

KRIS ADAMS BIOGRAPHY - LONG

Possessing an innate sense of time and a voice rich with the echoes of the masters, vocalist Kris Adams is truly a unique artist in the world of jazz. For over 30 years, she has sung at venues and given educational instruction worldwide, and has shared stages, recording studios, and teaching clinics with such luminaries as Joe Lovano, Luciana Souza, Gregory Hutchinson, Billy Drummond, Wayne Escoffery, Michelle Hendricks, and Paul Bley. Kris also has three solo albums to her credit, as well as multiple guest appearances and featured turns on a variety of jazz recordings and projects. She has adjudicated at many national music festivals, as well as participated in conferences around the world.

Born in Georgia to a music-loving family, Kris's first vocal memory is singing along to "Walk Right In" by the Rooftop Singers as it played on her parents' car radio. A "Navy brat," Adams and her family followed her pilot father from the American south overseas to Germany, finally returning to the United States and settling in Connecticut in 1987. It was there that she joined a children's musical theater group that traveled and performed all around New England, thus furthering her love of music.

Soon, a steady diet of Chick Corea, Return To Forever, and other fusion greats stoked the flames of a passion for jazz music, and Kris scored her first professional gig at the age of 19 with a Hartford-area Latin jazz band called Talking Drums, which featured jazz saxophonist Tom Chapin. A move to Boston, Massachusetts, in 1979 to attend the Berklee College of Music did not keep her from gigging in the Hartford scene, however, and she continued performing with an area vocal trio called Haiku.

After graduating from Berklee in 1982, Kris began performing professionally all over the northeast, and subsequently joined the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music Extension Division. There, in addition to her role as instructor, she pursued and received a Master's degree in Jazz Studies in 1993, studying with respected jazz artists Paul Bley (keyboards), Jimmy Guiffre (reeds), and Dominique Eade (vocals), as well as participating in workshops with such luminaries as Sun Ra, T.S. Monk, Jr., and Claire Fischer.

In 1999, Kris received a grant to finance the recording of her first album entitled "This Thing Called Love," which was released on her own Jazzbird label. The track list on this CD, while consisting of familiar songs, channeled the unique and offbeat jazz styles and singing mannerisms of those who had influenced her the most, artists like Elis Regina, Ursula Dudziak, and Norma Winstone. Adams followed up this successful release in 2002 with her second album, "Weaver of Dreams," which received the Blue Chip Jazz CD Award for "Top Vocals of 2002" from jazz critic, educator, and historian Dr. Herb Wong (IAJE Journal).

Like many jazz singers of her generation, Kris Adams combines her singing career with a full teaching schedule. In addition to her current position as a full-time professor in the Harmony, Voice, and Ensemble departments of the Berklee College of Music, she is also a member of the Performing Music faculty at Wellesley College. Kris is also a successful author, publishing her book "Sing Your Way Through Theory – A Music Theory Workbook For The Contemporary Singer" (Gerard & Sarzin) in May of 2011.

"Longing," her latest album and a collaboration with trumpeter/arranger Greg Hopkins which features a 7 to 13 piece ensemble, has received a four star rating from Downbeat Magazine and is now available from CDBaby, iTunes, Amazon.com, and Spotify.