SINI KKA  
GELAND

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MORTEN KROGVOLD

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE

# SINIKKA LANGELAND

BY NICK LEA

The Norwegian folk singer and kantele player, Sinikka Langeland, has been presenting her very personal artistic vision in a fascinating series of albums of albums for ECM in which she has utilised a variety of settings to enhance the stories she tells.

From her albums with her quintet, *Starflowers* (2007) and *The Land That Is Not* (2011) featuring Arve Henriksen on trumpet and the saxophones of Trygve Seim, *The Half-Finished Heaven* (2015) that featured a quartet including the viola of Lars Anders Tomter with whom she recorded *Maria's Song* (2009) to the sublime *The Magical Forest* that sees the quintet joined by the singers of the Trio Mediæval in a work that is both timeless and contemporary. However, with the release of her latest album, *Wolf Rune*, Langeland has stepped out and produced a solo album for solo kantele and voice that has a beauty and purity that is uniquely her own.

Born in Kirkenær in south-eastern Norway in 1961, Sinikka first studied piano, guitar and contemporary folksong. She discovered the 39-string kantele in 1981 after being told about the instrument by her Finnish mother, and after further studies in Paris and Oslo became fascinated by the traditional songs and music from the Finnskogen region of Norway. Having decided to focus solely on the kantele as her main instrument and with her deepening interest in combining the traditional with the present, Sinikka expanded her repertoire to encompass folk hymns, shamanistic rune songs and traditional dance pieces along with her own compositions.

For those that have been following the kantele player's recordings for ECM, a solo album seemed inevitable if a long time coming, so when I had the opportunity to talk to Sinikka about both *Wolf Rune* and her instruments I asked her how the solo album came to fruition.

*"First of all, Manfred asked me at Rainbow studios, when we mixed the Starflowers album, if I would like to make a solo album and also compose and play some instrumental pieces" explained Sinikka. "The idea has been growing during the years since then and I now trust more and more in the music and my playing without expressing myself through my voice. I also really like solo performances and albums where you can meet one voice and one person's landscape. And of course, since the kantele is a very soft instrument it is easier to get space for the small sounds and improvisations when all alone, and also the special way of the old improvisational style that may be only for the kantele. I find it very interesting and challenging to see what can be done on both the small instruments and the concert-kantele."*

With the ability in the studio to capture all the small sounds and subtle nuances of the kantele, the material on *Wolf Rune* has been very carefully chosen and well balanced over the course of the album. How did you go about selecting the songs to record, I ask? *"Thank you"*, comes the modest reply.

*"Since the solo album idea has been with me for a long time, I have been trying out different ways of approaching it but since I am a storyteller, with instrumental music or songs with texts, I ended building it up around the idea of the panteisme meeting the mysteries of the other spiritual thinkers and poets like Meister Eckhart and now Jon Fosse and how the music connected."*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MORTEN KROGVOLD



*The panteisme in Finnskogen is linked with the rune songs and the 5 string improvisations. The hymns and most of the poems are linked to the more mystic part of Christianity.”*

The beauty and sheer range of tones and timbres heard on the album come from Lange-land’s choice of which kantele to play, so I’m interested to find out if Sinikka has a specific sound in mind when arranging the song, or does the song dictate which instrument to play?

*“I mainly use the big concert-kantele when there are many changes of keys and more contemporary ways of arranging and improvising. I choose the smaller ones when I use an older way of playing and improvising. I also think about what atmosphere I want in the piece, different sounds come because of the different types of strings, and use of bow, etc. Also, one of the kanteles has tuning screws of wood that gives a very nice sound that I feel suits sacred music.*

*And it is also nice to play two at the same time, often then the concert-kantele and one of the smaller instruments.”*

While Wolf Rune is her first solo recording, Sinikka recorded an album, *Maria’s Song*, for ECM that was released in 2009 that also featured some pieces for solo kantele. So, I ask Sinikka if she felt her approach to the instrument and playing solo had changed between recordings?

*“Using a small 15 string kantele on Maria’s Song was a cautious small step since the previous Folktune and Bach projects had been just voice (religious folk hymns) and organ (Bach). I tried improvising with the big concert- kantele too, but my experience was that if you have older than Bach style of playing, singing (small kanteles with 5-15 string has its playing rooted in medieval style) it works better with Bach since he also builds his music on older traditions and psalms.*

*Then the recording *The Half-Finished Heaven* was a huge step on the road to make and play more instrumental pieces. It was planned like a solo album but Manfred understood that it was too early for me when I said I missed my voice, so he said, ‘why don’t you let Lars Anders on viola be your voice?’, but I started to trust and feel more and more that I could express myself also with instrumental music.”*

A relatively unusual instrument to hear, the kantele seems to have a way of fitting in a variety of musical settings from Sinikka’s wonderful solo recordings, the classical work on Maria’s Song and with her jazz quintet with Arve Henriksen, Trygve Seim, Anders Jormin and Markku Ounaskari, so I was keen to learn how she became interested in the kantele and decided to make it her instrument of choice. Without hesitation Sinikka says:

*“Yes, I love that the kantele, at least the big concert-kantele is an instrument that can be used in many kinds of music. My mother, who was born in Karelen in Finland, talked about it when I was a child, and she suggested that I should get one. In 1981, I think, we took the boat from Stockholm to Åbo in Finland and asked in a music shop. But it was not popular at that time, so first he said no, but after a while he took us into the back room of the store and there in a cupboard it was hidden. I bought it and the adventure started. But it was quite difficult so to learn at first, and it was after getting an offer of a 3-month tour in Sweden that I really started to get some lessons in Helsinki and practise. I played the guitar also but felt that it is difficult to really play something new on that. On kantele everything sounded new to me, even the simplest things, and it mirrors my soul and roots of course so I ended up being a kantele player. It is also fun now that I also have workshops on Sibelius Academy in Helsinki because I play it so differently from the Finnish players.”*

One of the aspects of the kantele is that it has a remarkably broad range and sound palette, and in the hands of a musician like Sinikka is incredibly expressive, so I ask if she can tell me about her instruments and what makes it so unique.

