

RACHEL CASWELL, Jazz Vocalist

Rachel Caswell is an award-winning jazz vocalist with a unique style combining extraordinary scatting ability and sensitive song interpretation. According to internationally-renowned jazz pedagogue David Baker, “Rachel Caswell is that *rara avis* who is truly a jazz vocalist. Her intonation is impeccable, her diction precise, her jazz sensibilities above reproach, and she swings like mad!” All these qualities can be heard on her debut CD *Some Other Time* with pianist Lynne Arriale, drummer Steve Davis, bassist Kelly Sill, and violinist Sara Caswell.

Rachel and her sister Sara co-lead the Caswell Sisters Quintet, which has recorded a soon-to-be-released CD project with acclaimed pianist Fred Hersch. Notable appearances of the Caswell Sisters include a weeklong After-Hours engagement at Dizzy’s Club at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York and an enthusiastically-received set on the opening night concert of the 2010 inaugural Jazz Education Network Conference in St. Louis. Rachel also frequently collaborates with bassist Jeremy Allen, a duo selected to perform at the 2006 International Association for Jazz Education’s Annual Conference in New York. Other notables with whom Rachel has performed include The Glenn Miller Orchestra, John Blake, Jr., Ingrid Jensen, the Billy Taylor Trio, and Curtis Fuller.

In addition to Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, Rachel has appeared at the Blue Wisp Jazz Club in Cincinnati, OH, Cornelia Street Café in New York, NY, the Jazz Cabaret Series at the Kentucky Center of the Arts in Louisville, KY, colleges and universities including Temple University, University of Denver, Vassar College, Depauw University, Hope College, University of Evansville, Eastern Illinois University, West Virginia State University, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and Indiana State University, as well as with big bands in Fargo, ND and Minneapolis, MN, the latter with charts commissioned by the Caswell Sisters.

Rachel’s pedagogical experience includes jazz-related masterclasses and clinics at numerous colleges and universities nationwide, most recently serving as a judge and clinician at the University of New Hampshire for the 2011 Clark Terry Jazz Festival in Durham, New Hampshire.

A native of Bloomington, IN, Rachel’s compelling improvisation skills developed out of her many years of instrumental jazz studies on piano and as a cellist under IU Distinguished Professor David Baker. A student of Baker’s from age 13, Caswell continued her studies at Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music on a full scholarship as a Wells Scholar, graduating with High Distinction in 1995 with degrees in classical cello and jazz studies. In 1998 she completed her Master of Music degree in Jazz Studies in Voice with Academic Honors and Distinction in Performance at Boston’s New England Conservatory of Music where she studied with Dominique Eade, Carol Sloane, Danilo Perez, George Garzone, and John McNeil.

While in graduate school, Rachel was chosen as one of two vocalists for the 1997 Thelonious Monk Institute Jazz Colony at Jazz Aspen/Snowmass and named the winner of the 1997 Hilton Head Jazz Society Scholarship. Rachel also placed in the top ten out of 150 contestants in the 2005 *jazzconnect.com* annual vocal competition, appearing in one judge’s top five. She has had coachings with Benny Golson, Jimmy Heath, Barry Harris, and Clark Terry and appears on Sara Caswell’s recordings *First Song* (Double-Time) and *But Beautiful* (Arbors). Rachel was also filmed as the featured vocalist in John McNeil’s *Jazz Series on Video, Vol. 3 Vocal Jazz: Learning to Scat* with Mr. McNeil as trumpeter/host and Rufus Reid on bass.

Rachel’s unique gifts as a musician and improviser have led jazz trumpeter Ingrid Jensen to say, “Very rarely does such a complete musician come along in the form of a singer! Rachel and her voice are capable of expression and artistry that parallel those of some of the great horn players in improvised jazz music – not to mention all of the wonderful singers out there. She is a force to be reckoned with.”