

Vocalist / Producer / Composer / Entrepreneur: Jazz & Blues

ABOUT JESSICA LEE



Jessica Lee is an American jazz & blues vocalist, songwriter (ASCAP) and recording artist, born in Manassas, VA. Lee's vocals reflect the influence of classic jazz, blues, rhythm & blues and gospel, but always with a heavy emphasis on the blues. Her musical motto is to study and perform "something old, something new, something borrowed . . . but always blue."

Lee performs at jazz and blues clubs, music festivals, charitable and private events, universities and concert halls throughout the U.S. She has performed at legendary clubs such as Antone's in Austin, Texas and is featured frequently at major charitable events. For example, Jessica was the featured jazz & blues singer to perform a live, nationally-broadcasted concert benefiting the Make-a-Wish-Foundation from the WQED TV Studios in Pittsburgh and has also been a featured singer for the

Susan B. Komen Race for the Cure and other major charity events. In 2011-12, record label EQ Music selected three of Jessica's recorded songs from her "Bluebird Fly" album for inclusion in three compilation albums, including two in their "Greatest Audiophile Voices" album series and one in "The Best Pop Jazz" album for international distribution. Since then, EQ Music has selected four more of Lee's recorded songs to feature on four new international vocal compilation CDs, including "When Blues Meets Jazz," and represents her solo albums internationally.

Also a social entrepreneur and educator, Lee has focused much of her entrepreneurial energy on several high-profile initiatives in collaboration with the nonprofit Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation, including co-founding the America's Arts & Music Crossroads Center which connects professional artists and musicians with underprivileged youth for creativity and career coaching; co-founding a jazz and American music camp series for at-risk youth with the Afro American Music Institute's James Johnson, Ph.D. and trumpeter/educator Sean Jones; the saving and renovation of the legendary Crawford Grill jazz club in Pittsburgh's historic Hill District with Hall of Fame running back Franco Harris and a team of social investors; and various other educational, career and entrepreneurial ventures which are designed to "pass on" the American Music and creative art forms to the next generation, with a special emphasis on serving youth in at-risk situations and communities.

Biography

Lee grew up in Franklin, PA, studying classical piano since the age of 5 and singing in church and school choirs and community theatre musicals and cabarets. During college,

her interest in jazz blossomed after a chance encounter with Paul Jeffrey, Director of Jazz Studies, Duke University, with whom she studied jazz history and improvisation and who encouraged her to begin her life-long study of jazz piano, vocals and improvisation. Jessica graduated from Duke University (1991) where she continued her study and performance of music, piano, creative writing and voice, and subsequently graduated from Duke University School of Law (1994) where she studied business and entertainment law on a partial scholarship.

Jessica returned to Pittsburgh in 1994 to begin singing professionally, initially under the mentorship and with the jazz band of guitar jazz legend and educator, Tony Janflone, Sr., with whom she later recorded and released the vocal/guitar inspirational jazz album, "From a Silent Heart." Jessica's musical development was consistently nurtured by the mentorship of many Pittsburgh jazz greats, with whom she's had the opportunity to both perform and record. Lee has shared the stage and/or recorded with renowned jazz drummer Roger Humphries; pianists John D'Amico, Max Leake and James Johnson, Ph.D.; guitarists Tony Janflone, Sr., Joe Negri and Mark Strickland; trombonists Harold Betters and Nelson Harrison, Ph.D.; bassists Dwayne Dolphin and David Pellow; trumpeters Sean Jones and Steve Hawke, and saxophonists Chris Hemingway, Jay Willis and Eric Defade.

