



Libby Hammer **Jazz Vocalist**

Libby Hammer is one of Perth's premier jazz vocalists. With a background in musical theatre and circus, along with five years of music study and 16 years of music industry experience, she has developed a solid reputation in Western Australia as an accomplished jazz singer, bandleader and vocal coach.

Libby started working as a professional jazz singer in 1996, a year before her graduation from Western Australia's Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowan University, and since then has enjoyed a solid schedule of performances in a variety of settings.

Destined for the stage and with extra skills from her many years as a young gymnast, Libby performed in musicals as a child, both professional and amateur. Her professional roles included a chorus part in the WA Opera's *La Bohème* and the character 'Pepper' in the National Theatre's *Annie*, both at His Majesty's Theatre, in 1981. She performed in amateur productions throughout her high school years and language studies at the University of Western Australia, where she earned a bachelor's degree majoring in French. In 1990, soon after graduating from UWA, Libby was performing professionally again, this time in the circus musical *Barnum*, again at His Majesty's Theatre. Having trained intensively in circus skills for this production, Libby worked for a few years as a birthday party clown, costume actor and singing telegram deliverer, before discovering the enticing sounds of jazz music.

Libby put away the unicycle and enrolled in the jazz course at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. In 1997 she completed a Bachelor of Music (Jazz), majoring in arranging and vocal performance. She was resident vocalist for the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra in 1993 and 1994.

In 1996, while still studying, Libby and three of her fellow students formed a quartet which they called Hip Mo' Toast (Hip because it's cool, Mo' because you get more for your money and Toast because everybody loves toast!). Over the years Hip Mo' Toast matured and grew into an outstanding collective of Perth's best jazz musicians, performing in ensembles ranging from a trio to a big band, all led by Libby herself. Hip Mo' Toast has performed thousands of concerts since 1996, including touring to the eastern states of Australia on two occasions, performing at the Villa Celimontana Jazz Festival in Italy in 2006 and for a royal wedding in Singapore in 2007. Hip Mo' Toast has made four CD recordings and in 2006 won its sixth consecutive Western Australian Music Industry Association award for Most Popular Original Jazz Act.

As well as having composed original songs for Hip Mo' Toast recordings, in August 2006 Libby completed her first commissioned work 'The Glade' for New Music For The Southern Forests. In her own right, Libby has performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and alongside such Australian jazz icons as James Morrison and Joe Chindamo. She has worked with international jazz artists such as Josh Hilberman

(USA), Christoph Spendel (Germany) and two-time Grammy Winner Gary Bartz (USA).

Libby was a key member of the Perth Jazz Society committee from 1992 until 2006 and in 2005 won the PJS Award for Most Outstanding Individual Contribution To Jazz. In 2007 she won another PJS award - Life Membership for Outstanding Long-Term Contribution to Jazz. She is proud to be Patron of Jazz Fremantle. Libby regularly adjudicates eisteddfods and singing competitions and is sought after for her professional development workshops. She has taught jazz at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and currently teaches singing at two of Perth's leading private schools.

Reviews

She swings and bops and ENTERTAINS, whether it is lounge music with a firm tongue in the cheek or straight ahead standards.

Peter Kenyon, JAZZWA, December 1998

Libby's strength and grace is grounded in the tradition of the greats, yet her sound and approach is so wonderfully her own.

Troy Roberts, Saxophonist/Musician/Composer, March 2010

Libby Hammer provides an irrepressible charisma on stage, scatting and purring like the best of them, the total entertainer.

Kulcha, Australia's leading world music venue, 2001

Everyone was charmed by the performance of... Libby Hammer... Libby always comes up with unusual and fresh interpretations of standards plus a dash of humour and backchat, which never fails to entertain.

Jazz Fremantle, June 2010

Hammer... exploited the tonal shades in her voice with some mesmerizing solos, performing with real showmanship. Bobby Timmons' Dat Dere was sung with perfect childlike belligerence, and her comic timing in Tadd Dameron's zippy Good Bait was brilliant.

The West Australian, June 2008

Just wanted to again thank wonderful you and the fabulous guys from the band for the best night out we've seen in bloody ages! Feedback around town has been amazing, everyone is raving about Soiree and Hip Mo' Toast in particular. Loveliest part of the whole thing for me I think was how great you all were. Really enjoyed chatting with you all and feeling like we'd all enjoyed working together to create a great night. Your professionalism was a joy to behold. Take care and many thanks again for helping us to create such a joyful night. Please pass on my thanks and very best wishes to other band members as well.

Amanda (unofficial, self-elected inaugural President of the Kalgoorlie branch of the Hip Mo Toast Fan Club) 2005
