

NEW YORK VOICES

29 years and counting, the evolution, the artistry and the worker bee mentality



2017 marks the eve of New York Voices 30th Anniversary and they show no signs of slowing down. This critically acclaimed vocal group has refined their musical story to a high art. They are known for their close-knit voicings, inspired arrangements and unparalleled vocal blend. Their chameleon-like musicianship allows them to move seamlessly from setting to setting, be it orchestral/big band to the intimate trio lineup. The art of survival as a group in the music business is as much testimony of their success as their vocal finesse'. That, and say still coming to mind to the great creative forces out there that want to play with the vocal stacking idiom. They are first call from great arrangers and conductors like Bob Mintzer, Don Sebesky, Michael Abene, Keith Lockhart, and Rob Fisher who all know and admire the complexity of what they do and want something out of the ordinary when developing new projects. Like the great jazz vocal groups that have come before — Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, Singers Unlimited, and The Manhattan Transfer — they are firmly a part of that legacy and are dedicated to passing it on to generations to come.

“The Art of Survival” is what it’s all about. That, and the family we have become.



- Pictured at right are Ivan Lins, Ralf Schmid, and the Danish Radio Big Band and the Bob Mintzer Big Band.

They have been busy making two very inspired collaborative projects with the great Brazilian composer, Ivan Lins, partnered with the Danish Radio Big Band, and the second being a meeting of minds with the Bob Mintzer Big Band at the Manchester Craftsman Guild. Great brains think bigger together and that is the thought behind merging the Voices in the Big Band sonority once again. In November of 2016, they recorded with Ivan and the DRBB with orchestrations by Ralf Schmid. It’s a stunning tour de force of Schmid’s modern landscapes, and the Voices and Lins joyfully reimagining his beautiful works. Mixing and release dates are pending. Let the pendulum swing to sooner than later.

And bouncing off of their guest artist appearance with the Mintzer BB in 2014 at the Tokyo Blue Note, Bob and the MCG reached out to have this pairing blown into a full fledged recording. Finding neat ways to include and imbue the Voices into Bob’s charts was a thrilling challenge for Meader. Already a huge fan of Mintzer’s tenor madness, Darmon had his work cut out for him, finding ways to work the Voices into the angular, groovy arrangements, all the while maintaining the instrumental integrity and lyrical message. As one would imagine, top flight soloists break the tunes wide open, offering virtuosic wails between structured solis and vocally stacked chorus’.

Other recent releases are from 2013, their 25th Anniversary year. ***New York Voices Live with the WDR Big Band Cologne*** on Palmetto Records is a collection of past favorites, current in-rotation tunes, and brand new arrangements. The big band charts were all written by the incomparable Michael Abene, the producer of their 1989 debut CD on GRP! The WDR — critically acclaimed big band based in Cologne, Germany — pairs perfectly with NYV’s musicality and might. And they closed 2013 with the much-anticipated and rave reviewed Holiday project, ***Let it Snow***. The recording is chock full of holiday favorites and a few lesser known gems presented in a wide variety of settings; a cappella, big band, orchestral and trio. Meader co produced it with sound guru Elliot Scheiner (also the producer of NYV’s studio big band CD, ***Sing, Sing,***

Sing). Jazz Times' Scott Albin wrote, "**Let it Snow** is one of the best jazz-related Christmas CDs in many a year."

The beginnings of NYV: Formed by Darmon Meader, Peter Eldridge, Kim Nazarian, Caprice Fox, and Sara Krieger, New York Voices had their first performances in 1988.

Darmon, Peter, Kim, and Caprice attended Ithaca College in NY and were part of an invitational alumni group formed to tour the European Jazz Festival circuit in the summer of '86. In 1989 they would sign their first record deal with GRP Records and release their self titled debut album, **New York Voices**. The group received rave notices and quickly received domestic and international recognition in the jazz world. From '89 to '94, they released four CDs on the GRP label, **New York Voices**, **Hearts of Fire**, **What's Inside**, and **Collection**.

While recording for GRP, they underwent personnel changes. In 1992, Sara Krieger retired her chair, and after auditioning over 60 vocalists from all over the United States, the group found Lauren Kinhan. There was an immediate chemistry, allowing the group to make a quick transition and become the "new" New York Voices. Lauren's first musical contributions can be heard on NYV's third CD, **What's Inside**, released in May 1993. In early 1994, Caprice Fox left the group, forever fixing NYV as the quartet it is today.

