

Carolyn Martin: Bio

Singer Carolyn Martin has been described as “... a winning throwback to the days where emotion was measured and artful rather than loud and histrionic.” From European concert halls to intimate venues at home in Nashville, fans have come to know Carolyn as a vocalist with a unique sense of musical style, a charismatic stage presence and a voice that exudes passion and experience – the soulful elegance that is the very essence of music.

Carolyn's music draws inspiration not only from the classic western swing groups of the 1930s through the 1950s, but also from the big band swing era, Broadway show tunes, and southern blues. Her CD "Cookin' With Carolyn" was named the 2011 Best Western Swing Album by the Western Music Association while her prior project, "Swing" was named as one of the top Swing CD's of the year in 2009. Carolyn was recently named the 2010 Western Swing Female Vocalist of the Year by the Academy of Western Artists, what nominated by the Western Music Association for 4 awards in 2010 (including, Album of the year and Female Vocalist of the Year) and was inducted into the Texas Western Swing Hall Of Fame in 2011.

Carolyn's latest CD, "Tennessee Local" continues to stretch the bounds of traditional western swing - in addition to her original songs, the album includes songs from composers like Irving Berlin and George Gershwin as well as western swing composers like Cindy Walker and Fred Rose.

Carolyn Martin: Press

While the ghosts of Hank Williams Sr. and Patsy Cline may not have actually crooned into the microphones on stage, Jason Petty and Carolyn Martin, ably backed by the Country Royalty Band, did an amazing job bringing the music made famous by these luminaries to life once more.

Angie Long - Greenville Advocate (Sep 14, 2010)
WOW! You are one HECK of a fine western swing singer!

Maam, you are just flat-more good!

We can't wait for your visit to the show...
Ralph - Ralph's Back Porch Radio Show (Mar 17, 2008)

I received your 'Swing' CD yesterday and listened to it twice all the way through. I think it's terrific! AAA+++. Great songs, great productionoutstanding musicianship. You have a wonderful voice...crisp, clear, dynamic and sensual as well. I'm really impressed. Congratulations on a superb project. No one who hears it will be disappointed.
Tom Wardle - wdvrfm.org (Jun 25, 2007)

“...a winning throwback to the days where emotion was measured and artful...”
Craig Havighurst - Tennessean

" She takes her time, smoothly caressing the melody like a gloved hand on glass. Martin has a powerful voice and is not afraid to pump pure emotion into her presentation."
Dee Dee McNeil - All About Jazz

"Carolyn Martin really stood out with a timeless voice adapted for both country and jazz standards. This collection of standards, including title track, The Very Thought of You, Mean to Me and Something is the Matter with The Moon is among my favorite finds this year. It's a distinct departure from my typical listening preferences, which is part of what makes the album great for me. The album is like capturing a vintage voice from a lost era with modern recording gear."
Jake Ludington - Mediablub

Carolyn Martin puts the swing in Western music

As perky and homespun as her songs, Western swing artist Carolyn Martin has been capturing a lot of attention from fans and fellow musicians over the last few years.

The Nashville resident performs music in the style of classic western swing from the '30s-'50s, with influences from the big band swing era as well. She plays cover tunes and original material, which she is most inspired to write during long drives in the car. "When I'm in the car, especially on an hour's long trip, I have time to just think," she said. "I turn off the radio and it's quiet and I wait until I am inspired by something that catches my ear. I have a notebook where I'll jot down ideas. Gosh, if I finished all the ideas in my notebook, I'd have hundreds of songs."

"I want people to be able to relate to my songs, but also I like that little twinkle-in-the-eye wink thing," Martin said. "Western swing is so amiable to that because it is meant to be fun music," she said. "It was created as a distraction in the '30s; those were hard times, and it was created for people to go out on Saturday night and dance and forget about their troubles for a little while."

Perhaps that is part of the reason for the current resurgence of interest in the genre. Western swing and related bands are appearing more often on the scene and their fans are the young crowd you would expect to see at a rock concert. Martin attributes part of this surge, as well as the music's survival over time, to its pure joy and how it makes people want to tap their feet and move.

In 2008 and 2010, she won the Academy of Western Artists' Will Rogers Award for Female Western Swing Vocalist of the Year and this year, Martin was inducted into the Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame.

Just one listen to her tunes and you will realize Martin's strongest suit is her way with words. She loves playing with language, yet keeping her lyrics simple so they can be easily understood.

"It's designed as dance music, and it naturally makes you feel better," she said. "It is infectious and it's absolutely as much fun or maybe more fun to play than it is to listen to.

"So much of it is improvisation on the spot. You say, 'Steel player take solo' and the music just happens, it's not planned and that's when the magic happens for me.

"I couldn't tell you exactly what swing means, but you can feel it, and you know it when you hear it," Martin said.

"We try to have a lot of energy and I think it's something that's going to send people out the door smiling and humming a tune."

I discovered lots of current musicians carrying on the style of old time music at this year's Folk Alliance conference. One find is Carolyn Martin. When I heard what sounded like Bob Wills' western swing band in the room across the hall from me, I had to investigate. This led me to Carolyn, who- with her husband Dave - lead a really hot band. Their CD Cookin' With Carolyn (Java Jive) swings from beginning to end. Not all the songs are about food, but there are enough, such as "Skillet Blues" and "That's what I call cookin'" to make you hungry. The Tennessee- based band wowed the professional musicians at FA and one listen to this disc will show you why.

Steve Ramm
"Anything Phonographic"