

Kristina

Some people appear to be driven continually toward some *thing*. From the day they're born, they're happiest when in motion, constantly striking out for new territories, exploring vast continents, crossing international boundaries. Jazz vocalist Kristina Smith can claim life membership in this peripatetic group. Literally born in a car, Kristina entered the world already in motion. She was already vocalizing, too, as her mother remembers, "crying soulfully...and on key."

Kristina and her family moved to Oakland, CA when she was three years old. She was fortunate to have a sixth grade teacher who saw value in teaching her students to embrace another culture and its musical beauty. By singing in Japanese, Kristina discovered that music could be a visceral, motivating, moving experience in any language.

When she was accepted to Mills College in Oakland, CA, on a dance scholarship, Kristina continued to delve into the rhythmic variations of many cultures while choreographing her dance programs at Mills. However, faced with a trick knee, she soon turned her attention to conveying her ideas vocally. Kristina continued to gain experience by engaging audiences in the San Francisco Bay Area venues and art houses.

During summer vacations in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Kristina studied at the Maria Benitez Institute for Spanish Arts and performed with the Gitano Singers and Dancers. The thriving Flamenco community of Santa Fe gave Kristina a chance to soak up the Latin rhythms and enrich her appreciation of the Spanish counter-culture.

Kristina's journey would eventually lead her to the studio arranger, producer, trombonist, and Patois Records proprietor, Wayne Wallace. In this collaboration, titled "**Offshore Echoes**," Kristina has tied together many musical elements that embrace exactly who *Kristina* is.

Kristina's choice of "Cherokee" reflects her own paternal Native-American roots mixed with her German heritage, to the songs "Take me to Aruanda" and the Portuguese lyrics of "Ilu Aye," Kristina examined the close affinity she has to *Samba*. With African roots in Angola on her mother's side of the family, as well as European and Native American ancestry on her father's side, Kristina honors her multiracial - multicultural lineage with rich rhythmic traditions from three continents. This makes Kristina unique, as she herself embodies lineage from the Americas, Africa, and European continents.

She respects the lyric by singing in clear and understandable terms. Influenced by her family's delightful sense of humor and aptitude for storytelling, Kristina delivers beautiful adaptations of songs from the recent and not-so-recent past. Wayne Wallace's arrangements embellish the melody with rich orchestrations and he adds just the right accents to provide a solid foundation for Kristina to realize her vision.

Kristina's message on this recording is hopeful and positive. "Never be afraid to love, never be afraid to just be, cast away the chains of doubt, have the courage to be free..." "open your eyes, you can fly"... and indeed she does.

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