

Lindsey Muir Biography

Music has always been a necessary element in Lindsey Muir's life as far back as the 24-year-old Connecticut singer can remember. "My mother, who founded Litchfield Performing Arts 25 years ago, opened our home for classical music. When I was maybe three—Mom would no sooner tuck me in than I would sneak out of bed, down to the landing, and listen to the live music from the living room. If I thought somebody had spotted me, I'd scurry right back up stairs," she says.

Throughout her life and, most especially now with the July release of her debut album "You're Nearer: Love Songs of the '30s and '40s," Lindsey is scurrying right towards the music, more than ready to be a prime time player in her own right.

The jazz-inflected genre of her new CD allows her to use her sweet, classically trained instrument of a voice to interpret great romantic ballads, with first-class backup from a jazz combo featuring the noted saxophonist and arranger Don Braden. Lindsey's other simpatico all-star sidekicks are: guitarist Mark Whitfield, pianist Dave Berkman, drummer Winard Harper and bassist John Benitez. She also gets a little help from her friends, trumpeter Terell Stafford (on "Something Happens To Me") and Brazilian drummer Rogerio Boccato, who adds Latin seasoning to a buoyant bossa rendition of "This Time the Dream's On Me."

From conception to birth--the disc itself was a one-year project--Lindsey created and directed everything from choosing the tunes to picking the personnel, thriving on having artistic control. Best of all, she pulled off this venture with the stamina, determination and efficiency of a young Marian McPartland. Muir is a rare artist/idealist with a hands-on, pragmatic worldview, unintimidated by the drudgery-filled business-side of making an album.

Lindsey, has all the technical equipment--impeccable pitch, clarity of diction, silken phrasing, breath control, rhythmic ease, a pretty, pinging timbre that carries around the room, harmonic sophistication and a subtle sense of dynamics. With no strain or histrionics, she projects the feeling that she's loved, lived with, and been deeply moved by the 11 songs on her album.

Her artistic flexibility and versatility come as little surprise when you look at her biography. Born June 17, 1981, Lindsey grew up with two of her mother, Vita Muir's, institutional creations, Litchfield Performing Arts and the nationally celebrated Litchfield Jazz Festival, marking its 10th season this summer, joining the effort as a volunteer at 15.

Part of the secret of her winning personal style is that she can sound sweet and innocent, yet somehow simultaneously sophisticated and emotional, as on the title tune, "You're Nearer," a Rodgers & Hart song from the 1940 film version of "Too Many Girls." She can project warmth and devotion on a classic romantic ballad like "I Wish You Love." For a change of pace, she can generate a fresh, rhythmic lilt that just won't wilt on "You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me," an evergreen from the Broadway musical "42nd Street." Or she can serve a delicious slice of musical impressionism, as on her savory samba version of "My Ship." Close your eyes and let your imagination sail on sunny, Caribbean waters.

On classic love songs, like "My Foolish Heart" and her moving grand finale, "That's All," you know that, much like a seasoned performer, she has lived with her material intimately, breathing-in the basic essence of the words until she can literally make them sound like her own.

Her album could have remained merely a dream deferred but for its basic inspiration—Lindsey's dramatic discovery of the ballad, "It Is Love You're After?" written by her late grandfather, Dick Bivona for her grandmother, Victoria. A week before she graduated with a degree in music from the University of Connecticut, Lindsey and her mother flew to Florida to be at the bedside of her dying grandmother. Victoria no longer seemed aware of her surroundings, so mother and aunt sang to her. They sang songs Victoria had always loved-- Barbra Streisand hits, Broadway tunes, and, the far more emotionally searing "Is It Love You're After?"

Lindsey had never heard her grandfather's song before, although she was vaguely aware her grandfather, who passed away forty years ago, was an avocational songwriter. Lo, and behold, after Victoria's death, the original sheet music for "It Is Love You're After?" emerged from among her personal papers. For Lindsey it was like inheriting an artifact of family history that bonded her to her grandparents like nothing else could have. Her grandfather's love song became the catalyst for Lindsey's CD, which, of course, she dedicated to her late grandmother.

Using the tune as the nucleus, she began her research, listening to her grandmother's old recordings and discovering the repertoire of now-personal favorites like singer/pianist, Blossom Dearie. Virtually everything and everybody became her database. She tapped her mom's encyclopedic knowledge of tunes and lyrics, and "You're Nearer," was a suggestion from singer/pianist Dena De Rose.

"I didn't set out to record love songs of the 1930s and '40s. I really set out to find music that spoke to me, and then discovered that they all happened to be love songs from the '30s and '40s," she says. Actually, the songs she selected are ageless. Despite its self-proclamation of old-codgerdom, her version of "I'm Old Fashioned" sounds forever young but not the least bit "trendy"—a word that doesn't exist in Lindsey's musical lexicon or uncompromising artistry.

The album brings one family story full circle. That circle became unbroken when Lindsey laid down seven tracks in her family's living room, including, of course, her grandfather's love song. Her mother, who's not only a czarina of culture but also a queen of cuisine, cooked a delicious dinner for the hungry musicians and then they had at it. Her brother Owen, a 26-year-old pre-med student and professional recording engineer, recorded the tracks in the Muir living room during a remarkably productive three-hour live session. The other tracks were recorded in a New Jersey studio months later. Her cousin, Chris Athens, a mastering engineer whose work has earned him two Grammy nominations, mastered both sessions.

The recording marks the completion of one family story. At the same time, it celebrates a new chapter in the life of a musically awestruck little girl secretly basking in the music in the shadows at the bottom of the stairs. Now she's grown up into a gifted, adult performer who has stepped boldly into that magic-filled living room and into the limelight of a much bigger world.

** For Booking & Information Contact Lindsey at info@lindseymuir.com