

## SUPER(STEIN) JAZZ SINGER IS MANY WORLDS APART

By Ruth Schweitzer - October 11, 2018 1285 0

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Jazz singer Andrea Superstein ties together her Jewish heritage, her upbringing in Quebec and her current home, Vancouver, on her latest recording.

An artist with a background in musical theatre, Superstein decided jazz was worth pursuing after attending a jazz camp in Sorrento, B.C., in 2009.

Until then, she'd been wary of committing to a career in music. "I had tried to

convince myself throughout my life that the path of a musician was too challenging or maybe I was too afraid I would try and fail," she said on the telephone from Vancouver.

At the jazz camp, where she got her first formal music education from top artists, the trepidation she'd felt vanished. "I think when something is inside you, you can't deny it. And I finally got to the point where I thought I can't live without this, now is the time," Superstein said.

Already familiar with jazz standards from performing in musical theatre during her high school and university years, she immersed herself in songs by songwriters like Cole Porter and George Gershwin.

"I was so excited to learn all this music. I bought a program for my computer that played all the backing tracks so I could sing along," she said.

A year after her week at the B.C. Swing Camp, it was abundantly clear she'd underestimated her musical gifts, among them her spellbinding voice. She was invited to sing at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival in 2010, the same year she was nominated as a Galaxie Rising Star.

Superstein's latest album, *Worlds Apart*, her third recording, showcases her skills as a songwriter and arranger as well as her sensuous voice. Most of the compositions, in English, French and Hebrew, are her own. Some of the songs explore the difficulty of connecting with one another in romantic relationships.

She said that while technology is connecting us with people we haven't met, we're becoming disconnected from people next to us.

*Worlds Apart* brings her three identities – as a Vancouverite, a Montrealer and a Jew, together – she said.

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The Hebrew-language track, *Hakol (All)*, came out of her visit to Israel in 1996. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated the year before and bus bombings were common. "It was interesting to me to understand how people could reconcile the danger that they lived in while still being able to live so heartily. So that's what I wrote," she said.

Sonically, discord and conflict is created on *Hakol* with horns, electronic elements and with Superstein's vocals. The song's drumming gives it a Middle Eastern flavour.

Nodding to her musical theatre background, she included a bilingual version of *My Favourite Things*, from *The Sound of Music*, on the album. And the track, *De Temps en Temps*, about a couple desperately trying to make their relationship work, is her first French-language composition.

"Growing up in Montreal, in that culture, really influences me. French is such a beautiful language and is actually a beautiful language to perform in and also to write in," Superstein said.

A Vancouver song, *You Spend* was inspired by the housing crisis there, she said. The astonishingly beautiful *Garden of Love* also has a West Coast jazz sound.

The album, produced by jazz singer Elizabeth Shepherd, shows how far Superstein has come from the days when she was learning jazz standards on her computer.

"For non-jazz people, when I say I'm a jazz vocalist, they instantly imagine that I'm going to be wearing a fancy dress and lying on a piano singing lounge music. And definitely that's not the kind of music I'm making," she said. "What we're trying to do is push the boundaries a bit, in terms of what jazz is and what jazz can be."