

Deborah Latz Bio

In **Toward Love**, her 2004 debut jazz CD, **Deborah Latz** weaves ten standards into an odyssey of love - the story of a woman falling in love, falling out of love, and moving **Toward Love** again. With perfect control and a voice, which by turns is sexy, sultry and playful, **Deborah Latz** leads us to places, both distant and achingly familiar.

"When the project began," Deborah explains, "it seemed the stars were in alignment, and my own life's odyssey had brought me to the beginning of a new course - I had found my true love; I had gathered a great bunch of musicians - it was now time to tell my story. Jazz, for me, has always been the medium of truth, the great tunes and lyrics alive each time I sing them - intoxicating. Everyone has a story to tell, and this is mine."

As a young girl growing up in the San Fernando Valley, Deborah was always humming or singing a favorite standard. She loved spending Saturday and Sunday afternoons watching the "road" pictures with Dorothy Lamour, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, and MGM musicals with Lena Horne, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Those performers had style, class, mystery and a quirky sense of humor. Their characters were looking for love, finding love or losing love and Deborah just soaked it in. As a teenager, living in the Bay Area, Deborah was entranced with singers like Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Frank Sinatra. As an adult, living in San Francisco and New York, it was Miles Davis, Stan Getz, Mel Torme, Rosemary Clooney, John Coltrane, Etta James, Alberta Hunter, Billie Holiday, Dave Brubeck and Johnny Hartman.

Deborah studied music and theater at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, CA and the British American Drama Academy in Oxford, England, and went on to perform in dramatic and musical theater. She recorded the original song, 'I'm Neurotic Over You' for the off-Broadway comedy, *High Infidelity* starring John Davidson and Morgan Fairchild at The Promenade Theater and in 1999 won the Best Actress Award at The Jerzy Grotowski Theatre Festival in Wroclaw, Poland, for her performance in the one-woman drama, *Juliet*. She received rave reviews in New York and Europe for the one-woman musical that she wrote, produced and performed, *Travels With Ma Own Self*.

"I have been around the block when it comes to love. You could say that I've practically been around the world when it comes to love. At 26, I packed up my belongings and threw them on my back, determined to find love in another country if not in New York, and I was on the road for many months, from the Mid-East to Northern Europe."

Deborah explored Paris, Munich, Amsterdam, Spoleto, and so many other places – their rhythm and life, their jazz. In Spoleto she entertained an Italian men's club accompanying herself on guitar and singing a collection of Italian arias and jazz standards. "After a compelling rendition of 'O Sole Mio', one of the men offered to buy me lunch, and I accepted. Bruno was a compact fellow, just a little taller than I was; he had a big nose, and

he had a Ferrari. He insisted that he drive me to Rome where I would stay with him and would have my own bed. I took him up on the offer and slept in the loft space over his kitchen table. Bruno was a gentleman. He showed me Rome, took me to the best restaurants, and his ex-girlfriend, Vittoria, hated me. She towered over Bruno, was built like a quarterback, and most impressively, was an opera singer. I'll cut this short by saying that she threw rocks at me through the kitchen window, spray painted the Ferrari with some very choice Italian slang, tossed garbage in the driver's seat and stood beneath Bruno's bedroom window screaming obscenities in five different languages. Our romance never had a chance."

Outside of The Louvre Deborah was singing jazz standards *a cappella* when a young woman invited her to her family's atelier for dinner that same evening. Her mother was a concert pianist and was hosting an artistic salon at her home – with an operatic flare Deborah sang 'You Go To My Head' for her supper. "And that's where I met an American expatriate who taught media and sexual politics at the University of Paris. He also had artist evenings and invited me to his atelier where I met journalists from around the world, actors, models, you name it. My new friend Jim had shared the company of Marguerite Duras, Samuel Beckett, Peter Brook, Grace Jones, Fran Liebowitz, John Lennon and many more. I was enthralled by his stories and his openness. We drank French wine, and he showed me photos of himself with luminaries of the theater, music, and literary worlds. Then, he asked me to join him on a trip to Edinburgh. Jim was in his fifties and a pleasant looking man, but I realized he had bedded at least ten times his age in women and I decided I wasn't about to join their ranks. And so, I was demoted to the floor with a pillow and a signed copy of his book, 'Thanks for Coming'.

"Some time later, I was lying on the beach in Eilat, Israel right near the border to Egypt, wearing my leopard thong and rhinestone cat sunglasses when I met Uli and Hermann, a son and father on holiday from Munich. Uli was nineteen, tall, lithe and sporting European cut swimming trunks, which highlighted a tattoo of a hummingbird on his right buttock. I couldn't take my eyes off him. They asked me where I was staying and I pointed to a patch of sand up the beach. I ended up being their guest in a fancy hotel for three days. We went dancing, sailed the Red Sea on a chartered yacht, laughed and learned about one another, and Uli and I fell in love. But... I had a bus to catch and then a ship to Italy. The three of us cried and held onto each other the day I left. Three months later, as I promised, I made my way to their home in Munich. It was there that Uli took me to Allotria, and I sat in with jazz musicians from around the world. I recaptured Uli's heart that night with *My Funny Valentine*. I decided at that moment to learn German and figure out how to make a living in Munich. But, after a month of drinking Bavarian bier and eating schweinshaxen, I found myself yearning for the sturm und drang of New York and realized that young and beautiful Uli was really a stepping-stone toward my true love. So..., I bought a one-way ticket to JFK."

Deborah's travels gave her plenty of time to reflect and to discover her strengths and weaknesses. What she came to realize was that she had grown to love herself. That revelation led Deborah to a moment, thirteen years later, sitting next to her future husband in a cool East Village bar in New York City, moving **Toward Love**.

"And so, to my fellow travelers, lovers of love, and survivors of love's heartache and joy, this album is for you."