

# Jazz artist weathers life's storms

## New album for MacLachlan

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CALGARY HERALD

Like most artists, you can chart Lorna MacLachlan's life through her work.

In hindsight, she's made it a little easier, thanks to some of the titles of her original jazz collections.

Her first CD, for example, was released over two decades ago and titled Jigsaw.

"I think that's a pretty good title for somebody who really didn't have a clue about who they were," MacLachlan says, sipping a coffee in the bustling Lazy Loaf and Kettle restaurant in northwest Calgary.

So, too, was the title of her 2011 release Time 4 Change — an apt one for the singer, pianist, composer and teacher.

"The minute I put that album out into the universe my life changed dramatically," MacLachlan says; she left a prestigious teaching position, her marriage "changed" and she lost both of her parents — most recently, her mother, who died this past Easter weekend, days before we sat down together.

"None of these things I consider to be negative," she says philosophically. "They're difficult sometimes but they are definitely major shifts in how you perceive things."

Which brings us to her newest album Feet On Ground, which she releases Saturday with a show at the National Music Centre.

The record is a rather sumptuous and spirit-filled garden party collection of instrumental and vocal compositions — light, airy, welcoming and alive.

It was recorded in Kelowna, with her longtime bandmates, including saxophonist Richard Harding and drummer Robin Tufts — both of whom she's worked with, on and off, for the past 30 years — and bassist Stefano Valdo, part of things for the last half-dozen years.

"These are my brothers," she says of the crew, including producer Claire Lawrence, who all gave up a week of their lives to work with her in the woods, help bring her ideas to life.

"They are truly my brothers ... You can't help yourself. You fall in love with people left, right and centre because it's music. And music is a glue and you can't help but discover a different side of music through music that it's such a privilege to get to know them in that way."

As an extension, Feet On Ground also gives some insight into MacLachlan and her life.

There are a number of incredibly personal compositions, such as: Bittersweet, which was written for her mother after the passing of Lorna's father.

SEE MACLACHLAN ON B4

## Singer has both Feet on Ground

MACLACHLAN FROM B1

The song Alison is for her daughter.

There are other tracks into which you can read a great deal, such as the sad, pretty After the Fall and the truly heart-wrenching yet defiant Don't You Cry For Me.

"Absolutely," she says of the songs as a window into her world. "But I don't think that was my intent, actually. I probably write to know me.

"I feel so lucky to have it ... a record of me talking to me about this or that — usually relationships or other people and their relationships.

It's about connecting with other people but it started with a need to connect with myself."

And that returns us to the idea of album titles and their significance to MacLachlan's life.

No longer does she see herself as the young artist attempting to piece together her identity. Nor is she at the point where she needs or requires changes in her life.

Feet On Ground finds her a different person entirely.

"I find that as you go on in life, it's

harder and harder to fool yourself into believing that somehow you're going to get out of this without too many messes.

"Because life is just a bit messy," she says thoughtfully.

"The older I get, the more I realize that everybody who looks like they're not dealing with messes are actually dealing with messes in their own way.

"So, yeah, my life has been a little bit messy.

"And I've found that I'm better at cleaning messes up. I'm much stronger and more grounded than I ever thought I was.

"So Feet On Ground is really just where I feel like I am right now. I don't think the messes are going to change but I have a feeling that my feet are in the right place to deal with them when they come."

As to where her musical and life journey will take her next, that, too, is something she's not overly concerned about.

"My motto would have to be: Left foot, right foot, left foot," she says. "I don't know where each one of them are going but they are on the ground."

She laughs.



Lorna MacLachlan

"I'll probably discover actually that this is all bulls — t," she says.

"And my next album will be You're So Full of It."

Lorna MacLachlan releases Feet On Ground Saturday at the National Music Centre.

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