

Cheryl Fisher

Articles

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Great Escapes

Alberta's jazz diva Masters her craft

By Alex Frazer-Harrison

When you think of jazz, places like Bragg Creek and Sylvan Lake don't immediately come to mind.

Yet for Alberta's own jazz diva Cheryl Fisher, not only does she celebrate the beauty of the vocal style known as jazz—she's also sharing pieces of her life in Alberta with audiences around the world.

"If it is a good tune, it touches people on a universal level," Fisher said on the phone from her home in Sylvan Lake.

"The feeling of being comfortable and at home...it's all universal.

"My daughter-in-law tells me my style is 'acid-folk'," she laughed.

"I think in jazz there's a lot of room for new approaches."

Fisher has been a well-known face on the local jazz scene for several years now, appearing in clubs and recording two popular CDs, *Slow Hand Jazz* and *Too Late to Hurry*.

Fisher came into jazz by way of pop, and credits musician Ernie Castle and a relative who used to teach opera at the University of Calgary for steering her in the direction of jazz.

"Jazz is having a huge resurgence—there's a new generation of swing lovers who are really young," she said, adding jazz appeals to music lovers wanting to go to that next level above swing music—she compares it to drinking champagne.

"You start off liking stuff that's sweet and bubbly...Baby Duck...but as you listen to jazz more and more you want to listen to other types of jazz—you get tired of Baby Duck and want to try a drier wine."

Fisher enjoys composing her own music, or writing lyrics to older instrumental pieces. Although she says she isn't "up to snuff" yet to accompany herself on piano, she doesn't rule that out in the future.

This fall, Fisher returns to the University of Miami School of Music to complete her Master's degree in Jazz Vocal Performance. But before she goes, she'll be showcasing at two locations in Calgary over the next couple of weeks—audiences will be able to hear some of the songs she plans to perform as part of her thesis next year.

Fisher said she wants her degree so that she can better communicate with fellow musicians, "in their first language."

And that, she says, will translate into even better music, compositions and performances for her audiences.

Cheryl Fisher and Friends perform July 23 and 24 at Charlie's Wine Bar and Grille, 501 17 Ave. S.W. Call 229-2090 for more information.

Later, from Aug. 5 to 7, Fisher will team up with guitarist Allan Vance at the Embarcadero, 208 17 Ave. S.E. Call 263-0848 for more information on that gig.

Fisher returns to the University of Miami later in August.

Cheryl