*“The small 5 and 15 string kanteles are played ‘upside down’. It is said that now we think that the music goes from lower to higher and that the scales correspond with from down and up, but that in earlier times you could think that low was up and the scale goes down to ‘higher’ tones” she explains. “So, on the modern big 39 string concert-kantele the bass is down now, but earlier they played all the kanteles with the high strings close to your body, think about the guitar, it would say the thickest strings as number 1 or the piano would have the highest notes and it makes you think differently. You also pick one finger on each hand after each other, for example, left thumb, right finger, number 2, left finger, 3 right hand, finger 4... also pick one finger on each hand after each other, for example, left thumb, right finger number 2, left finger, 3 right hand, finger 4.. this is also strange in the beginning ... they say it combines the two halves of the brain differently. Five tones are a kind of centre in all the oldest tradition and improvisation.*

*“The sound of the kantele is quite unique sound, and I think it must be due to the box and that it is mainly played by the fingers. The big concert kantele has 5 and 1/2 octaves, and that’s almost the range you use most on a piano. The low strings, the bass strings are so great, low and clear at the same time. Paul Salminen developed the tuning system so you can get all the keys, and that asks for virtuoso building as my kantele-builder Hannu Koistinen does, to make it tuned and then stay in tune. He and his father are really masters and do also improve and experiment all the time to make better instruments.”*

In addition to the natural sound of the kantele, Sinikka also plays her instruments with a bow increasing both the expressiveness and timbre of the instrument. Accepting the complement, Sinikka gives a modest reply

*“Thank you, I use just a normal violin bow. You could say I am, all the time, trying to find contrasts to the more normal ‘harp’ playing, and trying to find other colours. I also get inspired by the musicians that I play with of course, Anders Jormin has quite a fantastic way of using the bow on his bass.”*

In parallel with her kantele playing is Sinikka's singing, so I ask if she considers herself a singer first or an instrumentalist or are the two inextricably linked? *"Well, I think I always will be a storyteller, but I really like to go on experimenting with the instrument. Both are linked I think, at the moment at least."*

What draws many listeners to Langeland's music is her very personal and individual use of traditional folk music, so I am interested to learn where Sinikka draws her inspiration from, and how she endeavours to make her music sound so contemporary? Pausing a moment Sinikka says, *"My source is something that wants to come out, and I like the old tunes so much and they can be so strong in their simplicity."*

*"In fact, I decided to use two traditional elements that I really love very much as part of my music, my musical DNA if you like, and also use this in my newly composed music. These are:*

- 1. The 5-6 tones from old kanteletrad.*
- 2. The polsdance rhythm in asymmetric 3/4, the way they played it in Finnskogen. I did even restore the dance to find out how it was, then the texts and the stories decide the rest. I also like to get out some groovy things."*

This melding of the old and the new, traditional and contemporary, is heard as a startlingly fresh concept on Sinikka's album, *The Magical Forest*, that makes great use of the voice with Sinikka's vocals and that of Trio Mediaeval. Is this something that she might look to develop further as a collaborative project?

*"I would love too!", comes the immediate reply "The question is time, finance and priority. I have made a whole 90-minute Mass For The Blue Whale (Mysticeti) with classical singers, folk and jazz improvisers, it was a huge fantastic thing to make and perform, but I composed it over a two-year period and we performed it twice with, 10 musicians but have not yet recorded it. I had to do it, and when something has to be done I do it, but I try to listen carefully around what is most important."*

As our conversation draws to a close, I ask about her plans for the future. Is she hoping to do more solo recordings, or does more work with the quintet beckon? *"In fact, I am doing both with the same music."*, Sinikka replies with enthusiasm. *"I am diving into poet and play writer Jon Fosses texts and poetry. It's very interesting making the music and developing the same piece solo and then arrange it for the quintet in the same period of time. It gives ideas and strengths to each other. Solo, I sing the poems and an actor reads other poems and texts."*

*"It's called 'Row My Ocean', and one piece is on Wolf Rune. Together with the quintet I am planning recording the music in October. Because of the pandemic I had to use Norwegian musicians because we postponed the rehearsals with my old quintet may be 3 or 4 times during a two year period. So, to get the work growing I have now a Norwegian quintet with Trygve Seim, Mathias Eick, Mats Eilertsen and Thomas Strønen. We managed to play some concerts this spring and have some more before hopefully recording in October. But The Starflowers quintet will also play some concerts and we will see what will happen next also with that wonderful quintet."*

Continuing she adds, *"The sister album to Maria's Song, Maria Magdalena will also be released on the organist Kåre Nordstogas' label LAWO in September. Since I have so much going on at ECM we found this to be a good solution for just this recording. I will also play Wolf Rune concerts and share concerts with Thomas Strønen who also has a solo project going on in 2022. And maybe, just maybe, there can be an instrumental kantele recording one day."*

**We would like to thank Nick Lea of Jazz Views for his continued support of our work and for contributing this article.**





PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAG ALVENG



WOMEN WHO INSPIRE

YAZZ

AHMED



PHOTOGRAPHER SEB JJ PETERS



PHOTOGRAPHER SEB JJ PETERS

# WOMEN WHO INSPIRE YAZZ AHMED

BY MATTHEW RUDDICK

The first time I saw trumpet player Yazz Ahmed perform was in the intimate confines of Jazz at the Crypt in Camberwell. I had not long returned from eleven years living in Asia, and was just starting to immerse myself back into the London jazz scene. I was aware that she had released one album, *Finding My Way Home*, in 2012, but had only heard one or two tracks before the show. Her performance that night was quite spellbinding. Her trumpet sound was cool, clear and concise, and her occasional use of electronic effects worked well, particularly in the acoustics of the church basement. Her Bahraini heritage (she has a Bahraini father) came through in a number of her compositions, which really stood out to me. She had also surrounded herself with a first-class band; whilst I cannot remember everyone who played that night – it was several years ago – Ralph Wyld made a particularly strong impression on vibes.

I was blown away, and bought her debut CD that evening. Given the strong impression that she had made, I remember being surprised that it took so long to release a follow-up. *La Saboteuse* was released in the spring of 2017, and was well worth the wait. As I wrote at the time, it felt like a big leap forward. “Stylistically, there are hints of Miles Davis’s early fusion albums, particularly with her use of the pedal, which has the effect of stretching, and almost melting the notes. But as with fellow trumpeter, Christian Scott, she has taken fusion – always broadly defined – in a direction all of her own. Where Christian Scott utilised hip-hop drum pads and traditional African drums on *Stretch Music* (2015), which reflect his New Orleans heritage, Yazz Ahmed has used Arabic music scales and influences that reflect her Bahraini roots.”

