

BIO

Diana Panton

vocal

Diana Panton has quietly become one of the brightest lights on the jazz scene today. Her work has been consistently praised by listeners and music critics alike for her ethereal vocals, exceptional song selection and emotional intensity. "Her diaphanous vocal sound never insists and her high speed vibrato is like the beat of a hummingbird's heart - natural, untainted and pure." (Lesley Mitchell-Clarke, *Wholenote Magazine*)

Her keen aesthetic sense has attracted the attention of some of the jazz world's most respected masters. When Order of Canada and legendary multi-instrumentalist Don Thompson first heard Panton sing at age 19, he recommended she audition for the reputed jazz workshop at the Banff Center for the Arts (Canada). There, she studied under Norma Winstone (and in subsequent visits, Jay Clayton and Sheila Jordan). "When the great singer Sheila Jordan said Diana Panton 'sounds like the sweetest bird you'll ever hear', she helped define some of the ephemeral delicacy that marks Panton as unique." (Stuart Broomer, *Toronto Life*)

Before recording her first album, Panton completed an Honours Masters degree in French literature and fulfilled a teaching engagement at the University of Paris (France), followed by a position as a French Sessional Lecturer at McMaster University (Canada). She then completed teaching qualifications in French, Visual and Dramatic Arts which would eventually lead to her current position at Westdale Secondary (Canada).

When the time finally arrived to go into the studio, national award-winning guitarist Reg Schwager was invited to join Don Thompson for some stellar accompaniment behind Panton's pure vocals. The late great Montreal jazz critic Len Dobbin called ...*yesterday perhaps* one of the finest debut CDs he had heard in years! It landed Diana on the covers of *VIEW* and *NOW Magazine* and the album made *NOW's* TOP 10 Discs of the Year. The album was also awarded a Silver Disc Award upon its release in Japan in 2011.

Since her initial CD release, Panton's impressive catalogue of internationally acclaimed albums have garnered numerous honours, including two JUNO wins, a second Silver Disc Award in Japan, five JUNO nominations, nine Hamilton Music Awards, a host of National Jazz Award nominations, Canadian and American Independent Music Award nominations. Her sophomore album, *if the moon turns green ...* was the first place jury-selection to perform at the *Jazz à Juan Révélation*s in France where she was voted *Première Dauphine* by the Juan public.

Her last album, *I Believe in Little Things* charted simultaneously on both the Jazz and Children's Music Charts on Billboard in the US and went to Number 1 on iTunes and Amazon in Canada and the US, including topping Amazon.com's Movers and Shakers Chart. The album has received significant critical praise, including being selected as the one of the top albums of 2016 by School Library Journal and *DownBeat*.

On her latest release, *solstice/equinox*, Diana leads a stellar cast of Canada's brightest luminaries, including three Order of Canada recipients: Guido Basso, Phil Dwyer and Don Thompson, plus four-time National Jazz Guitarist of the Year, Reg Schwager. The album is a collection of songs about the changing seasons. It went to #1 on the HMV Jazz Chart in Hong Kong and Books.com in Taiwan. It was also voted one of the Top Albums of 2017 by *ICI Musique*. In 2018, *solstice/equinox* was an Editor's Pick in *DownBeat Magazine*.

Panton is the recipient of the 2016 Hamilton Arts Award for Music, the 2017 Woman of Distinction in Arts/Culture/Design by the Hamilton YWCA and the 2017 OSSTF Wayne Clark Teaching Award and a 2017 Hamilton Wentworth District School Board's Profiling Excellence distinction. Diana was also recently featured as the guest host on CBC Radio. Previous Tonic radio host Tim Tamashiro named her one of Canada's TOP 5 Jazz Vocalists. The jazz listenership at JAZZ.FM voted Diana onto their list of the Top 25 of Canada's Most Significant Jazz Musicians.