

Donna Dufresne and Gypsy Romantique' Press Kit



DONNA DUFRESNE – songwriter, vocalist, rhythm guitar



Donna Dufresne has been performing on stage as a singer since she made her debut at the age of three at the local Grange Hall. She has studied voice, acting and music and performed throughout her life. Donna holds a bachelor’s degree in American History from Lesley University and a master’s degree in Gifted and Talented Education from the University of Connecticut. She began using music and storytelling to enhance science and social studies curriculum when she was a teacher and director of an environmental education program. There she wrote and recorded a collection of catchy children’s songs with topics ranging from ecology lessons to global warming. While working on her undergraduate degree in

history, she developed several historical characters which she performs as one-woman shows, including Connecticut State Heroine, Prudence Crandall. Recently, she wrote and produced a children’s musical at Chaplin Elementary School, where she teaches gifted & talented in a school-wide enrichment program. The play, *Speaker for the Earth*, features songs that address global warming and the affects on animal habitats. The music was arranged, recorded and produced by her pianist, Tim Peck.

As a singer/songwriter, Donna has made a steady progression through music history, starting out with traditional folk songs and Celtic music and moving toward writing her own political satire and environmental songs. After recording *Envirojazz*, a collection of original songs for teaching environmental science, Donna began to journey through her own musical roots. Growing up in the ‘50’s & 60’s, her family listened to what they called “cowboy music” such as “Sons of the Pioneers”, and old style country including Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, and Hank Williams. She also loved big band music and the show tunes from Broadway musicals and movies. This eclectic taste emerged in 2004 with the recording *Cowboy Romance*, produced and engineered by Mark Thayer (Signature Sounds). That album, which featured original western swing, led Donna into writing the genre-bending songs performed by GYPSY ROMANTIQUE’. Combining a love for the gypsy jazz/hot club music introduced by Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli in the 1930’s, with American Western Swing, peppered with Latin rhythms such as Tango and Bosa Nova, Donna has created a nouveau repertoire of romantic songs in her new album *Tango with the Moon*, produced again by Mark Thayer of Signature Sounds. Her band GYPSY ROMANTIQUE’ features musicians who played on the album, who have studied and performed gypsy jazz, western swing, Latin, and the American Songbook in a multitude of bands. Having found her true niche’ in writing music that supports her sentiments and her voice, Donna Dufresne has finally landed on a creative tarmac that includes other romantics who have a fascination with gypsies, cowboys, jazz sirens and film noir. Get ready to take flight with Donna Dufresne as she livens up the stage with vintage costumes and a little theater while the musicians in GYPSY ROMANTIQUE’ provide the serious and complex arrangements that support the music. “A Little Django, A Little Tango, A Little Swing, A Lot of Fun”, indeed.

ROBERT DAVIS (AKA Reuven Dobraminski) – Gypsy Guitar



Like many others, Reuven Dobraminski's ancestors became Davis's at the turn of the century at Ellis Island. They eventually settled in northwest Rhode Island as subsistence farmers where the family still resides. Wandering into the "big shtetl" of Providence in the 1960's, Bob played with a fledgling crop of young musicians including Scott Hamilton, Bruce Gertz, Eddie Tomasi, and Joe Bargar, and even Tom

Brown of the Lionel Hampton band.

Having nurtured his guitar roots in rock, blues and jazz, Bob has transmigrated into the world of gypsy jazz. He has made a study of Django Reinhardt and become a local expert in the subject of the French Café and hot club music of Paris during the gypsy jazz era of the 1930's. He is a founding member of the popular Rhode Island gypsy jazz group, *Minor Swing*.

Today, Bob loves his gypsy guitars almost as much as his goats, girls and wife, all of whom live with him on the family homestead in Rhode Island. Still a farmer and musician at heart, but software engineer by necessity, Bob's *grand bouche* guitar is often seen in the midst of a crowd gathered around the campfire after a long day in the fields. When not sitting upon a vintage tractor, milking goats and engineering the software train, Bob can be heard in and around Providence and Connecticut with *Minor Swing* and *GYPSY ROMANTIQUE*'

JOHN DEBOSSU – stand-up bass



While in the Master's program for Computer Science at Brown University, John Debossu played in the Brown Orchestra under the direction of Wolfgang Balzer. John has studied under such notable musicians as Miroslav Vitous at the New England Conservatory. In addition to being a software engineer, John performs with numerous jazz groups and big bands in the Rhode Island/Connecticut area as well as with the gypsy jazz group *Minor Swing* and the classical group *Bohemian Quartet*. He is a versatile bassist who navigates flawlessly between classical, rock, blues and jazz. He played acoustic bass on Donna's album *Tango with the Moon* and is a member of *GYPSY ROMANTIQUE*'.

