

Amandah Jantzen/Biography

Jazz and popular music are overloaded with "overnight successes" who gain a great deal of attention when they burst upon the scene, only to slip away into obscurity within a short time. Amandah Jantzen is the complete opposite. Throughout her career she has gradually earned a strong reputation while mastering her craft. She is a singer who, once experienced, one never forgets.

Amandah has the rare ability to uplift standards and make vintage songs sound fresh, new and topical. Her warm voice and swinging style, combined with a large repertoire, result in consistently memorable performances. She is never shy to embrace melodies and lyrics from the Great American Songbook, bringing out the hidden beauty in both, but her renditions are never predictable. She is a jazz singer yet is also quite accessible to a wide audience.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Amandah was drawn to music from an early age. Although she occasionally performed at jam sessions and in piano bars, she primarily worked outside of music until 1986. By then, having discovered in turn Al Jarreau, Linda Ronstadt's Nelson Riddle recordings, Nancy Wilson and Sarah Vaughan, Amandah knew that she simply had to sing jazz. She relocated to Portland, Oregon five years later and became active locally, performing in jazz clubs and at concerts. She was particularly inspired by bassist Leroy Vinnegar and guitarist Charlie Byrd, developing into the warm and highly expressive singer that she is today. Byrd convinced Amandah that she should accompany herself on piano, a move which has added to the appeal and musicality of her performances.

Amandah Jantzen's singing is well showcased on her three recordings, *Some Other Time*, *Devil May Care* and *My Secret Love*. She is also featured on a third of the songs on the *Ellen Vanderslice* compilation, *Once in A Blue Moon*, and half of the tunes on *The Standard Vanderslice*. Because of the quality of these recordings and the popularity of her live engagements, I have picked Amandah as one of the top 500 jazz singers of all time and will profile her in my upcoming book, *The Jazz Singers*, which will be published by Backbeat Books in October, 2008. Her newest CD, *Northern Star/The Singapore Sessions* was just released in 2007.

In addition to working in Portland (including long-term bookings at both the Doubletree and Heathman Hotels), Amandah has performed at extended engagements in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, at the Salishan Golf Resort on the Oregon Coast, at the Stone Harbor Resort in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, and at the historic Ankeny's Restaurant on the top floor of the Ridpath Hotel in Spokane, Washington. She has also been featured at the Du Maurier Jazz Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia, in Florida with tenor-saxophonist Turk Mauro and multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan, at Bally's Casino in Las Vegas, and has opened concerts for both Mc Coy Tyner and Charlie Byrd.

Internationally, she's worked two engagements in Singapore, with multiple extensions that kept her busy for 15 months, culminating in the recording of her most recent (*Northern Star*) CD. Continuing her tour of Asia, she then performed extended bookings in Seoul, South Korea; Bali, Indonesia; New Delhi, India; Shanghai, China; and most recently, Bangkok, Thailand. Additionally, in early 2008, she was featured in the Emirates Air Jazz Vocal Concert Series at Nardis Jazz Club in Istanbul, Turkey.

In early 2006 she placed second in the 5th Annual Jazz Connect International Vocal Competition. She has also developed a steady base of "House Concert" appearances in the US as well as working several jazz venues inbetween her long term bookings in Asia.

An enthusiastic and charismatic performer who is also subtle, Amandah Jantzen is a constant joy, both musically and personally. She is on her way to becoming a major name in the overlapping worlds of jazz, cabaret and classic American pop music.

Scott Yanow, Los Angeles, CA