The album bought Yazz Ahmed considerable acclaim; it was named jazz album of the year by both *Kind Of Jazz*, and more importantly, *The Wire*.

Since then, Ahmed has gone from strength to strength. An impressive EP of remixes followed in 2018, and the following year, she released her third full-length album, *Polyhymnia*, which featured a six-song suite based on “six women of exceptional qualities, role models with whom she felt a strong bond”. The album had originally been conceived four years previously, and we described the album in our review as “truly inspirational”. And so, when asked to write about women who inspire me in jazz, Yazz Ahmed was an obvious choice;

She had drawn on the inspiration of other strong women, and in so doing, become an inspirational figure in her own right.

We would like to thank Matthew Ruddick of *Kind of Jazz* for his continued support of our work and for contributing this article.



# THE SEARCH

IT IS STILL NECESSARY TO ACTIVELY LOOK FOR  
JAZZ CREATED BY WOMEN

BY MIRIAN ARBALEJO



**F**or almost a decade, December has marked the beginning of a number of collaborations regarding the diverse "Jazz Critics Polls" published regarding the albums we enjoy all year long.

For me, the "voting season" begins with the poll directed by Francis Davis (with Tom Hull's invaluable assistance), ending with DownBeat's special number on August.

For that I listen to a thousand albums every year, give or take; or at least I was able to give my full attention to that number before the Covid-19 circumstance.

If there's one thing I feel frustration about is finding a jewel after the deadlines. That happens every single year, and, curiously enough, most of these gems are works made by women.

So this was the usual state of affairs until a variable changed, said variable being me having to stop my activity for a significant period of time on 2021. So I relied on the music sent to me but had to go without actively searching music created by women, which I was so used to do year after year, I wasn't even conscious about it anymore until I had to stop. The same is true with jazz composed in Asia and Africa.

This has been a striking revelation to me: the fact that you still need to actively search for jazz made by women so you can share the real spectrum of this music today.

This is a beautiful opportunity to make amends with myself regarding the aforementioned frustration about those albums I listen to after a deadline. So I'm sharing two brilliant albums composed, performed and led by Spanish jazzwomen:

The first one, *Trabalenguas* [it means tongue-twister in English], by Ester Quevedo Quintet, I listened, enjoyed and recommended "on time". The second one, *Ramé Project*, by Cristina Miguel Martínez, was a late (in a "deadline way of speaking") discovery, so I'm feeling relieved and pleased sharing it today.

# MIRIAN ARBALEJO RECOMMENDS

## Ester Quevedo

The pianist and composer Ester Quevedo presents *Trabalenguas*, her debut album as a leader, recorded live at the Aurora theatre in June 2019 during the l'Estival de Jazz d'Igualada jazz festival.

As an active participant in the Barcelona jazz scene, Ester Quevedo has surrounded herself with a kindred group of musicians, whose interplay and good taste are on display in her project.

Her compositions are based on intervals, rhythmic games, and harmonies that draw on her experiences and find homogeneity in the group, highlighted by the sonorities of Óscar Latorre on trumpet and Vincent Pérez on trombone, supported by the solid rhythmic foundation of Pau Sala and Roger Gutiérrez.



Ester Quevedo – Piano, composition  
Oscar Latorre – Trumpet  
Vicent Pérez – Trombone  
Pau Sala – Bass  
Roger Gutiérrez – Drums



Cristina is a multidisciplinary artist, saxophonist and composer born in Mollet del Valles (Barcelona).

Formed at Conservatorium Van Amsterdam (BA) and Kunst Universität Graz (MA).

