

## Dina Blade - Press Kit



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Dina Blade is a singer with a deeply relaxed sense of time and swing who spent her early childhood watching old cartoons with jazz soundtracks and has been enthralled with the music ever since. She has graced stages in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Cuba and Brazil, singing at festivals, jazz clubs, schools, parties and other community events.

An effervescent performer with a devotion to the timeless songs from the 1930s and 40s Great American Songbook, Dina has created several thematic shows preserving the work of the master composers and lyricists from that era. For this reason she is a recipient of the American Masters Performance Initiative from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In lessons, workshops and master classes, Dina builds an easy rapport with students through gentle encouragement, helping each one find their own unique voice. She mentors many aspiring singers, passing along her knowledge about this great mode of expression with much enthusiasm and love.

As an American jazz artist, Dina's recordings are regularly featured on Music Choice National Syndicated Radio and can be heard both nationally and internationally. "Shall We Dance", her most recent release with her quintet Swingin' in the Rain, is perfect for dancing and includes fresh interpretations of jazz classics. "Bossa Amazônica", a collection of bossa nova and samba songs, was recorded in Acre, Brazil and features accompaniment by musicians from that region. Dina earned international acclaim for "I'm In the Mood For Love" featuring the lyrics of Dorothy Fields, and deejay Jim Wilke, Jazz Northwest's Host on KNKX, included the recording "My Romance" on his "Best of the Northwest" list. Other projects include "Sentimental Journey" featuring hits from the WWII era, and "Swonderful", celebrating popular jazz standards recorded with a world class rhythm section.

In addition to her skills as a vocalist, Dina is an accomplished guitarist. As a young child she learned to play folk songs on the guitar to accompany her singing, gradually expanding her repertoire to include American Jazz, Blues and Brazilian Bossa Nova. As an internationally known musician, Dina's popularity as a swinging vocal stylist continues to grow, and she maintains a busy schedule of performances and clinics designed to entertain and educate audiences of all ages.

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## **Dina Blade's Career and Performance Highlights:**

- \*CD Release for "Shall We Dance" with Swingin' in the Rain in Seattle, Wa., USA 2019
- \*CD release for Bossa Amazônica with Grupo Apuí in Seattle, Wa., USA 2016
- \*Masquerade Ball at the Century Ballroom, Seattle, Wa. 2014-19
- \*Jazz Concert at Teátro João Donato Performing Arts Center in Acre, Brazil 2014-16
- \*Jazz Concerts at Café Porão in Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil 2011-12
- \*Escola Acreana de Música (Music: Choir) Residency / Concert, Acre Brazil 2013 -14
- \*Dancing 'til Dusk annual outdoor swing dance series, Seattle, Wa. 2011 - 2018
- \*Magnolia Summerfest, Seattle Wa. 2010-15
- \*Rosehedge Annual Gala Fundraiser, Seattle, Wa. 2009-15
- \*NEA's American Masters Performance Initiative Recipient 2007-08
- \*Anacortes Jazz Festival, Anacortes, Wa. 2008-12
- \*Kirkland Waterfront Summer Concert Series, Kirkland, Wa. 2007-09
- \*Jazz Under the Stars Concert - Pacific Lutheran Univ., Tacoma, Wa. 2007-09
- \*Uma Celebração do Jazz Americano" Campinas, Brazil 2006
- \*"My Romance" CD on KPLU Jim Wilke's "Best of the Northwest 2006"
- \*Mountainview Concert Series, Mountainview Calif. 2005-18
- \*Pampas Club Vocalist with Floyd Standifer Quartet, Seattle, Wa. 2004-06
- \*Music and Dance Research in Northeastern Brazil (Bahia) 2005
- \*Museum of History and Industry - American Jazz meets Indian Khatak music and dance collaborative concert, Seattle 2004
- \*Whaler Bay Lodge Concert series, Galliano Island, BC, Canada 2004-06
- \*San Juan Arts Concert w/school jazz band & vocal clinics SJ Island, Wa. '04
- \*Twisp Jazz Concert Series, Merc Theater, Twisp, Wa. 2003
- \*"Red, Hot and Blue" Cole Porter Festival, Spokane, Wa. 2002
- \*Festival Internacional de Choros, Santiago de Cuba – Cuba Tour 1999
- \*Concerts on the Cove, Whidbey Island, Wa. 1995-96
- \*University of Washington, Kane Hall, World War Two Music Program, 1997 to present
- \*Seattle, King County and Timberland Public Libraries, Great American Songbook Composers and Lyricists of the 1930s & 40s music programs 1997 to present
- \*Festival of American Fiddle Tunes – children's program of songs, games, and dances, Port Townsend, Wa. 1996 to present
- \*University of Washington Ladies Musical Club presents Music in Seattle Public Schools – World music and dance assemblies 1995 to present
- \*Dance On Capitol Hill Underground Theater presents "Ya Gotta Wannit" an autobiographical music and dance production, Seattle, Wa. 1994
- \*Seattle Tap Dance Festival – song and tap dance headliner 1993-94
- \*Northwest Girlchoir – singing square dance commissioned, Seattle 1992
- \*Lady of the Lake Music & Dance Week, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 1991
- \*Blue Heron Arts Center Concert Series, Vashon Island, Wa. 1990
- \*KADAC Arts Center Concert Series, Kelowna, B.C., Canada 1989
- \*Washington State Artist in Residence – American music & dance 1986-89

