

Maye Cavallaro

From the first purloined copy of my mom's "Sing Along With Mitch" record, where I danced in the living room and pretended to thrill an audience into a frenzy, I've always loved the romantic and dramatic tunes from composers like Sammy Cahn, George Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin and well, yes, the Beatles. So naturally, I've found a niche in the jazz/cabaret world, with all the rest of the blues-soaked dreamers. All of the best songs are about love, in all its disguises, whether it is heaven or hell. It usually is a little of both.

One of the joys of these classic tunes is that they lend themselves to interpretation. That interpretation changes with your mood, experience, the hour of the day, and whether or not it's spring. As a jazz player, I'm free to record and perform any tune that moves me without being limited to a particular style, or time period. I have very eclectic musical tastes; I love blues, gospel, big band swing, Annie Lennox, Al Green, Link Wray. And, I'm always discovering new singers, new styles of music, new composers and I'm falling in love all over again. Luckily, I live in the bay area where there is also a bumper crop of wonderful musicians to play with and learn from. On any night of every week there is wonderful live jazz happening.

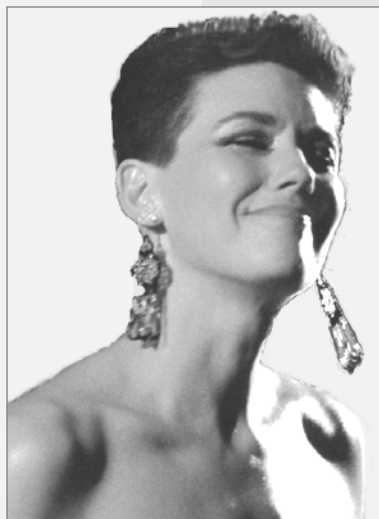
I'm not one of those people who always knew I would be a singer. In fact, although I always sang in choirs and talent shows and dreamed of "my life upon the stage," I started my professional life as a high school English teacher. Of course, when one is teaching adolescents a good deal of dramatic flair is helpful, in fact downright necessary. But, I never thought of making singing a career until a friend invited me to sing in a restaurant with him for, (what a cliché), dinner. Since my delicatessen debut, I never looked back. I quit my day job, launched a rock band

and began playing local clubs. The first set was always blues and standards and I'm still singing some of those tunes.

My performing career has been varied. As well as eclectic musical tastes, I also like to perform in different settings and play different types of music. I have sung on terraces overlooking the Napa Valley with only a guitarist, I have sung in front of big bands for both concerts and dancing. I frequently work with my own trio. I have enjoyed singing in swinging dance bands, in intimate cabaret rooms, in Town Hall in New York City, in fancy hotels, in smoky cellar jazz clubs, for lots of people or a few. I once sang at the San Francisco Zoo for the marriage of two lion trainers. I always like the music to be romantic however. I said I was one of the blues-soaked dreamers.

*"Canta che ti passa,"
...sing and it will pass.*

In 1994 I started my own record label, Redhead Records, to allow me to produce and market recordings. In 1995 I released my first recording "In The Middle Of A Kiss." with pianist Abe Battat Much to our pleasure it was chosen by Philip Elwood of the San Francisco Examiner as one of the top ten jazz albums of the year. In 1999 I produced and released my second recording on this label, "Never Let Me Go," featuring some of the bay area's finest musicians. My third release "Hearts", released in 2002, features the wonderful jazz guitarist, Mimi Fox. Seven selections are in the duo format. For five selections we're joined by Paul McCandless on reeds and Ian Dogole on percussion.



Several years ago one of my friends asked me to turn my teaching experience into teaching her how to sing. I discovered that I really enjoyed teaching and yakking with other singers about singing I've continued to enjoy teaching for the last several years in my own studio, and I'm thrilled to be on the faculty of the innovative Jazzschool in Berkeley, CA., teaching performance classes and a workshop called "Take the Stage, Performance and presentation for All musicians." I also will be teaching the honors vocal jazz class and guesting as a master teacher working with classical singers helping them to explore the world of jazz and cabaret singing. One of the great thrills in my teaching career was when, during a two-month singing engagement in Japan, I was asked to teach voice classes for students who spoke only Japanese. We did all of our lessons by the 'me-sing-you-sing' method. Amazingly, they knew all of the words to hundreds of American songs, from Duke Ellington to Stevie Wonder. A big class favorite was "My Way" as sung by Frank Sinatra. My usually shy students would all wave their arms high, and belt out the big finish for this song. We ended every class this way. It's very invigorating.

I'm a student of the human heart. How we're alike, is more intriguing to me than how we're different. Sometimes, it's harder to see. No matter where I've been in the world, everyone cries over a sad love song and taps their toes when the beat swings.

When I'm sad, I sing. When I'm happy, I sing. When I'm hungry I eat, and then I sing. I really am a hopeless romantic. As my Italian heritage teaches me "Canta che ti passa,"... sing and it will pass.

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