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## Chantale Gagne: An Interview

Canadian pianist talks about her new recording and the future...



Steve Caputo

SC - Chantale congrats on the new recording. Please tell us a little background on the project.- the compositions, the musicians etc..

CG - Thank you very much! In 2010, a couple of years after the release of my first album “Silent Strength”, I decided I was ready to seriously start working on a new project. Of course, in between the two albums I kept working on my music, searching and getting inspired but I had the feeling I had to put something together for a new CD. I first of all, finally decided of the instrumentation and finalized my music in regards of this quartet formation: vibraphone, piano, bass and drums. Born and raised in the countryside, I think I needed to go back a little to my roots and salute the nature that had surrounded me all of my life. Living in NYC is quite intense and I needed to at least feel this peace. “Wisdom Of The Water”, the title of my album expresses this state of mind and was actually the first piece to be composed for the entire project. The rest, honestly, came naturally. Vibraphonist Joe Locke was most definitely a superb addition to my existing trio; Peter Washington on bass and Lewis Nash on drums. They all felt in one instant, the spirit of my music. I found that the blend piano-vibraphone was quite enchanting and that you could even discern at some point, drops of water or flowing water...

SC- As a composer Chantale is there any one thing that inspires you most to compose?

CG - Frankly, the answer is simple, life... past, present and future. What you lived and experienced or how you feel at the present time and more than anything, what you dream of. All of this is obviously strongly influenced by what's going on earth.

SC - How do you maintain the patience and persistence that is required in today's crowded jazz recording world?

CG - Well, I'm doing it for myself first because I love what I do. Of course, I'm always hoping my music will touch other people than me. I believe that if you're true with yourself, there is a good chance that it will in some way, go to other people's heart.

SC - Tell us about the title of the recording.. "Wisdom of the Water" – How did that come about?

CG - I would spend my whole life in the water. Water keeps you alive, it keeps you healthy. Water is beautiful and majestic (and yes, scary at times). There is a lot to learn just by watching water. As it is written on my album: "...let life stream and dance like water..."

SC - A question I have been asking all jazz artists in this profile column.... Right now there are two schools of thought when it comes to the question "What is the current state of Jazz" Some believe is very healthy and some believe its worse than ever.. What is your take on this question and what are some of your current views of Jazz music today.

CG - The whole music business has changed in the past years, not only jazz. CD stores closing down, bars and clubs closing down, easy accessibility to the music on the web, iTunes, Amazon etc. There are ways to make it work for us though. We have to take advantage of this new technology and what it offers.

Strictly about jazz now, it is indeed a crowded field. We have to be creative and keep this art form alive, without forgetting its roots and the great masters. Jazz is a small world and cannot compete with pop or rock music. As long we move forward and try to evolve with it, hopefully, jazz will remain with us.

SC - As far as influences on the piano who would you say influenced you the most?

CG - Ah! What a difficult question! The very first jazz record I listened to was "Bill Evans-Portrait In Jazz". My brother was listening to it when I was 13 or 14 I think. I fell in love! Since then, Bill Evans definitely stayed one of my favorite pianists of all time. There are many other musicians I could mention here....

SC- What do you have planned for the future on the writing and recording side?

CG - Writing music is very dear to me. I am now starting to explore strings writing and arranging. I am not saying that this is going to be my definite next project but I like to know about different aspects of music. I believe that everything you learn, listen to or analyze can lead you sometimes to a place you would have never thought! Music is full of surprises, you rarely know what's next!

SC - Chantale if you had one artist you could record with - who would it be?

CG - One? Can I mention two at least? Tony Bennett, Kenny Barron.

For more information go to: [www.chantalegagne.com](http://www.chantalegagne.com)

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