## **Dina Blade's Concert Programs:**

*\*Performance length for all programs: Approximately one hour (can be extended to a full length evening performance of two sets with intermission and a costume change)*

*\*Number of performers: Duo with voice and piano up to a quintet with voice, piano, bass, drums and horn*

**1.) "Sentimental Journey"** - is a lively presentation of American popular songs from World War Two. Costumed in a vintage military uniforms, songstress Dina Blade weaves a musical program that is fascinating and fun, with audience interaction, memorabilia and anecdotal patter about radio, movies and dances in the wartime Swing Era. This timeless music is guaranteed to get your feet tapping and rekindle the magic of yesteryear! \*Target Groups: theaters, libraries, Memorial / Veterans Day celebrations, reunions, seniors, choirs, English, Poetry, Literature, Psychology, Music and History classes (middle school through college)

**2.) "Too Marvelous For Words"** - is program of classic songs features popular lyricists from America's Golden Age of Radio, and includes interesting anecdotes about well known songwriters like Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Dorothy Fields, Johnny Mercer and a host of others. Discover endless ways to describe falling in and out of love in this celebration of an extraordinary and unique art form, presented in a Cabaret style reminiscent of vocal jazz from the 1930s and 40s, and performed in period costume.

*\*Target Groups: eaters, libraries, senior groups, luncheon clubs, choirs, churches, English, Poetry, Literature, Psychology, Music and History classes (middle school through college)*

**3.) "On the Sunny Side of the Street"** - is fascinating program of songs and stories features lyricist Dorothy Fields, a brilliant and successful woman who began her colorful career during the Tin Pan Alley days of the 1920's and continued producing great lyrics throughout the evolution of the American Music Hall through the Golden Age of Radio right up until the 1970's. The first woman to win an Academy Award, she was honored with her face on an American postage stamp. Presented in a Cabaret style reminiscent of vocal jazz from the 1930s and 40s, this wonderfully unique show is performed in period costume.

