

Tri-Met P.I.'s new career
in jazz singing

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THE BEE

TriMet legal secretary relaunches self as P.I. and blues singer

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FOR THE BEE

Periodically, it's important to establish a new dream, find a fresh path, or reinvent yourself. Linda Lee Michelet used to be a working mother with a part time job as legal secretary at TriMet's headquarters in the Brooklyn neighborhood. Now in her 40's, following a divorce and with her children grown, she decided it was time to do something different.

Today she is a licensed private investigator for TriMet by day, and a glamorous cabaret blues singer by night. The confidence she displays is a counterpoint to her new persona. "I've never been happier," she says. "I just released my debut CD."

Michelet lives on S.E. 35th Avenue these days, but grew up in Southern California. "My folks owned Eader's Bakery in Ontario," she says. "My Dad had a huge jazz collection, and I grew up singing along with the

music of all the great jazz artists. I've always sung because I enjoyed it, just to entertain myself and my kids. When I was on my own again, I joined a Portland group called 'Cleopatra and the Crocodiles' as a lead singer. We sang retro-Country style music, and I had the most fun I've ever had with them."

Michelet found that she had a real talent for singing and performing. "I was a late bloomer," she says. "My daughter Lindsay, who is now an actress, introduced me to tap dancing about 15 years ago. We used to dance and sing together at classes and around the house, just for fun. She was instrumental in getting me into live performing. We actually wrote, choreographed, and performed a musical routine for Mothers' Day called 'My Baby and Me' that was a rousing success. My son Erik was the drummer—it was a real family endeavor."

For the past two years, Michelet sang at the Waterfront Blues Festival in Portland. She is currently booked on the last Saturday of every month at the Heathman Hotel on Broadway in downtown Portland. Her credits also include performances in "Fiddler on the Roof" at Art in the Park, Jazz on the Pond, and being part of the Waterfront Blues Cruise. This summer she's booked for a gala event for the Porsche International Club at Jantzen Beach. "I'm so lucky," she reflects. "I get to do what I always wanted to do: I dress up in fancy ball gowns and sing what I love—it's just incredible to me."

Through both chance and talent, Michelet has had some lucky breaks. "Terry Currier, owner of Music Millennium, heard me sing, and offered me a chance to sing a tribute to Peggy Lee at his store. This was followed by another tribute—to

Julie London. I finally had the chance to really do justice to these great old jazz arrangements that I grew up with. I was contacted by a representative from Pacific Talent here in Portland who heard me perform. He got me a regular spot at the Heathman Hotel, and now serves as my agent."

This "honey-voiced siren with a velvety voice", as she has been described, has become a popular attraction in Portland's blues and jazz scene. She has sung with big bands and small combos, on live radio and TV, and in musical theater. "I'm mostly a cabaret-style singer. I always wear full-length gloves and ball gowns," she says. "On my CD, I sing a swinging blues tribute to"

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Peggy Lee and other great **women of jazz** with a five-piece combo. These guys are wonderful: Greg Goebel on piano, Willie Blair on bass, Bob Wahlke on drums, Neal Grandstaff on guitar, and Dick Titterington on trumpet. We always have a great time."

Michelet's debut CD was recorded live at the Heathman Hotel. Copies are available through Music Millennium, CD Baby, and at www.linda-michelet.com. Terry Currier, owner of Music Millennium, writes of her performance: "As you listen, you are swept into the era of the great supper clubs....Her sophistication and glamour sets her apart from the typical cabaret singer. This live recording sounds like an artist who is at the top of her career."

Linda Michelet's dramatic and sultry tribute to the legendary women of jazz evokes a reprise of the "spirit of the blues". It also points to the revitalization of the human spirit. "I'm sort of like a phoenix," muses Michelet. "I decided that I had to either make it on my own, or not even try. I pushed forward with what I knew how to do, and it worked."



Photo by OWEN CAREY

Linda Michelet, singing at the Heathman Hotel.