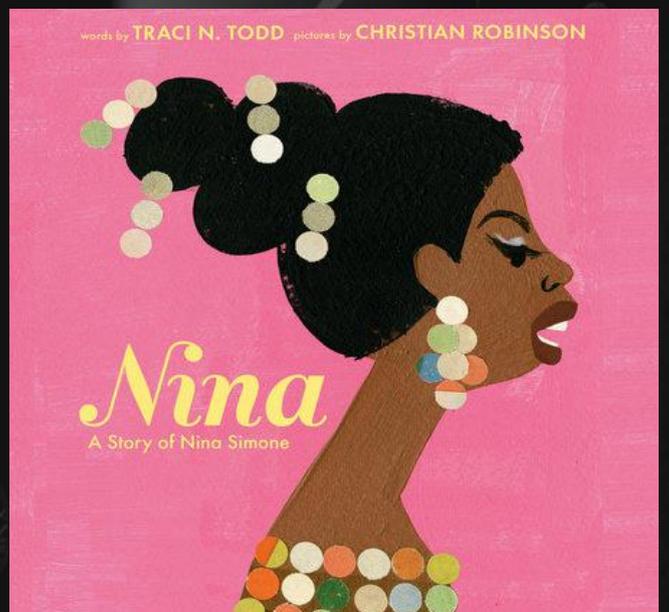
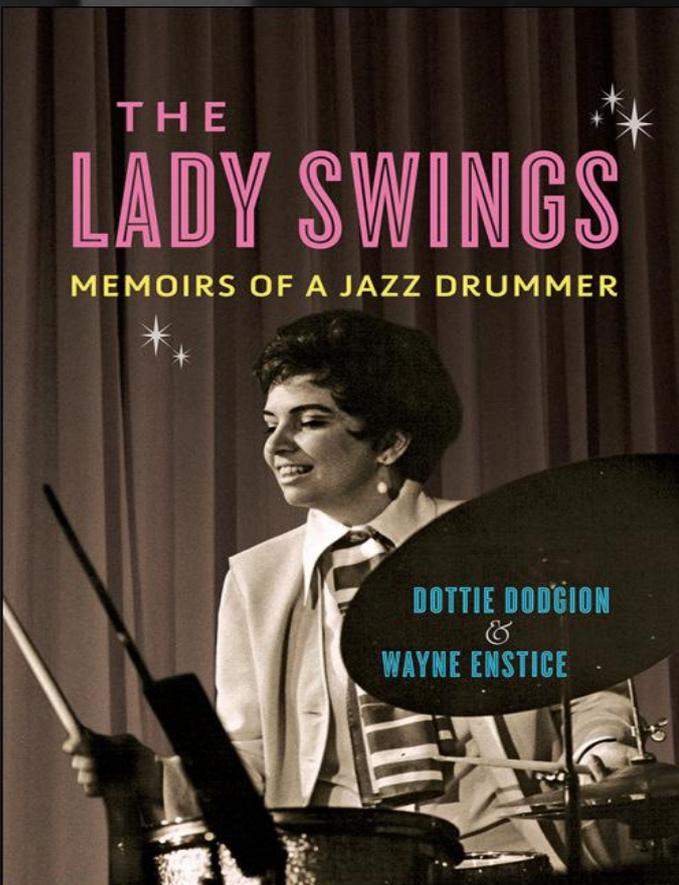
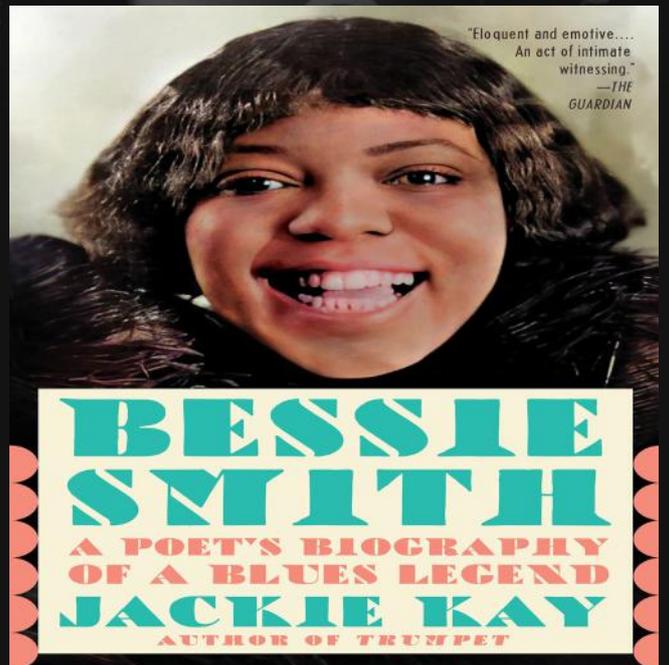
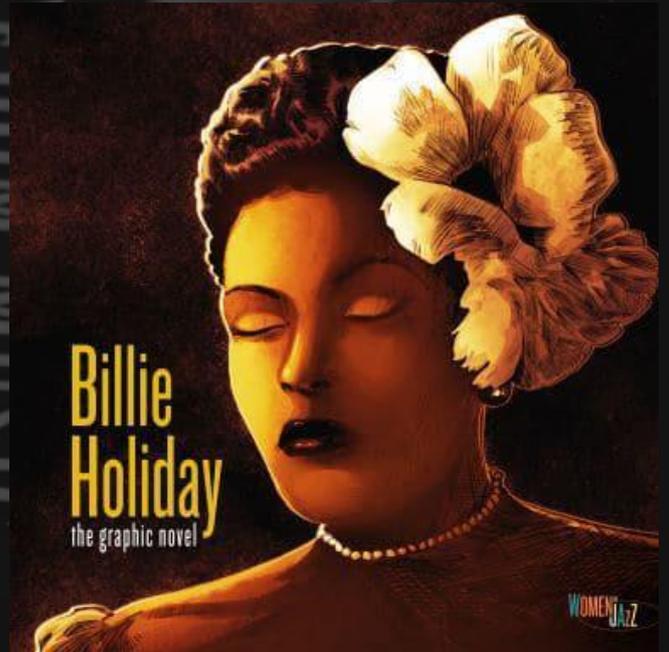
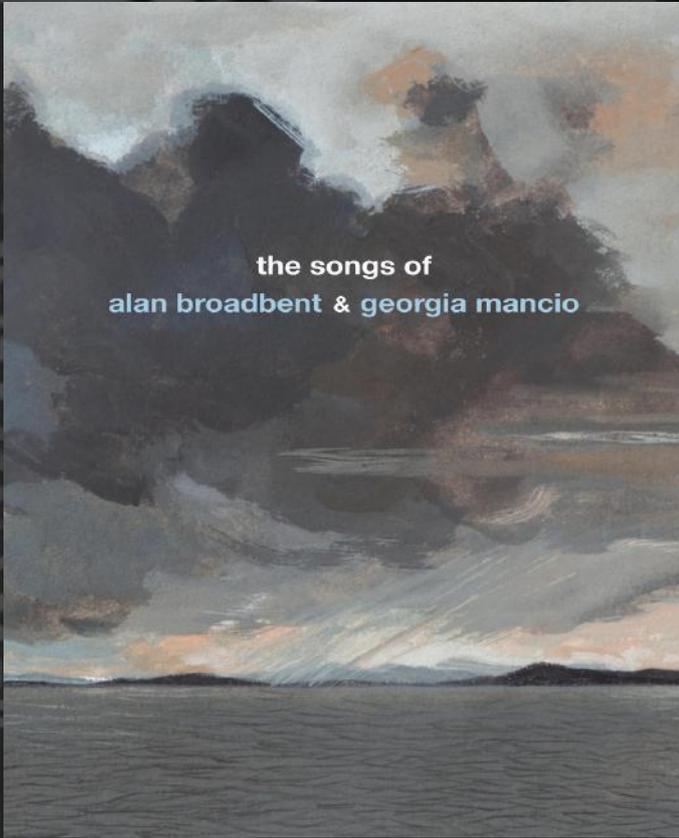
Currently living in Barcelona.