*\*Target Groups: Women's Events, theaters, libraries, senior groups, luncheon clubs, choirs, English, Poetry, Literature, Psychology, Music and History classes (middle school through college)*

**4). "A Swinging Holiday Concert"** - Take a trip down memory lane while listening to this irresistible collection of Popular songs and Holiday gems from the Great American Songbook of the 1930s and 40s. Presented in a Cabaret style and performed in period costume, songstress Dina Blade weaves a fun and heartwarming nostalgic program guaranteed to rekindle the Holiday Spirit! *\*Target Groups: community theaters, libraries, senior events, luncheon clubs, choirs, English, Poetry, Literature, Music and History classes (middle school through college)*

**5). "My Funny Valentine"** - Explore the countless ways to say "I love you!" a la Gershwin, Porter, Berlin and other greats with this irresistible collection of classic romantic and torch songs from the Great American Songbook of the 1930's and 40's. Presented in a Cabaret style reminiscent of vocal jazz from the 1930s and 40s, songstress Dina Blade weaves a fun and heartwarming program of songs and stories guaranteed to rekindle the romantic spirit!

*\*Target Groups: community theaters, libraries, senior events, luncheon clubs, choirs, English, Poetry, Literature, Psychology, Music and History classes (middle school through college)*

# Heritage Music Review:

Heritage Music Review-May 2007

## For Dina Blade, It's All About the Song

by Doug Bright

Seattle vocalist Dina Blade's passion for the great American songbook is evident in her straightforward singing style and thematic glimpses of musical history that characterize her CD's and live shows, such as "Too Marvelous For Words", a lyricists tribute on May 18th at Bake's Place in Issaquah.

A native of the Philadelphia area Dina Marie Catherine Matecki was born into a family whose love of music and dancing can be traced back to her grandfather, Walter Matecki, who came to this country from Poland in the early 1900's and started a band with his brother. Consequently, young Dina was treated during her formative years to a veritable feast of music that included the polkas of her Eastern European heritage, the lush pop balladry of Johnny Mathis, Harry Belafonte's popular calypso renditions, and the big-band swing of Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, and Sammy Kaye.

Her father was especially partial to vocalists like Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby. "Mostly I remember hearing Bing," she says. "My parents went dancing regularly to live music, which meant Saturday night was a big deal for them." There was also plenty of musical input from older siblings.

"My sister, Barbara, was a huge musical influence on me," Blade recalls, "because we shared a bedroom and I was exposed to her musical tastes: Motown, doo-wop, and folk. She often played Joan Baez recordings, and my favorite was her first record with the old English ballads. She played some of those and other folk songs on guitar, and we would harmonize on them together. I learned guitar chords from a Mel Bay book to emulate her. I idolized her."

One of Dina Blade's biggest breaks as a vocalist was the chance to work with swing revivalist John Holte and his Radio Rhythm Orchestra. "John Holte offered me the opportunity to sing with a big band," she explains, "along with a weekly gig at The New Melody Tavern with a septet, where I honed my material and met many musicians with whom I still play. I advise all serious singers to do a Big Band stint if possible because it is an extremely valuable experience as well as being a trial by fire that opens one's ears like nothing else."

The next milestone in Dina Blade's career was the release in late 1991 of her debut quartet recording, DON'T BE AFRAID. Backed by Dave Peterson on piano or electric guitar, Chuck Deardorf on bass, and Dean Hodges on drums, Blade presented a widely ranging program encompassing buoyant swing treatments of "It's A Wonderful World" and "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams", the beautiful, sensitively delivered ballad "My One and Only Love", a delicate jazz-waltz rendition of "How Little We Know", a smoothly Latinized "I Remember You", and a brooding torch ballad called "Sidewalk Sale" written by Seattle's Steve Rice. Though her voice was still expressive, her innocent exuberance had by now given way to a more subtle delivery that placed a slightly greater emphasis on her lower range. To paraphrase Joni Mitchell in "Both Sides Now", it was a case of, "Something's lost but something's gained." "While the Three Way Street album featured Blade's vocals to good advantage," I wrote at the time of the album's release, "this one is the showcase her clear voice and subtle delivery deserve."

It was about this time that Dina Blade found it necessary to refocus her musical career for the happiest of reasons. "I was six months pregnant when I recorded DON'T BE AFRAID," she explains. "After the birth of our daughter, I wanted to explore education and outreach venues as other options for singing because, as a new mother, the late night club hours were taking their toll."

