

Anita Wardell – Artist Profile

Profile

Anita Wardell's singing is exciting and breathtaking. She is noted for her mesmerizing and captivating vocal improvisations and vocalese lyrics to instrumental solos. Anita is a musician who uses the voice as her instrument, displaying precision and agility, mixed with heartfelt emotion. Singer Norma Winstone praised her "unexpected vulnerability, which makes her reading of the ballads both beautiful and touching. Her honesty shines in this well-chosen collection of songs."

Bebop pioneer, Mark Murphy, proclaimed Anita, "a gift from Australia", adding "What hits me, is how expressive her ballad singing is. Then she has the courage to scat a ballad or two, not unlike a young lady disciple of the Ben Webster school."

Full Biography

Born in Guildford, UK, Anita moved to Australia with her family as a child. Anita's formative years were spent soaking up the Rodgers and Hammerstein and Cole Porter classics. She also explored her father's collection of big band albums by Duke Ellington, Count Basie and many more.

During her teens, she started to get to grips with the complexities of modern Jazz when she discovered Clifford Brown, Cannonball Adderley, Miles Davis and Charlie Parker. At the same time she learned her vocal craft from greats like Ella Fitzgerald, Mark Murphy, Carmen McRae, Betty Carter, Jon Hendricks and Eddie Jefferson.

After attending secondary School she completed her degree in Music at the Adelaide University. In 1990, Anita relocated back to the UK where she studied at the Guildhall school of music and drama.

Anita's recording career began in 1995 with her CD, Why do you Cry? featuring pianist Liam Noble.

In 1998 she released *Straight Ahead* with international star pianist Jason Rebello. Japan's most popular jazz publication, *Swing Journal*, gave its endorsement, writing, "she's the real thing who can fluently scat and vocalese!"

Her longstanding musical relationship with pianist Robin Aspland started with the release of *Until The Stars Fade* in 2001 also featuring the exciting US drummer Gene Calderazzo and Jeremy Brown on bass. *Jazzwise Magazine* called her "energetic and inventive" while *The Guardian* proclaimed her "a model of the Jazz singer's art", highlighting her clarity, improvisational skills and emotional resonance.

In 2004 she teamed up with tenor saxophonist, Benn Clatworthy, and recorded *If You Never Come to Me*.

Anita received the prestigious BBC Jazz Award for Best of Jazz category in 2006. In the same year she was signed to Proper Records and recorded *Noted* (2006) and *Kinda Blue* (2008).

Her latest album, *The Road*, was released in summer 2013. In the same year she won the Best Vocalist category in the British Jazz Awards.

Over the past four years, Anita has travelled extensively, performing and leading jazz vocal masterclasses in USA, Europe and Australia.