

Janice Friedman: Pianist/Vocalist/Composer/Lyricist/Arranger/Teacher

www.janicefriedman.com

You can hear Janice Friedman perform live most any day in NYC. She has a residency at The Center Bar in the Time Warner Building playing what one person described as “anything but background music.” Sailing on the NY harbor by day, she’s the pianist, vocalist and master of ceremonies on The Bateaux New York. When she’s called to take off from one of those spots, you can hear her in all sorts of configurations, solo to big band, in concerts or at one of the many jazz clubs in town such as Mezzrow and Kitano either featured as a leader or supportive as a side person. In between all of that she is teaching, composing, doing rehearsals, and bringing her life’s creative work, a story in the music, called *Salt Suite* to fruition. This is the life of a successful and versatile NYC musician.

The career of Janice Friedman was established early on. Brought up on some of the greatest piano trios of all time- she loved Errol Garner, Oscar Peterson, Marian McPartland, Bill Evans and Ahmad Jamal. By the age of 5 she knew she was going to be a jazz musician. There was no question about it. She was at that piano and organ and into it! A bit later she started her classical training and very quickly was winning international piano awards, titles, trophies leading to concert appearances at Carnegie Hall. As early as elementary school, Janice was helping with all music projects. She was earning her living in the music world by her early teens, teaching, accompanying and performing. She kept up that consistent schedule while earning a jazz studies degree with honors from the prestigious music school at Indiana University. Within a few years of her return to the east coast Janice was whisked off to tour with the Woody Herman Orchestra- a rare and impressive opening into a world that at that time was not open to female jazz musicians. She returned to NY to play steady engagements and notable concerts with her trio, solo or in big bands and could be seen in many of the famed jazz clubs and other city establishments, keeping non-stop busy through every year.

There have been numerous world-wide tours, jazz festivals and concert appearances. A highlight along the way was the opportunity to play 2nd piano with pianist Marian McPartland on tour and on her popular NPR show *Piano Jazz*. In describing her, Marian said “She has a most distinctive touch.” *Janice was the lone female represented on the stage with 32 other performers in the Swing Under 40 Concert, part of the JVC Jazz Festival in NYC. NY Times Jazz critic wrote of her “Explosive piano playing carrying the aura and variety of a big band with just bass and drums.”*

Janice Friedman has been the pianistic contributor to many recordings. She has been the go to person for lyricists needing music and vocalists needing support. A fine example of all of her skills can be heard on Suede’s *Dangerous Mood*, where she was called to arrange for full big band, lead the rehearsals and, of course, play. Her own discography starts with two trio CDs, *Tryptych: A Trio of Trios* followed by *Finger Paintings*. With *Swinging for the Ride*, her vocal skills along were on display along with her keyboard talents and she threw in healthy helping of original compositions showing the full breadth of who she is. Then came a long-awaited solo project, *Solo: Half and Half*, covering a swath of twentieth-century music from Fats Waller and Hoagy Carmichael to Duke Ellington and Lennon & McCartney. From ballads to boogie, from swing to bop, these mostly familiar musical choices are given fresh interpretation.

The most recent release, *Janice Friedman Trio: Live at Kitano*, is her fifth as a leader and features the amazing abilities of the famed Victor Lewis on drums and Ed Howard on bass. The sound and feeling on this CD are extra special and, as usual, authentic. From Andrea Canter, “This is a musician with chops to burn on two instruments — piano and voice, with a deep well of compositional as well as improvisational ideas, many muses but a very individual style.”

Janice is currently hard at work on an original musical, *Salt Suite*, a most personal project that she’s been developing for many years. Whether by sheer stubbornness, artistic wizardry, or good fortune, she’s making music that moves us through all the twists and turns of a century of jazz piano, judiciously adding human voice to a keyboard that never stops talking. From her recent appearance at the Rochester International Jazz Festival: “It was as if she were inside the song.”