



BIOGRAPHY

“Music in general but jazz in particular is about sharing your emotional experience. It is an intimate conversation between the musician, the music and the listener. What appeals to me is the enduring sweetness and intelligence of this art form known as jazz.” –Mitzi Zilka

If jazz is about emotions, Mitzi Zilka has found a way to pack a wallop by combining her talents as both a singer and a lyricist. The words she has penned to a variety of jazz instrumental classics including Monk’s Mood, Blue Bossa, Lament, Pent up House, Look to the Sky and Lady Bird, add a fresh dimension to the jazz tradition, says two-time Grammy winner, Peter Boe. “She not only has a great jazz voice, but also, the words she writes to original instrumental music and existing standards are among the best I’ve seen.”

A Portland native, Mitzi moved to L.A. with her family when she was 11 where she began her classical training as a singer. But says she fell in love with jazz the moment she heard Billie Holiday sing. “What got me about Billie Holiday is that you heard real stories about pain and love and I believed every word she sang.”

With her three octave-range and rich alto voice, Mitzi appeared in musical productions throughout her teen years – and even did studio back-up vocals for Dennis Wilson of the Beach Boys – before college and a young family of her own interrupted her singing career. A lot of living since then has brought her back to jazz, her first love. “People say you can’t sing jazz until after age 30, maybe because it’s so much about the human condition. My goal is to reach the audience and give them an unforgettable musical experience.”

Mitzi has appeared at Portland’s top jazz venues including, Abou Karim, Aura Restaurant + Lounge, Blue Monk, Heathman Hotel, Jimmy Mak’s, LV’s Uptown Jazz Club, Museum After Hours, Riverplace Hotel, Rose Festival, Tony Starlight’s

and Wilf's as well as Duck Pond Cellars in Dundee, Newport Performing Arts Center in Newport and the Portland Jazz Festival.

Additionally, between 2003 and 2004 she spent nearly a year singing in Sydney Australia performing at the Soup Plus, Tea in the Library, Hype Park Jazz Bar, the Basement and the Sydney Conservatory of Music. In 2006, Mitzi performed in the Netherlands with Europe's celebrated pianist & composer, Amina Figarova.

Discography

Her debut CD, *Two Sugars*, released in July 2003 offers a heaping spoonful of her magic and passion. *Two Sugars* has been aired in three countries, USA, Australia and Thailand. In the USA her CD has been played on OPB (Oregon Public Broadcasting) during the Fresh-Air program and numerous times on KMHD 89.1, Portland's premier jazz station. In Sydney her CD was played on the Sydney Eastsider 89.7 jazz station as well as the Rhythm & Jazz station 93.3. Mitzi released her second CD, *Something Good*, in October 2005 and it is distributed nationally and internationally, including the U.K., Germany, Japan, France and the Netherlands. Plans are underway for her third CD to be released late 2009. Her second CD, *Something Good*, has been featured extensively on Yellow Beat Radio in Japan, KMHD in Portland and Whole Wheat Radio in Alaska.

Mitzi is also the Founder and Director of the esteemed Portland Jazz Singers Foundation providing monthly Showcases for seasoned and up & coming vocalists, a vocal ensemble group called the Revue Singers (performing original thematic jazz stage shows) and Vocal Performance Workshops for singers at all levels.