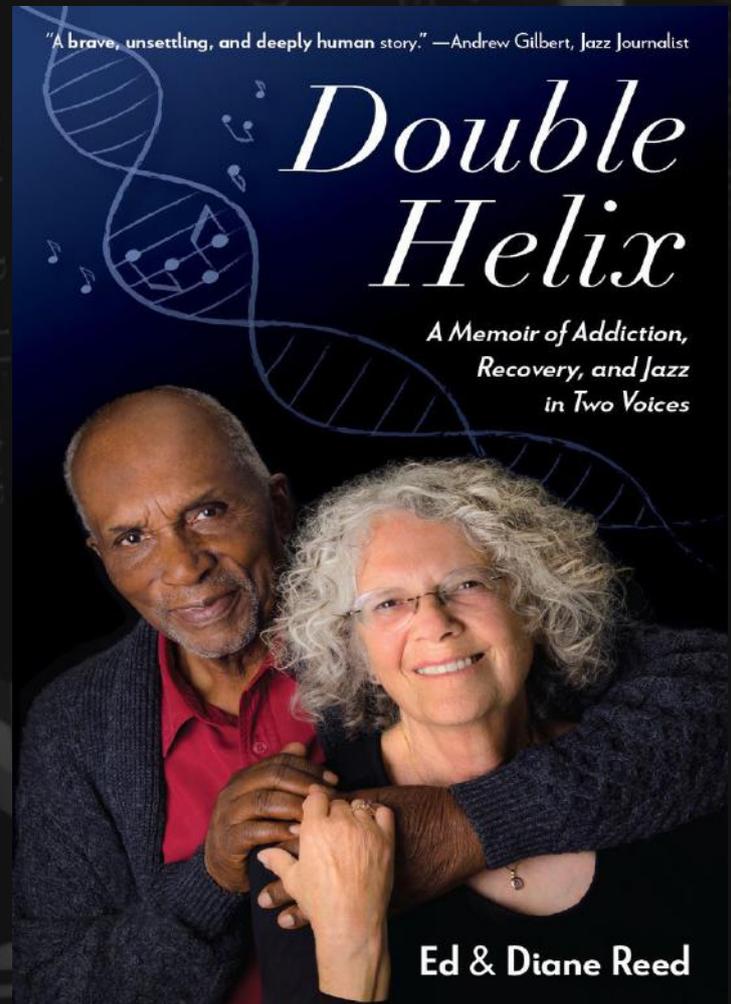
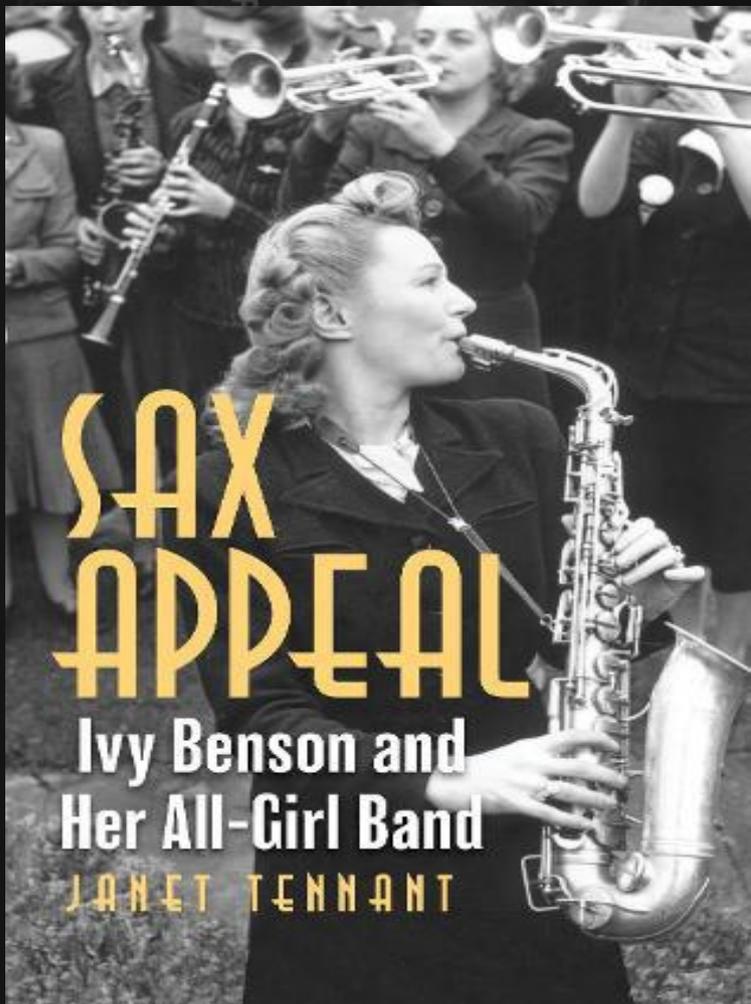
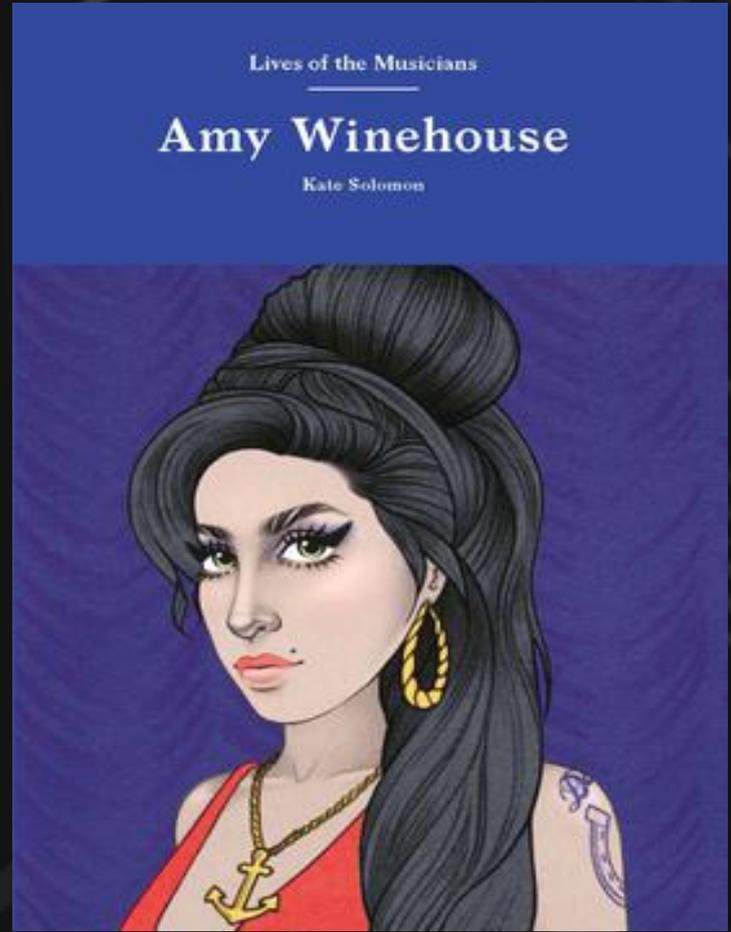
This music has been inspired by the questions of beauty and its subjectiveness. The value of imperfection, a rebellion against canons and symmetry.

