

Jazz Vocalist Karla Harris

With a style and range that runs from velvety vulnerability to soul-tinged power, singer Karla Harris is known for jazz vocals that bring honeyed nuance, sophisticated warmth and dynamic delivery to the songs she sings. She weaves her American influences of jazz, swing, blues and soul, as well as an affinity for Latin jazz, into a multi-textured musical tapestry, blending boundaries while remaining respectful to the roots of each tune. Her art lies not only in expansive vocals, but also in a knack for tapping into the emotion of a song and delivering it fully.

Karla has performed at events such as the Newport Jazz Festival, Cathedral Park Jazz Festival, Bite of Oregon festival, Portland Jazz Festival, Nantucket Arts Festival, and the Atlanta Jazz Party. Of her performances, WSIE Radio says Karla is “a powerful singer at ease in any setting, a singer for all seasons who makes any song memorable.” Clubscene writes, “She engages us and makes us happy to be spending the evening with her.” Her versatility is compelling. As one fan put it, “Karla has more dimensions than the string theory.”

Karla released her first CD, “Twice As Nice,” a collaboration with internationally acclaimed bassist Tom Kennedy, in 2007. Featuring Kennedy’s arrangements, the recording is a collection of standards including two songs each from some favorite songwriters. Of the project, Jazz Scene Magazine writes, “Always respectful of her American Songbook choices, Harris has superb intonation and a contemporary, appealing approach to the songs.”

A native of St. Louis, Karla relocated to Portland, Oregon, in 2004, where she was a mainstay in that city’s celebrated jazz scene. A 2012 move brought her to Atlanta, where she was introduced to L.A.-based pianist, composer, arranger and educator Ted Howe, producer of her latest recording, “Karla Harris Sings the Dave and Lola Brubeck Songbook.” The CD is the first-ever studio recording dedicated exclusively to vocal versions of 11 Brubeck compositions with lyrics written by his wife of 70 years, Lola. It features Karla with Ted Howe, Tom Kennedy, drummer Dave Weckl and saxophonist Bob Sheppard. The project is scheduled for release in February 2015 on Summit Records, with a debut live performance following at the Sarasota Jazz Festival.