

## Jan Findlay

As a little girl, Jan Findlay would happily sit on her mother's lap while she played piano. She'd place Jan's hands on top of hers so she could feel what it was like to feel and experience the music. She had begun to absorb music's power and passion, dominant forces in her life ever since.

Through her school years Jan performed in choruses, musical theater, and in her first jazz trio. Later she was a guest vocalist for several big bands and toured her cabaret act through the Manhattan circuit.

A benchmark in Jan's musical career was meeting Howard Williams, a jazz and blues man who had established his reputation by performing with John Coltrane and Woody Herman. For a few years Jan and Howard performed regularly as a piano/vocal duo at Robert's in New York City. During this time Howard pursued his dream of establishing his own big band. His regarded status within the jazz community and his skill in creating challenging and fresh charts combined to attract top musicians with credits that included Woody Herman, Blood Sweat and Tears, Count Basie, Gerry Mulligan, Bobby Short, Wynton Marsalis, and the Glen Miller Orchestra. Jan was invited to be the band's solo vocalist, and so it remained for nearly ten years.

The Monday night experience at Robert's afforded Jan the opportunity to listen to and perform with some of New York's premiere musicians, including Frank Vicari, Jerry Weldon, Doug Lawrence, Virginia Mayhew, Danny Hayes, Bill Mobley, John Eckard, and Don Leight. The clientele in the cozy Robert's were true jazz buffs, including jazz men of the 40's and 50's who had played with greats such as Duke Ellington, Buddy Rich, and Stan Getz. Jan was taken under the collective wings of these sidemen. They shared stories of jazz in its heyday and introduced her to songs that would suit and stretch her vocal style. This was indeed a unique jazz institute of musicianship and culture.

When Robert's closed its doors in late 1998 the band moved to its current home, the Garage Restaurant and Cafe, Greenwich Village, NYC. It was there that Jan met Jay D'Amico, an extraordinarily talented and versatile jazz pianist. A few club dates as vocalist with the Jay D'Amico Trio were all that was necessary for to know that it was a good match. Jan and The Jay D'Amico Trio have been together now for seven years.

When Jan was a teenager performing club dates in her first jazz trio she demonstrated superior vocal talent, with superb phrasing and a commitment to honest lyrical expression. She entered the New York jazz scene as an adult and immediately her talent was recognized. The unique jazz experiences she has had since have vaulted her to yet another level.

Jan is one of those rare singers who can transition effectively from a ballad that is offered with touchingly gorgeous vocals to a blues tune that has a soulful alto edge, both delivered with honest emotion. She will "play" with a melody line, but she doesn't subscribe to the theory that a jazz singer must totally re-create the melody line. She does believe that sometimes subtle nuances enhance the beauty that is already in the song. Remember, it's very possible that the song may have been learned sitting on her mother's lap.