Cristina Miguel Martínez - tenor sax  
Alistair Payne - trumpet  
Álvaro Vallejo Larre - violin  
Daria Ujejska - viola  
Mathilde Vendramin - violoncello  
Tin Džaferović - doublebass

Cristina Miguel Martínez

# ON THE BOOKCASE





ON THE  
Women in  
Jazz Media  
PLAYLIST





2021  
RELEASES



# CARMELA RAPPAZZO



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELIOT KAMENITZ



## **'Love & Other Difficulties'**

Produced by Carmela Rappazzo  
and Barbara Manocherian

Vocals: Carmela Rappazzo  
Piano and Musical Direction:  
Oscar Rossignoli  
Bass: Martin Masakowski  
Drums: Doug Belote

Released June 2021

**A**merican vocalist, composer, producer and all round legend Carmela Rappazzo released her new album 'Love & Other Difficulties' in June 2021. A beautiful album recorded in New Orleans, under the musical direction of brilliant pianist Oscar Rossignoli, which Carmela describes as '*My take on love songs and all that love brings into our lives*'. Carmela's music has been on our playlist all year, including her previous albums 'Howlin' at the Moon' and 'Myths and Legends'. We love her honest and heartfelt storytelling and her strength and support for others especially during some challenging times over the past few years - a truly inspirational artist. You can find her performing in New Orleans as well as live streamed performances. Highly recommend!

**'AN ANGEL PIROUETTES  
ON THE HEAD OF A PIN  
THO' THE ODDS DO SEEM SLIM  
SHE HOLDS HOPE THAT SHE MIGHT WIN'**

**CARMELA RAPPAZZO**



JO HARROP





PHOTOGRAPHY BY MUPHOVI



## **‘The Heart Wants’**

Vocals: Jo Harrop

Production: Jamie McCredie and Hannah Vasanth

Arrangements: Sam Watts, Paul Edis, Joe Rodwell and Jamie McCredie

Musicians include: Jamie McCredie, Hannah Vasanth, Christian McBride, Tony Kofi and Jason Rebello

Released October 2021

**V**ocalist, songwriter and producer Jo Harrop has been a huge favourite on our Women in Jazz Media playlist this year. Originally from the North East of England and now based in London, Jo has been taking the world by storm with her recent album and we are so very excited for her success. The depth and warmth of Jo’s vocals are beautifully and sensitively captured in all of her albums and this beauty extends beyond her voice and into all elements of her work. Her kindness, passion and honesty shine through for all the world to see.

*“In an unexpected moment of stillness, when the world came to a sudden stop and confusion, frustration and fear seemed to sweep across the earth, I finally began to work on the album that I had longed to make for many years,”*



**SUAVE VOCALIST AND SONGWRITER JO HARROP** released, in early October, her first self-penned solo album “The Heart wants” (Lateralize Records). Yet another album composed during the pandemic, a time when we were asked to change our normality and give up our spaces and freedom, a difficult time that made us all reflect on what is important and why. “The Heart wants” is a classic example of pure creativity, singularity, perfect vocals and least, but not last, **a very important collaborative album!**

There are 12 tracks to enjoy, some of them are originals by Harrop and some others have been re-interpreted. Every single one works because this is a luxurious mélange of the most talented musicians and singers (Paul Edis, Andy Davies, Jason Rebello, Hannah Vasanth, Natalie Williams to name a few). “The Heart wants” offers a bonus track as well, “Weather the storm” which, in my opinion, is simply beautiful and moving.

Favourite tracks: Wise Words, Life Inside, If ever I would leave you, Weather the Storm

**This review written by Erminia Yardley, was originally published for our Women in Jazz Media column for Jazz in Europe in November 2021.**

ASHAINE

WHITE



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA



## ‘Fairytales’

Vocals and lyrics: Ashaine White

Production: The Garden

Composer and all instruments: Gilberto

Mallindine-Bettini

Mastering: Pete Maher

Released October 2021



Ashaine White is a fierce and formidable artist making a significant impact in the music industry. A jazz and neo soul inspired singer/songwriter hailing from North London in the UK, she is on a mission to break barriers within UK music – and breaking them down she absolutely is, not just in the UK but across the world.

Her ‘Fairytales’ EP features five outstanding tracks: Prince Charming, Gone, Cookie Cutter, As If By Magic and Cure. On “Cure” we see ‘Ashaine dive into her thoughts on feeling alone and isolated in an environment, which was once at its busiest, now at a standstill. During 2020’s pandemic, Ashaine was forced to take time away from her busy schedule as a professional musician as the industry came to a halut. Using this time to look introspectively, Cure is a product of an overactive mind with ample spare time to run riot’

*‘I really enjoy the song writing process of being an artist, it’s my time to really sit and collect my thoughts on situations occurring in society today, I take pride in writing lyrics that really tell a story that is true to myself. My EP is a true testament to that and is really me finding my feet and my niche as an artist in musical form’*

CHARLOTTE

KEEFFE





TOULOUSE LAUTREC

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESS ROSE



## ‘Right Here, Right Now’

Charlotte Keefe (trumpet, flugelhorn, electronics and compositions)

Ashley John Long (double bass), Ben Handysides (drums) and Moss Freed (guitar)

Diego Sampieri (guitar)

London Improvisers Orchestra - Maggie Nicols, Caroline Kraabel, Steve Beresford, Phil Minton, John Edwards and more...

Released June 2021

**T**his summer prolific English improvising trumpeter and composer Charlotte Keefe release her latest album *Right Here, Right Now*. Lavishly showcasing her accomplishment and versatility, there are nine tracks in all: three have her soloing or in duo; three in her eponymous quartet; and three have Keefe demonstrating what a great team-player she is in the highly respected London Improvisers Orchestra (LIO). Thus, all in all, this is somewhat of a patchwork quilt of an album.

