

Kiki Ebsen

Kiki Ebsen has loved the music of George Gershwin all her life. His signature inspirational melodies, lyrics, and rhythms appealed to the California native, who makes her Pasadena POPS debut this summer. As the youngest daughter born into a famous Hollywood family, Kiki began life surveying the world from Balboa Island before the family relocated to a secluded ranch in the quiet beauty of the Santa Monica Mountains. Wherever she was, the beauty of arts and music enveloped her in creativity.

At a very early age, Ms. Ebsen embraced the classics, opera, and jazz and sat extremely still for performances of the great works in music. Seeing extraordinary art exhibits added fuel to her creative muse. As an adult, she came to realize the connectivity between art and nature, noting how seamlessly one flowed into the other. This observation then explains the range and scope of Kiki's career to date and how she can move among multiple artistic genres with great ease.

Acting may have been the family business, but music was the canvas where Kiki could paint her own unique portrait. Over a few fast decades, Kiki established a dynamic career as a solo artist, separate from her famous parents. Ms. Ebsen garnered great acclaim and a faithful following as singer/songwriter, musical accompanist, vocal soloist, stage performer, and actress, time permitting.

Ms. Ebsen's path to the POPS was inevitable, after years of working on- and off-stage, paying her dues, embracing each musical genre. Early teenage years were divided between performing in rock bands, participating in national equestrian competitions, learning every nuance of stage productions in her mother's community theatre, and performing on the road with her father's creation, "An Evening That's Entertainment," her first taste of the road on the unglamorous tour bus.

Enrolling at California Institute of the Arts, Kiki auditioned for the chamber singers, where her operatic voice was discovered and encouraged by mentors there. She concentrated primarily on classical voice and piano, but remained steadfast in her love of pop-rock music. In school, Kiki's first opera role was as Barbarina in "The Marriage of Figaro," backed by the California Institute of Arts Orchestra.

After she received her BFA in Vocal Performance from The California Institute of the Arts, Kiki entered and subsequently won the American Collegiate Talent Showcase. She then embarked on a singing and playing career, touring the United States and internationally, supporting platinum-selling artists including Chicago, Tracy Chapman, Al Jarreau, James Ingram, Boz Scaggs, Michael McDonald, and Christopher Cross. Her spare time was spent writing and recording her own albums. Ms. Ebsen was then invited to perform as the opening act for select artists who graciously endorsed her music while she was on their tours.

In the fall of 2015, Ms. Ebsen was featured with Central Texas Medical Orchestra in Austin, TX. With Christopher Cross, Kiki performed with the Nashville Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony and the Honolulu Symphony. With Colin Hay (Men at Work) she performed with The Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra as well as an international appearance with David Benoit and

Michael Paulo with the Magenta Symphony Orchestra at the Java Jazz Festival in Jakarta, Indonesia. Other recent notable appearances include the Laguna Festival of Arts, the Divine Jazz Cruise and the Monarchs of Jazz Festival with David Benoit and Deniece Williams.

Ms. Ebsen's work has regularly included television appearances, i.e., The Grammy Awards (Tracy Chapman) and backing Grammy-winners including Al Jarreau, James Ingram, Peter Cetera, Patti Austin, and Tevin Campbell on "The Tonight Show" starring Jay Leno, "The Late Show" with David Letterman, and "The Arsenio Hall Show." She spent a season on the Emmy-winning daytime, "The Wayne Brady Show" as part of his featured house band.

Kiki served as Vocal Arranger/Co-Music Director from 2001–2005 for Lifetime TV's "Women Rock!" music specials, starring Pat Benatar, Chaka Khan, Dolly Parton, Bonnie Raitt, and Ann Wilson. Her original compositions have been recorded by Boney James, Eric Marienthal, Jessy J, and Deniece Williams for their albums, and her voice is heard on six songs on Peter White's latest CD, "Groovin,'" released in October 2016. Currently she is in the studio working on her seventh solo CD, set for a summer 2017 release.

Ebsen's first foray into films was "hopeful band member" in "Back to the Future" (1985) and reprised the uncredited role of "piano player" on "Glee" (Fox, 2014), "Speechless" (ABC, 2016) and "Life in Pieces" (CBS, 2017). Numerous credited video performances on DVDs include tours with Grammy winners and platinum-selling recording artists Namie Amuro, Belinda Carlisle, Bill Champlin, Tracy Chapman, and Christopher Cross.

Recent performances of The Kiki Ebsen Band offer audiences their favorite originals, popular jazz standards, and beloved Hollywood melodies. When she performs her multimedia show, "To Dad with Love: A Tribute to Buddy Ebsen," focus is on the Great American Songbook. Then, at her Joni Mitchell Project, you'll hear a variety of diverse songs from "Song to a Seagull," "For the Roses," and "The Hissing of Summer Lawns."

Ms. Ebsen notes, "Joni Mitchell is a brave and fearless explorer of the heart and soul. Her music continues to inspire others." John K. Adams (Tolucan Times) wrote of Kiki's style, "her honest delivery also coaxed nuances out of the songs that I'd never heard before. She and her band really brought Mitchell's music to fresh life." Over a dozen first-call Los Angeles recording and touring musicians comprise her musical ensembles.

Through the years, Kiki has received acclaim for her recordings of originals, standards and popular jazz songs. Steve Wagner (American Songwriter) calls her "...a world-class songwriter-performer...with a polished vocal style and songs of substance." Simply at home on any stage she graces, Mary Bogue (Cabaret Scenes) says of "To Dad with Love," Kiki delivers "an exceptional cabaret experience...tender, plaintive and adoring, captivating the audience ...honest connection to the lyrics...It's the best show in town!"

For the past decade, Kiki has grown her educational programs at her Southern California nonprofit, The Healing Equine Ranch. There, classes are offered in natural horsemanship principles, with an emphasis on human growth and awareness to promote healing.

When asked to describe her philosophy on life, creativity, and joy, Ms. Ebsen says, citing a favorite quote by Oscar Wilde, “Be yourself; everyone else is already taken!” Kiki Ebsen continues to create a vibrant life with her own voice, and remains true to her creative muse today, as she paints, sketches and writes on canvas, as well as on her keyboard. Living proof that you really can “do it all” if you’re willing to put in the work and honor your gifts and talents, Kiki Ebsen truly is, an artist of the heart.