As an artist-entrepreneur, Lee started up a musical production company, ViveVenture, LLC, in 2001 and an affiliated record label and released her debut "Bluebird Fly" album as a co-producer with Grammy-winner Jay Dudt and Hollis Greathouse of Audible Images Recording Studios in 2005. In reviewing the "Bluebird Fly" CD, Nate Guidry, former jazz critic for the Pittsburgh Post Gazette wrote, "Jazz, blues and rhythm & blues meld seamlessly into her considerable vocal palette." This album continues to enjoy sales in New Zealand, Japan, Europe and other countries; and in 2010 the song, "Lover Man," of that album was licensed to the EQ Music record label for inclusion in a compilation album entitled "Greatest Audiophile Voices." EQ Music continues to represent all of Lee's recordings in jazz compilations which include artists such as Norah Jones, Amy London and others. Her third album, a duo with jazz guitarist Mark Strickland, entitled "Silver Days, Charcoal Nights" was released in 2012 and her fourth studio album, "Rhythms of Anyway," was released in 2013. "Rhythms of Anyway" includes several original compositions as well as a fusion of jazz and rhythm and blues classics.

As a producer, Lee creates and performs customized live concerts and music series for clubs, charities and universities. One of her custom shows is currently enjoying a weekly run of over 12 years – the "Jessica Lee Jazz Networking Show", which began weekly shows in May, 2001 at Dowe's on 9th Jazz Club and continues today at the Rivers Club in Pittsburgh. This jazz networking show connects and encourages innovation between business innovators and arts innovators and helps to keep regional jazz clubs thriving by introducing new audiences to these venues and the music. Lee has also produced, performed and taught workshops at major universities throughout the U.S., including Duke University Law School, Point Park University and Carnegie Mellon University.

Jessica has become a truly international artist with her music being enjoyed in Europe, Asia, New Zealand and more. She has shared stages with many jazz and blues greats

and with some of her heroes, such as the great American songstress Gladys Knight. Jim Merod of the Blueport Jazz Record Label in San Diego, CA, reviewed Jessica's "Silver Days, Charcoal Nights" CD by stating: "Virginia-born (Carolina-honed) vocalist Jessica Lee possesses the essential quality that makes jazz and blues lyrics utterly compelling: a soulful voice with a soulful personality dedicated to a soulful approach to her craft. The first time I listened to Jessica, in Pittsburgh at one of her many weekly gigs, I discovered how honest her lyrical energy truly is. Each time, from that moment on, Jessica's radiance seems more and more beguiling. She is that 'real' thing . . . a jazz singer whose blues-saturated feeling creates immediate happiness and friends for life."

Discography

Albums

- Bluebird Fly 2005 ViveVenture Productions
- From a Silent Heart 2010 ViveVenture Productions
- Silver Days, Charcoal Nights 2012 ViveVenture Productions
- Rhythms of Anyway 2013 ViveVenture Productions

Compilations

- Greatest Audiophile Voices EQ Music Catalogue # EA72323
- The Best of Pop Jazz EQ Music Catalogue # EA72400
- Greatest Audiophile Voices Volume 4 EQ Music Catalogue # EA72566
- Best Covers EQ Music Catalogue # EA72625
- Jazz Bar EQ Music Catalogue # EA72586
- When Blues Meets Jazz EQ Music Catalogue # EA72653
- Movies Classic Jazz Vol. 2 EQ Music Catalogue # EA72365

From the Media

"It's refreshing indeed to feast one's ears on this outstanding new release from Pittsburgh-based songstress Jessica Lee. BLUEBIRD FLY is a wonderful excursion into jazz, soul, and Rhythm & Blues, with a definite emphasis on the Blues...I invite you to discover this compelling vocalist. Jessica Lee's BLUEBIRD FLY adds a classy, tasteful dimension to the Smooth Jazz format!" SCOTT O'BRIEN— SmoothJazz.com

"If you appreciate the heart of American music, you will treasure Jessica Lee's CDs." Jay Dudd, five-time Grammy-winning engineer

"Jazz, blues and rhythm & blues meld seamlessly into her considerable vocal palette." Jazz Writer, Nate Guidry, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"[In] smoke-filled clubs here and across the country, Lee is . . . known for her soulful and skilled handling of gospel, blues, jazz and soul classics." Pittsburgh Magazine