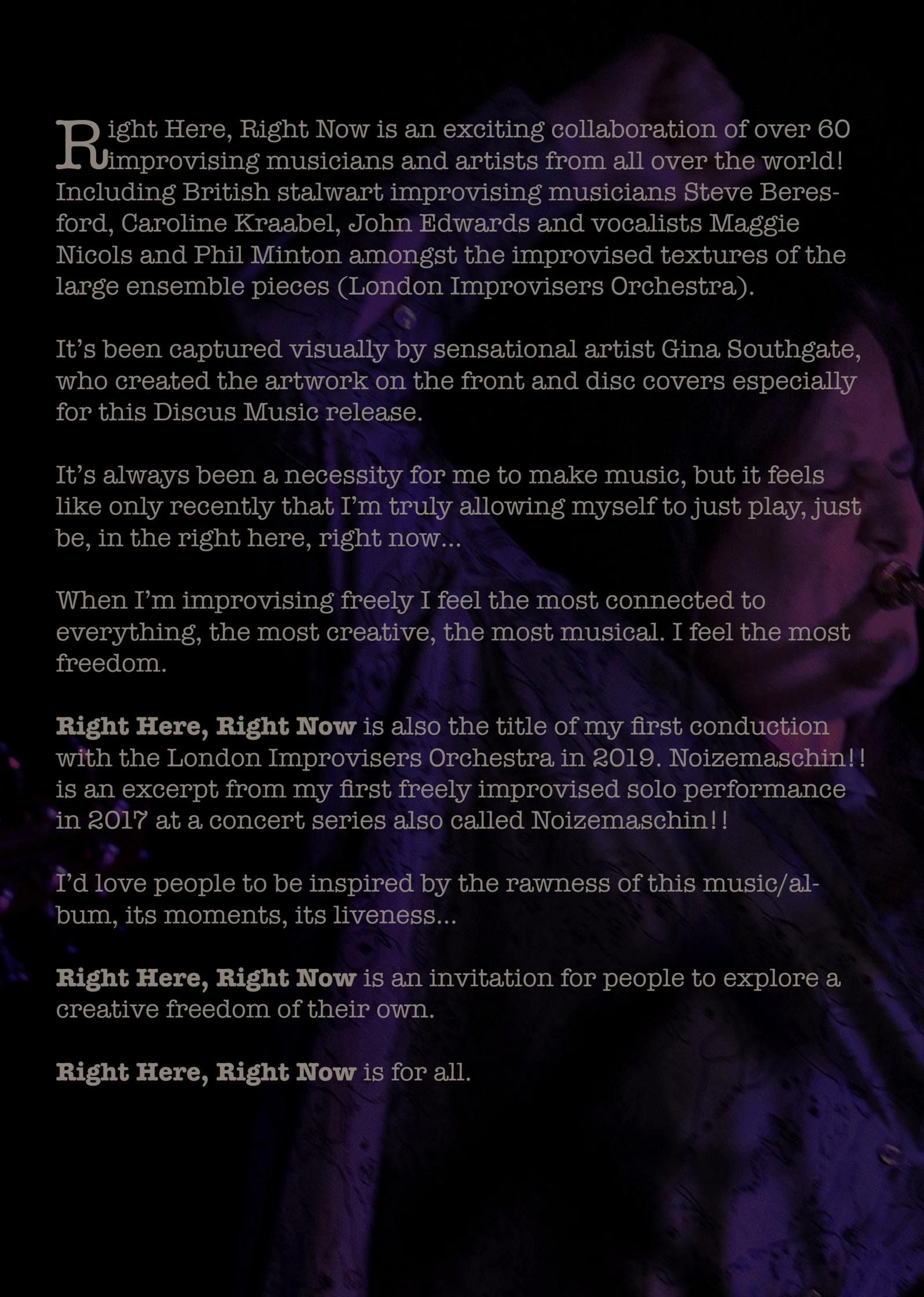
Over the years Keefe has been active in numerous quality projects and bands, as leader or collaborator, some of the highlights (for this writer) being Andrew Woodhead’s recent *Pendulums*, Calum Gourlays’ *Big Band* and last but not least her role as the Musician in Goblin Theatre’s children’s production, *The Legend of the Jazz Penguin*. A mover and shaker in improvisation circles such as LIO, *Lone*, *Impulse Collective* and *Mopomoso*, Keefe also finds time to serve as *Improvised Music Trumpet Professor* at *London Performing Academy of Music*.

Keefe’s quartet likewise has a confident and evolved sound, the band members seeming secure with each other. In opening track *1200 Photographs* Keefe’s trumpet is lyrical and strong, while Frisellian electric guitar segues gorgeously with double bass scraggs and perfectly placed drum kit interpolations. *Sweet, Corn’s chutzpah*, pleasing unison trumpet and guitar and bluesy feel leave one wanting more, while in penultimate track, *A Horse Named Galaxy*, Keefe’s bur-nished tones truly glow.

*Right Here, Right Now* showcases a highly authoritative voice which can also show tremendous delicacy. A colourful patchwork quilt of an album, this is music that will help keep the circulation moving over the winter, especially for those of us who are energized by improvisation.

**This is an excerpt of the review written by Fiona MacTaggart, originally published for our Women in Jazz Media column for Jazz in Europe in November 2021.**





**R**ight Here, Right Now is an exciting collaboration of over 60 improvising musicians and artists from all over the world! Including British stalwart improvising musicians Steve Beresford, Caroline Kraabel, John Edwards and vocalists Maggie Nicols and Phil Minton amongst the improvised textures of the large ensemble pieces (London Improvisers Orchestra).

It's been captured visually by sensational artist Gina Southgate, who created the artwork on the front and disc covers especially for this Discus Music release.

It's always been a necessity for me to make music, but it feels like only recently that I'm truly allowing myself to just play, just be, in the right here, right now...

When I'm improvising freely I feel the most connected to everything, the most creative, the most musical. I feel the most freedom.

**Right Here, Right Now** is also the title of my first conduction with the London Improvisers Orchestra in 2019. Noizemaschin!! is an excerpt from my first freely improvised solo performance in 2017 at a concert series also called Noizemaschin!!

I'd love people to be inspired by the rawness of this music/album, its moments, its liveness...

