

Ingrid Jensen

Ingrid Jensen's trumpet playing is as fresh and alive as her aptly named debut album, "Vernal Fields", released on the ENJA label. Although her playing has the influences of such greats as Miles Davis, Woddy Shaw and Art Farmer, Jensen is creating her own style and conceptions whether she is playing soft ballads or rapid-fire bop lines. With trumpet in hand, Jensen speaks volumes.

"Vernal Fields" won Canada's Juno Award as "Best Mainstream Album of 1995". The same year, Jensen received the "Best Newcomer Award" at the Cork Jazz Festival in Ireland and weeks later, won the second annual Carmine Caruso International Jazz Solo Trumpet Competition held in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In 1996, she performed throughout Europe, parts of Japan and Chile, and into North America playing with her own quartet, and big bands, such as the Maria Schneider Orchestra and DIVA. Jensen was selected to play in the All-Star ensemble at the Kennedy Center's Women in Jazz Festival.

Jensen, 30, was born in North Vancouver, where as a child she often listened to her mother who played ragtime and stride piano "for the sheer enjoyment of it." A graduate from Malaspina College in Canada, then Berklee College of Music in Boston, she moved to New York City, and was invited to tour Europe with the Vienna Art Orchestra Production "Fe & Males".

Following the tour with the VAO, she auditioned for a jazz trumpet professor position at Austria's Bruckner Conservatory, becoming the youngest teacher (age 25) at the Conservatory. She immersed herself in as much music as possible, sitting in with touring U.S. jazz musicians, including Lionel Hampton and his Golden Men of Jazz, where her performance with them caught the attention of ENJA records - and a record deal.

Jensen was busy in Europe, however, she longed to be living in New York City, for its energy and the variety of live music. New York City was also where she wanted to record her first album.

Opportunity knocked. In 1994, at a summer jazz workshop in Banff, she learned of an audition for a New York City-based big-band called DIVA. Jensen won the chair and moved back to the Big Apple and has been playing throughout the world ever since.

In fact, Jensen has a performance schedule that would make even the busiest airline pilot wince, dividing her time between several continents. She is an active clinician and guest artist, appearing at both the 1995 and 1996 International Association of Jazz Educators convention; Bowling Green University in Ohio; Berklee College of Music and Tufts University in Boston, and at the Courtenay Summer School of Music in Canada. She recently was an Artist-in-Residence at the Berlin Hochschule for Music.

Her career is moving forward, she says, because she focuses on the music instead of what she's accomplished. "I try to keep my life and music on a parallel course and my goal is to be growing in both realms. There are so many elements in music that can be discovered and expressed when we are honest about the direction that our lives are taking us. That's all I'm trying to do - follow the spirit of the muse and play."