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Toronto sultry songstress **Joanne Morra** releases debut album

ALOUETTE

Thursday, March 23, 2017

The Gladstone Hotel (Melody Bar)



Toronto, ON -- After years of delighting audiences with her rich, polished jazz vocals and rocking sidewalk festivals and late-night venues as lead singer for the funk band **The Ambassadors**, Toronto songstress **Joanne Morra** releases her debut album ***Alouette***, a deeply personal collection of classics ranging from Québécois rock to jazz standards, blues and German cabaret. Also featured are

original compositions, as well as surprising renditions of French folk songs such as *Au chant de l'Alouette* and *Un Canadien errant*, made magnificent by warm and sensual vocals. The album, produced by **Joanne Morra** and **Eric St-Laurent**, is entirely acoustic and delivers sweet, silky sounds that are both melancholy and uplifting.

An artist in virtually every sense of the word, **Joanne Morra** began her career as a visual artist, first earning her degree in painting and photography, but through it all had a voice that refused to play second fiddle. Over the past decade she has performed at her home base, Gate 403 in Toronto's west end. During that time she studied jazz and music performance through various workshops at the Royal Conservatory of Music and Humber College, and under the tutelage of mentors, including **Art Nefsky**, **Paul Cooper**, **Bonnie Brett**, **Whitney Smith** and **Howard Rees**. In 2015 and 2016, Joanne was on the roster for the TD Toronto Jazz Festival Club Series.

David Jager of NOW Magazine described Morra as showing "a formidable sensitivity and range, from her sultry whispery ballads to her high powered blues and standards", while Etan Vlessing of The Hollywood Reporter gushed, "for anyone who loves a voice that goes straight to the heart, or anyone who loves when an artist sings with full-throated soul and passion, only to sing another tune relaxed and soothingly, then you MUST see and hear Joanne Morra in concert."

Alouette features **Joanne Morra** on vocals, backed by award-winning guitarist **Eric St-Laurent**, **Rachel Melas**, of Toronto's fave Cajun group **Swamperella**, on bass, and **Joey Burke** on lap steel.

You can listen to the album on Joanne Morra's website under **MEDIA**.
Password : *Francophonie*

For CD's, photos and interviews please contact Josée Duranleau of Duranleau Communications at josee@duranleau.com or 416-652-7672

BIOGRAPHY

Joanne Morra began her career in the visual arts, with a degree in painting and photography from York University, but her powerful singing voice refused to play second fiddle for long.

For almost two decades she has sung jazz, blues and funk across Toronto and the GTA, and has crooned to audiences everywhere from high toned establishments to gritty late night clubs and street festivals. Joanne has performed at a wide range of venues including: The Spadina Theatre, The Liberty Grand, The Reservoir Lounge, 120 Diner, Relish Bar & Grill, Coquine Restaurant, The Winchester, The Silver Dollar, Gate 403, The Local Gest, The Spoke Club, The Sister, The Scarborough Golf and Country Club, The McMichael Gallery, The Gardiner Museum and Heliconian Hall, to name a few. She was also on the roster for the TD Toronto Jazz Festival Club Series, in 2015 and 2016, and has rocked many clubs and festivals with her electrifying funk stylings as former leader of The Ambassadors.

Her training is top notch- she has studied at various workshops at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Humber College, and Shelley Berger Music School, as well as under Howard Rees, Paul Cooper, Whitney Smith, Tom Schilling, and Bonnie Brett.

Joanne has had the pleasure of working with the finest musicians, most notably Eric St-Laurent, Rachel Melas, John Farrell, Kevin Barrett, Carson Freeman, Kurt Lund, Jeff Hower, Anthony Panacci, Richard Underhill, Whitney Smith, Jordan O'Connor, and Joey Burke.

When she's not singing, Joanne teaches art and history at a French high school, volunteers internationally and rescues Toronto street cats.

The musicians

Eric St-Laurent - Guitar

Born and raised in Montreal, St-Laurent studied improvisation in New York before moving to Berlin where he toured with both the big and small names of the German and Scandinavian music scenes. Winner of the SOCAN award for Best Original Composition at the Montreal Jazz Festival and The Best Band Award at the Vienne (France) Jazz Festival, St-Laurent has been featured on over 50 recordings, produced multiple albums, composed scores for short films and theatre, and toured extensively in Europe and Canada. Since returning to Toronto, Canada, St-Laurent has recorded and toured with Till Bronner, Dave Liebman, Dave Douglas, Rebekka Bakken, Slide Hampton, Luc de la Rocheliere, Sylvie Paquette, Richard Underhill, David Binney, Jojo Mayer, Carlos Del Junco, Bernard Primeau and represented Canada at the International Guitar Summit in Nice (MIDEM).

Rachel Melas - Double bass

Rachel Melas has been playing bass since 1975 when her grandfather bought her an electric bass and a couple of Mel Bay instruction books. She played in numerous bands of every imaginable stripe, from the 80's post punk art rock of the Animal Slaves, the 90's world beat of Mother Tongue and the Cajun and Zydeco band Swamperella in the new millennium. She started playing upright bass in 1999 and studied Jazz with Howard Rees Jazz Workshop from 2006 to 2009. She is also an avid student of traditional music, attending workshops, intensives and music camps several times a year. She currently plays with Swamperella, Amelie et les Singes Bleus, Moo'd Swing, Klezmer groups The Horables and the Gypsy Jive Band as well as other purveyors of jazz and traditional music.

Joey Burke - Lap steel

Joey Burke is a lap steel, guitar player and composer based in Toronto. In the late 1980s he toured and recorded as a member of Sweet Jones. Later, he began a career composing for television and film, including programming for TVO (with Joanne Morra) and the CBC. Joey currently studies lap steel with Burke Carroll, and is a member of Lowfills and The Don Valley Outlaws.

REVIEWS

"A chanteuse of the first order, Morra caresses originals and standards in both official languages with a silky ease that's just made for a dimly lit jazz club." Chris Young, The Toronto Star, 2017

"Joanne Morra wears many hats, and she really wears them well...this album (Alouette) shows her unwillingness to be pegged as just a jazz singer" Errol Nazareth, CBC Big City Small World, 2017

"Une voix à la fois claire et chaude, envoûtante et élégante" Lila Mouch, L'Express de Toronto, 2017

"Joanne Morra fait partie des rares chanteuses francophones à Toronto. Elle est surtout une artiste incroyablement talentueuse, et son chant vous portera longtemps après l'avoir écouté... Une artiste passionnée, sensible et versatile, à la présence envoûtante, à découvrir absolument!" Guillaume Lorin, CHOQ fm, 2017

TV/RADIO

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RADIO REGENT – Jazz Zone

CJBC Radio Canada – L'Heure de pointe

CJBC RADIO-CANADA – Grands Lacs Café

CBC RADIO – Fresh Air

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CBC Radio – Metro Morning

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RADIO-CANADA - ICI Ontario

RADIO-CANADA – Le Téléjournal

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