**Right Here, Right Now** is an invitation for people to explore a creative freedom of their own.

**Right Here, Right Now** is for all.

**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.

CHARLOTTE KEEFFE

# MOLLY JOHNSON





PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS NICHOLLS





## **'It's a Snow Globe World'**

Molly Johnson (vocals/writer)  
Davide DiRenzo (drums)  
Mike Downes (bass)  
Robi Botos (piano)  
Donna Grantis (guitar)

Released October 2021

Known as one of Canada's greatest voices, award-winning jazz vocalist Molly Johnson is a mother, singer-songwriter, artist and philanthropist and absolute legend. Molly launched the Kensington Market Jazz Festival, was awarded the Queen's Jubilee medal and was honoured with becoming an Officer of The Order Of Canada. She also established the Kumbaya Foundation and Festival, raising awareness and funds for people living with HIV/AIDS, and continues to work with several charitable organizations each year. If you don't know of Molly Johnson, you really should, she is truly an inspiration.

Talking about her new album for this year, 'It's a Snow Globe World', Molly says:

*"I thought about the tapestry and the beautiful multicultural moment in Canada where not all Canadians celebrate Christmas. Not everybody likes Jesus – not even Black baby Jesus – and so I thought about faith and the common denominators of our multi-faith community in Canada - there's life, love, joy and family -that was the motivation. It was kind of a challenge: can we make a holiday record that doesn't always say Christmas, that isn't filled with 'Jingle Bells' or 'Deck the Halls,' that's inspiring and joyful and happy? And a little bit pretty, because we could all use a little pretty right about now. I'm normally not so pretty. I like a good camping trip and some muddy boots."*

MIGDALIA

VAN DER

HOVEN





PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY



## **'Girl Facing South'**

Migdalia van der Hoven: Drums  
Wikus van der Hoven: Saxophone and composition  
Josh Stidwill: Piano  
Johnny Mayers: Bass

Released August 2021

**B**orn in Mexico, trained at Berklee in the US, living in London, drummer Migdalia van der Hoven is a significant rising star and definitely one to watch and support. Endorsed by Prostick USA and RTOM Corporation, she also has her own line of jazz cymbals in collaboration with Red Cymbals, the 'van der jazz' series, having been working in the industry for the past 25 years after studying with Jackie Santos, Terri Lynn Carrington, Victor Mendoza and Mark Wall. Her new brilliant new EP 'Girl Facing South' was launched at Ronnie Scott's and Jazz in Europe stated **'a new focussed, driven and exciting star has arrived, and her name is Migdalia Van Der Hoven.'**

*'We're massive fans of the Yellowjackets and that sort of West Coast sound, jazz fusion. It takes you through a journey of different places that we've been. So there's a track called 'Savannah Rain' and it's nearly like you can hear the rain of the Savannah in the background, even with all the colours in the drums and the African groove and then it goes into a proper fusion. I feel there is a sort of a more rock funk groove in 'Girl Facing South' which is pretty much talking about me. I love to groove, and I love a smooth sort of sound on the drum, so it tells you, okay I'm in London, I'm facing South - it's South of the border, South Africa. All of those elements which people won't even think about was the inspiration. The other track is called 'Red Skies' and that one is a sort of up tempo, kind of ballad. I'm a session musician as well but there's nothing like sharing what you're feeling with other people and that they can see and hear exactly what express you through your music'*

**Migdalia van der Hoven**



# WENDY KIRKLAND







## **‘Latin Lockdown Live’**

Wendy Kirkland (piano)  
Pat Sprakes (composition and guitar)  
Roger Beaujolais (vibes)  
Wayne Matthews (bass)  
Steve Wyndham (drums)  
Jon Richmond (percussion)

Released December 2021

**W**endy Kirkland, pianist and singer extraordinaire, has been stunning audiences across the UK for many years and is considered ‘one of the great unsung heroines of British Jazz’ The JazzMann. With two sell out performances at Ronnie’s Scotts under her belt this year, we are thrilled to add another Wendy Kirkland album to our playlist.

Sizzling, uplifting Brazilian and AfroCuban jazz, a sparkling mix of samba, bossa nova and mambo classics plus thrilling original material from Wendy Kirkland’s latin sextet, featuring special guest vibraphone virtuoso Roger Beaujolais at the helm.

The music has been arranged and/or composed by jazz guitarist Pat Sprakes and also features Wayne Matthews on bass guitar, Steve Wyndham on drums and Jon Richmond on latin percussion. The natural culmination and recording of their Latin Lowdown Live tour of 2021 which began as live streamed concerts then developed into in-person performances and was funded by the Arts Council, this recording is completely live and documents the concert which was attended by enthusiastic patrons, the energy palpable in the mix of music and dedication to the latin repertoire of Brazil and Cuba.

To quote two audience members at the concert:

*“We were transported...it was great and life-affirming. The sextet is ‘something else’.” and “A privilege being part of the recording. What draws me to the band is an admiration for how you create and work together on a shared passion.”*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY





# CHINA MOSES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SYLVAIN NORGET

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SYLVAIN NORGET





## **‘China Moses & The Vibe Tribe’**

Produced by China Moses  
Vocals by China Moses  
Composed by China Moses  
Sax and MD by Luigi Grasso  
Organ and Piano by Ashley  
Henry  
Drums by Marijus Aleksa  
Basses by Neil Charles  
Piano and Rhodes by  
Joe Armon Jones

We started our magazine with an inspirational and powerful woman and we feel it is only right to end in exactly the same way. The mighty **China Moses**. Singer, author, songwriter, producer, presenter, business women and so much more, China Moses leads the way for us all.

Her latest album gifts us with four tracks - **‘Nicotine’**, **‘Put It on the Line’**, **‘Move Over’** and **‘Breaking Point’**, all beautifully crafted, oozing with strength, honesty and of course her own unique and undeniable groove. If listening wasn’t enough, the accompanying videos for ‘Nicotine’ and ‘Put It on the Line’ transport us into China’s glorious world and glory is absolutely what she brings. She beautifully oozes with style, confidence, groove and truth. Simply stunning.

Through her passion for truthful storytelling, not only in her own stunning music but also sharing and supporting other artists:

**China is a warrior and role model for us all.**