An early source of inspiration was vocalist Susannah McCorkle, whose spellbinding musical biographies of great American songwriters elaborated on their compositions with revealing stories and thought-provoking commentary. "I had seen her at one of her early rare Jazz Alley appearances," Blade

explains, “and was impressed by the way that her interesting patter between songs kept her sets infused with a vibrancy previously unknown to me. A few years later I saw Andrea Marcovicci’s Intiman show about Irving Berlin’s music and was again inspired.”

While involved with a Washington State artist-in-residence program, Blade had gained valuable experience researching and presenting programs that traced the evolution of tap dance. Consequently, theme shows on the great American songbook were a very logical next step. She found a willing collaborator and accompanist in pianist Barrie Vye, whom she had met working with John Holte. “Barrie Vye was a WW2 vet who helped me choose material from the extensive list of World War II megahits,” she explains. “I added historical anecdotes, and it evolved into “What Did You Hear In The War, Daddy?,” a program of American popular songs from World War II. I submitted the idea to the King County Libraries as a senior programming option and received 22 requests for May of that first year--Senior Citizens’ Month. I realized then that there was a market to be explored.”

Dina Blade spent the next few years performing with Barrie Vye in the library systems of Seattle and King County, and gigging in schools with the old-time musicians The Canote Brothers, sharing her extensive collection of singing games and dances with children.

Busy as she was, Blade made time to hone her skills with a few lessons in vocal improvisation with pianist Jerome Gray, and it was through Gray that she made the contacts that resulted in her second album. In the course of his instruction, Gray had played her a Mark Murphy album with piano accompaniment by Bill Mays. A native of northern California, Mays had begun studying piano at an early age and fallen in love with jazz at 16 when he heard the legendary Earl Hines in concert. In a few years he was gigging in the Bay Area, and by the time Dina Blade discovered him about 35 years later, he had become a first-call accompanist for singers on the national jazz scene.

She had attracted the attention of Seattle’s Pony Boy jazz label and was gearing up for a recording project when she learned that he was coming to Centrum, the Port Townsend arts organization responsible for the Fiddle Tunes festival. “When I saw that Bill was coming out to Centrum for Jazz Week,” she recalls, “I called him and sang into his answering machine. He called me back, and we met for the first time when I picked him up to go to the recording session. He was charming, witty, and hilariously funny, and we got along beautifully.”

The resulting CD, S’WONDERFUL, emerged in 2001. Aply backed by Mays, bassist Bob Magnusson and drummer Joe LaBarbera, Blade ranged from well-known standards like “On The Street Where You Live”, and “That Old Black Magic” to pianist/composer Bill Evans’ moving ode to childhood innocence, “Waltz For Debby”. With this warmly produced masterpiece of creative synergy, Dina Blade had achieved another milestone.

Blade’s next recording, I’M IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE, was devoted to the songs of Dorothy Fields, the lyricist responsible for such classics as “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love”, the well-known title track, and “The Way You Look Tonight”. In keeping with the format for her historical theme shows, Blade was backed by only Bill Mays’ piano. “I was doing a lot of duo work at the time,” she explains, “so it seemed like a good idea to keep it simple and intimate with just the two of us. It made sense to choose material Bill was familiar with since we would not have the luxury of a rehearsal. It was a wonderful experience and the right decision.”

Dina Blade’s latest CD, which she released last fall, is entitled MY ROMANCE. In addition to the American songbook classic for which it’s named, it features an invigorating samba treatment of “It Might As Well Be Spring”, a slow and luxurious reading of “Imagination”, and an appropriately buoyant treatment of “Give Me The Simple Life”. As one might expect, she unearths a few forgotten treasures from yesteryear as well. “Miami Beach Rhumba” comes from those seemingly carefree days when Cuba was a celebrated vacation paradise instead of a Communist dictatorship. The album’s wittiest, most shamelessly pun-filled offering is “Rhode Island Is Famous For You”, and naturally, Blade has way too much fun sing-

ing it. Mose Allison's wonderfully wry social commentary "I Don't Worry 'Bout A Thing ('cause I know nothin's gonna be all right) gets a guest appearance from tenor saxophonist Craig Flory.

