

# Jozée Devoua: In Her Own Words



## On The Road Again

I was born in Victoriaville Québec, at least that's what my mother tells me. My father's work had us move from city to city too many times to name them. I left my "native" city at 10 months old and stayed 4 years on average everywhere else. My decision to complete a Bachelors degree at the University of Ottawa was the perfect excuse to stop the madness and settle down.

## Being Taught I Couldn't Sing

At an impressionable age, an influential music teacher categorized me as a backup

singer and told me that my voice was too low to be a lead singer. Unfortunately, I chose to believe that and limit myself to doing backup vocals for years only allowing myself to dream of "flying solo".

## In Lieu of Becoming a Rock Star...

Since my dreams of becoming the next big star were temporarily shattered, I did what most people do; got a Bachelors degree in Criminology at the University of

Ottawa, never used it and instead became a Consultant in Project Management for an IT firm.

I successfully and quickly climbed the corporate ladder, making more and more money, getting more and more titles without any sense of purpose whatsoever. I was on autopilot.

## Everything Happens For a Reason

At the age of 21, I was diagnosed with diabetes type 1. A few years later, for unrelated reasons, I had to undergo a couple of major surgeries on my spine. I spent many months in recovery often wondering what my life would bring next.

I also had plenty of time to reflect on clichés such as "everything happens for a reason" and "life is not a dress rehearsal" etc. Here is one that I made up; "the luckiest people are the ones who realize early enough that clichés are the most important truths in life".

**"I wanted to be a pro and had no time to waste."**

## Deciding I Could Sing

After my surgeries, I decided it was time to take my destiny into my own hands (cliché) and do what I knew would truly make me happy and give me a sense of purpose.

I challenged those voices that had been telling me I couldn't sing lead vocals all these years and realized that with a little bit of confidence and vocal training our vocal range is much bigger than we think.

## Jozée: with a Z

After being noticed in a singing class by a Director for the City of Ottawa, things went very fast for me. My first gig was in front of 200 people.

By my second gig, I was singing with some of the best musicians in the area. I have to admit, it was a challenge, I didn't understand most of the terms they were throwing at me but I was not about to show it. I wanted to be a pro and had no time to waste. Word of mouth has greatly contributed to

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my success. I have been blessed with repeat customers as well as great references which has allowed me to build a client base that has kept me busy doing what I love.

I have had the opportunity to perform at amazing venues such as the Lac Lemay Hilton, the Chateau Laurier, the Museum of Civilisation, the Chateau Sheraton, the Andrew Haydon Park floating stage, the Centerpoint Theater as well as many private and public venues.

### Learning My Craft

Through all of these milestones, music has always been a big part of my life. Although I have forgiven them now, thanks to many years of therapy, my parents made me take organ lessons at a very young age. From that, I learned musical theory which I was able to apply when I taught myself piano and guitar as a teenager.

These days I am studying jazz and classical piano and continue to take vocal lessons, coaching, master classes; all that gives me an opportunity to learn more about this fascinating instrument.

I recently took some violin and saxophone lessons only to realize that I was back in overachiever mode and it might be best to focus on just a few things at once.

I do pick up my guitar once in a while when I feel like singing outside. The piano being so heavy and all..

### Jazz Fits Me Like A Glove

Why jazz? It has all the elements that work with my laid back personality that my musicians often refer to. I was definitely not born to be a star. Given the option, I probably would have done my first gig from behind the stage. Some people know from a young age that being on stage is their destiny. In my case, although it was never a dream of mine, making music was.

What drives me to get on that stage is the love of communicating the emotion that I am feeling to others when I sing and of telling a story through songs. I am so blessed to be able to sing in settings where the energy is warm, calm and

**“I was definitely not born to be a star”**



intimate. Even in corporate settings for example where we often just provide background music, there is always a great energy flowing. Those are the elements that allowed me to become comfortable on stage and get use to the spotlight.

### What's On My Ipod

I have always had very eclectic taste in music and in everything in life for that matter. I can't say that I have been influenced by one or two artists in particular but some that I love to listen to include; Rosemary Clooney, Etta James, Annie Ross, Holly Cole, Diana Krall, Sade, Sting, Shirley Horne, Janet Seidel, and Bonnie Raitt.

### Low Key

In January of 2007, I recorded my first album "Low Key". I am proud (and broke) to say that I did it all as an independent artist. Once again, I worked with some of the best musicians in the Ottawa area. The comments so far have been very positive.

My intention with the album was to experience the studio, have people get to know me as a jazz artist and create more opportunities for me to do what I love.



## Looking Ahead

"I see trees that are green, red roses too, I see them bloom, for me and for you, and I think to myself, what a wonderful world"!...

I just released a new Christmas cd "Jazz Winterlude", a project created with friends that will surely warm-up your holiday evenings!

I will continue to do what I love; teach, sing, collaborate with the best and choose projects that allow me to grow as an artist. I hope to meet you on my journey!

Jozée.