

Cheryl Fisher

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Fisher in fast lane

By Mike Bell

It seems odd when **Cheryl Fisher** talks about having a little trepidation before she went to Toronto to record her latest CD *Joyride: Life In the Jazz Lane*.

The vocalist says she was a little intimidated by the reputations of the players she was about to record with.

I'm certain the musicians could say the exact same thing about Fisher.

The one-time fixture on the local scene—she now divides her time between Alberta and Florida—is one of this country's brightest and best jazz voices, having honed her instrument over the past two decades performing and studying at home and abroad.

"There are no shortcuts to mastering your craft—there are just no shortcuts," says the woman, who also teaches the art. "You have to put the hours in, you have to spend the time and you have to get the experience."

That experience—earned everywhere from Paris to Vancouver—is clearly evident on her third and latest disc.

Joyride is a sleek open-air ride through contemporary jazz, driven by superb playing and, primarily, Fisher's cool, alluring delivery that sounds as effortless and as magical as merely drawing a breath.

It's also Fisher at her most accessible—something she says she had to learn was an OK thing to be, which she did when she was, not surprisingly, studying in the U.S.

"There's nothing that will break you out of your shell than when you're put into situations where you're dealing with 20-year-old divas who want to be the next **Whitney Houston** and are willing to do anything to succeed," she says of her time at the U of Miami.

"It was a real eye-opener for me...I realized it was OK to be centre stage, you're supposed to be centre stage, you're supposed to be comfortable in that spotlight."

The spotlight deservedly shines on Fisher tonight as she celebrates the release of *Joyride: Life In the Jazz Lane*.

Cheryl