With pianist Hans Brehmer, bassist Larry Holloway, and drummer Ken French, Blade once again achieves a warm ensemble synergy here that's further graced by Scott Kettron's more ethnic percussion and Jim Knodle's cool-jazz muted trumpet, and provides further proof that for Dina Blade, it's all about the song.



# *Pinedale Fine Arts Council, Inc.*

*a Non-Profit Corporation*

*P. O. Box 1586*

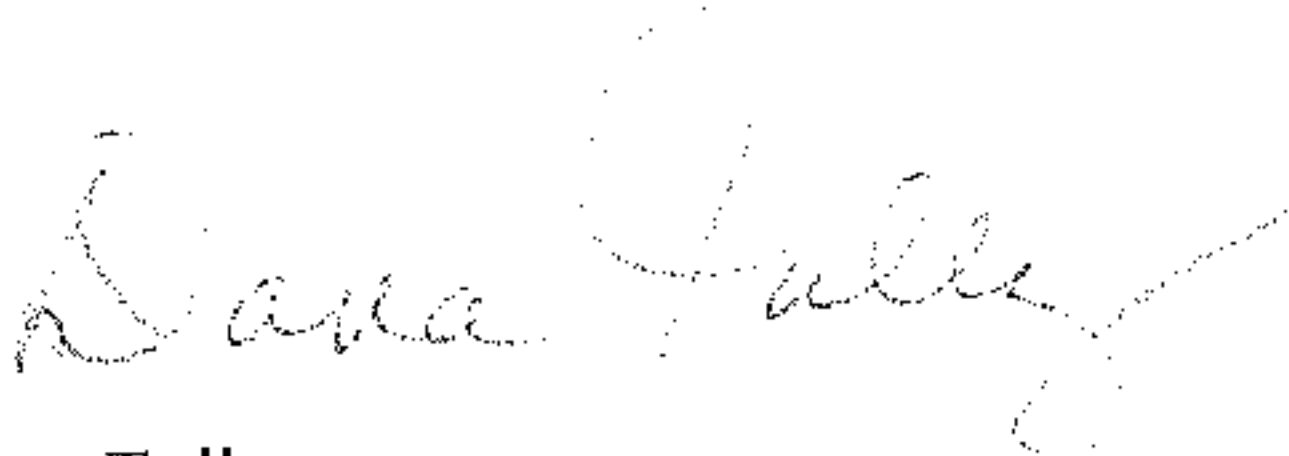
*Pinedale, Wyoming 82941*

To Whom It May Concern:

The Pinedale Fine Arts Council was very pleased to host jazz vocalist Dina Blade and her accompanist Hans Brehmer for a 3-day residency in May, 2009. During Dina's stay in Pinedale, she conducted outreach in our senior centers, nursing home and high school choirs as well as an evening performance of "What Did You Hear in the War, Daddy."

The high school choir workshops conducted in Pinedale and Big Piney were very well received. Students participated in creative expression through production by singing in different styles which helped reinforce different time signatures and also helped students understand how quickly you can change a piece of music by changing a meter and singing in a different style by accenting different beats. Dina and Hans worked with several of the students individually on solos and also were gracious enough to help the accompanist after the workshop to offer ideas on some of their own music.

Dina's "What Did You Hear in War, Daddy" show is a complete time travel experience of song, a bit of dance and memorabilia. It is a wonderful way to bring that era to life for the younger generation plus set 90-year old toes a tapping. Both Hans and Dina are very personable and warm which invited the audience to linger afterwards to visit with them and share their own personal stories and memories of that era.



Dana Tully  
Executive Director, Pinedale Fine Arts Council