



By Jean Amodea

A Soulful Sound

Wendy Renee delights audiences with her vocals

Wendy Renee abandoned the cold winters of Minneapolis, Minnesota for the sunshine of Southwest Florida, packing up her passion for singing, along with her personal belongings for the cross-country migration.

That was eight years ago, and since then, the professional singer has delighted local audiences with her vocals.

The multitalented beauty whom has modeled, acted and performed in musical theater was born into a home filled with music; never questioning that singing would be her life's vocation. "My earliest memory was singing with both my parents, then at school events where I would organize talent shows, directing and casting and costuming. I even came up with a one-girl show in fourth grade wearing a turtle costume and performed in the library for whoever wanted to watch me," Renee said, of her musical upbringing.

Over the years, she developed an extensive repertoire, singing The Great American Songbook standards to the soulful music of her favorite influences, legends Etta James and the jazz of Ella Fitzgerald to the '60s music of Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, Diana Ross and Whitney Houston. "I love to learn new material and look for the talent in every generation of music; it also helps me from getting bored. I love singing the music of Adele, Beyoncé, Katy Perry, Amy Winehouse and Bruno Mars."

Renee calls opening for Etta James, in a Minneapolis concert where she performed an opening set of jump, swing and blues tunes, one of her most memorable performances. She also opened for Oleta Adams, famed soul, jazz and gospel singer. But she dreams of singing on anational level and signing a recording contract.





Wendy Renee sings at Café Luna in Naples. Renee is a soulful singer and spends her Sundays at The Springs of Riverside Church in Bonita Springs.



Today, performing as a solo, duo, trio or with her four-piece band, Renee entertains crowds at country club events, restaurants and lounges. And, judging from the audience reaction, she has yet to offer nothing less than stellar performances, engaging audiences and captivating them with her charisma and verve. “For me, the key to a successful stage presentation is that I love it so much that my energy and passion spills out into the audience and I connect with them. It is contagious,” Renee explained.

“As I continue to grow as a singer, the biggest thing I have learned is to be myself and show my audience the love I have for my craft. My philosophy is that you should do what you love, if possible and do it with enthusiasm, and the love will show.”

Renee has also been taking piano lessons for the past two years and plans to play for crowds, adding the piano is “perfect for dinner set music.”

A songwriter and recording artist, Renee’s debut CD, “At Last” covers the music of James, Fitzgerald, Billy Holiday and Al Green. She is currently working on a second album of pop, soul and R&B tunes.

Not only enamored with secular music, Renee’s passion for her faith is expressed through her vocal talent where she delights churchgoers at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday as worship leader at The Springs of Bonita, in Bonita Springs, something she has done for 15 years. Renee explained it’s a way to connect with the Lord on a personal level. “I am able to go to the Lord out of a thankful heart and praise him for who he is, for what he has done for me and what he will continue to do in my life.” ■

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