RICH DUBOIS – Fiddle



Richard Dubois was born into a musical family in Providence Rhode Island. At age nine he began playing violin when his grandfather loaned his fiddle to Rich for violin lessons. From the start, Rich wanted to become proficient enough to play bluegrass music with his older brothers. His sparse classical training gave him enough of the basics to learn various styles from recordings, helping him to develop a virtuoso ear for music of all styles, much appreciated by his fellow musicians. Having spent his childhood performing with the family in local shows, he developed a lifelong love of performing on stage. At age 19 he joined Hank Walters and the Nashville Company and worked with them for many years. He won *Fiddle Player of the Year* from the RI Country Music association at least 8 times, ultimately resulting in his induction into the RI Country Music Hall of Fame. He has also been recognized by The Massachusetts Country Music Association for several years and awarded that state's *Fiddle Player of the Year*. This culminated in his induction into the *Gallery of Greats* in Massachusetts in 1992.

Rich has performed and recorded with numerous award winning bands including *Alive and Pickin'*, *the O.K. Chorale*, and for the last 17 years – the *John Penny Band*. He also plays with the Boston based western swing band *The Spurs*, and an alternative country band called *Dogie and the Cowpie Poachers*. Rich has been most fortunate to perform with such national stars as Hank Thompson, Barbara Fairchild, Dick Curliss, Tommy Cash, Billy Walker, Jimmy Parker and Billy Hunter, and shared the stage with legends such as Merle Haggard, George Jones, Colleen Carter, Johnny Paycheck, and many others. He performs with the nouveau swing band *GYPSY ROMANTIQUE'*, led by Donna Dufresne, and played fiddle on her album *Tango with the Moon*.

CHRIS HAYNES – accordion



Chris is the Director of Music at Springfield College, Massachusetts, where he has taught and played for over a 16-year period with many of the world's more athletic musicians. As a freelancer, he has been the band director of the *Young at Heart Chorus* up to the point at which the popular film "Young at Heart" was made, and which, due to its success and the demands of travel, made it impossible for him to do the gig any longer. He is solidly in the stable of recording artists at the *Signature Sounds* record label, which is where he met Donna during the recording of her album *Cowboy Romance*. He has had the good fortune to be on many albums that not too many people know about. He also invests a considerable amount of time in writing esoteric chamber music and poetry. He loves to cook and

is trying to bring the pork fat count to newer and more sublime levels in his culinary pursuits. He resides in Williamsburg, MA with his two teenage daughters, his two and a half year old son and his dog, Roxanne, none of whom seem to be complaining about the cooking.

GYPSY ROMANTIQUE SWING BAND ALSO INCLUDES:

TIM PECK – piano



Tim has worked with Donna for the last three years, composing and arranging music for the album *Tango with the Moon*, and producing and recording the music for her children's musical, *Speaker for the Earth*. Tim has a degree in music and composition and is currently in pursuit of a master's degree in performance and jazz. He studies jazz piano and composition in Boston, while teaching and directing the music tech program at Pomfret Academy where he is kept extremely busy between teaching, student performances, and dorm duty. Still, he manages to find time for his own music with his jazz ensemble *The Tim Peck Trio*, and he has recorded his original jazz compositions on an album titled *Ms. Matched*, available at cdbaby.com. Tim played piano on the album *Tango with the Moon*, and performs with GYPSY ROMANTIQUE' Swing Band.

WAYNE GASIOREK – Drums



A resident of Northeast Connecticut for the last 20 + years, Wayne is currently an instructor of drumming and freelances as a performing drummer for several bands in the New England vicinity. He is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and his past playing experience has been extensive on the east coast as well as spending several years performing as a show band drummer in Las Vegas. With a passion for jazz, the GYPSY ROMANTIQUE ensemble has been a great fit. Wayne played drums on the recording *Tango with the Moon* and performs with GYPSY ROMANTIQUE Swing Band.

JOE MEO – sax, clarinet, flute



Joe Meo is a multi-woodwind player who has had a wide-ranging musical career that seemed preordained. His first instrument (a clarinet) fell out of a car and landed across the street from his house when he was 8 years old! He has played all his life from that moment on, shelving a career in electrical engineering (he holds both a BS and MS degree in that subject) to pursue his first love of music. He has played in numerous rock, funk and jazz bands from New Jersey to Massachusetts. He has toured the world with the *Jeff Holmes Big Band* and the *Ed Palermo Band*, and has played with the Tonight Show Orchestra under *Doc Severinsen*. He has played with many pop artists including *Billy Vera*, *The Pointer Sisters*, *The Four Tops*, *The Temptations* and *Johnny Mathis*. He has played on several cruise ships including the maiden voyage of the Queen Mary 2. He has played on many recordings ranging from albums and CD's to commercials. His abilities on clarinet, sax and flute have allowed him to play in pit orchestras for Broadway productions. Lately he has added guitar and vocals to his musical arsenal. He also has a thriving teaching career, teaching privately and substituting in private and public schools. He is equally adept in all genres of music combining outstanding reading skills and the ability to improvise, allowing him to fit seamlessly into any musical situation. Joe played sax, flute and clarinet on the recording *Tango with the Moon* and performs when he is available with the GYPSY ROMANTIQUE' Swing Band.