In addition to their own CDs, NYV has made many guest appearances on recordings and live performances that have earned them critical acclaim and demand in a variety of settings. You can find their performances on such CDs as the Grammy Award winning **Count Basie Orchestra with New York Voices, Live at Manchester Craftsmen's Guild** (MCG Records), the Latin Grammy Award winning **Brazilian Dreams** with the great Paquito D'Rivera, the contemporary classical **Visions Within** (Robert Lepley - EarthBeat Records), **Heirs to Jobim** (BMG Records), Don Sebesky's, **I Remember Bill** (BMG), Jim Hall's **By Arrangement** (Telarc), **A Love Affair - the Music of Ivan Lins** (TELARC), **Louisiana Purchase** (DRG), and many more.

They have had the pleasure of performing with a number of influential jazz artists including Ray Brown, Bobby McFerrin, Nancy Wilson, The Count Basie Orchestra, George Benson, Jon Hendricks, Annie Ross, The Manhattan Transfer, the Boston Pops, The Metropole Orchestra, Ivan Lins, Paquito D'Rivera, Bob Dorough and many more.

In early 1997 they traveled down a different road, paying tribute to Paul Simon with **New York Voices Sing the Songs of Paul Simon**. They explored a variety of styles to express new turns on this singer/songwriter's rich songbook. All Music Guide said, "The arrangements are brighter and brassier than Simon's originals, but there's a real charm to the performances that makes it a thoroughly entertaining experience."

In 2001, New York Voices released their sixth CD, **Sing! Sing! Sing!**. After many years of performing with the Count Basie Orchestra, the group wanted to address the great Big Band songbook and offer their own spin. With Darmon doing the lion's share of the vocal and big band arrangements, they hired the producing talents of Elliot Scheiner (Manhattan Transfer, Steely Dan, Fleetwood Mac) to capture the music and mix it with

his exquisite precision and care. As reviewed by Don Heckman of the LA Times, "The title track quickly lays down what to expect from the balance of the program: complex, interwoven vocal lines, interactive improvising and brisk ensemble accompaniment. And revivalist swing fans -- both players and listeners -- would do well to check out the Voices' capacity to bring a contemporary quality to classic material without sacrificing the essence of either."

In the last decade, the pops symphony community has called upon them to develop various programs. The Boston Pops knocked first and commissioned a few big band style adaptations. Then a baby boomer show followed that toured extensively in 2003. Finally, the Boston Pops got the holiday program started in 2005, and the rest is history. NYV has added to all these programs over the years allowing them to dive into the gorgeous landscape of symphonic settings and build a new following of music appreciators. Janelle Gelfand of The Cincinnati Enquirer said, "*The group's incomparable blend, hip delivery and great arrangements resulted in one swinging party. Their four-part harmonizing was so close, it was hard to tell where one voice ended and another began.*"

2007 marked the release of their seventh studio CD, ***A Day Like This***. They went back to their roots of mixing things up; Brazilian influences, swinging trio numbers and a couple big band romps. They also included a handful of original songs from the members, which has always been a strong suit for this multi-talented ensemble. All About Jazz LA said, "a sumptuous collection of vocal harmonic heaven... the vocals are a Whitman's Sampler of various flavors and tastes, richer than a dark chocolate bon bon."

NYV has traveled the globe with their elegant music, amazing audiences the world over with their impeccable voices and stunning arrangements. "Live, they're just as impressive to witness," says Mathew Lurie of Time Out Chicago. "We dare say there may be no better way to understand the wit and wink of jazz harmony than via these Voices."

Along with their extensive concert performances and recording schedules, NYV also works in the field of education, giving workshops and clinics to high school and college music students throughout the world. In 2009, they launched the **New York Voices Vocal Jazz Camp** at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Now going into its 9th year, the camp moved its residency to the beautiful campus of Ithaca College in upstate New York in 2016 and continues on their mentorship and outreach in this region. Also in 2016, they launched the first annual **New York Voices International Vocal Jazz Camp** in Ptuj, Slovenia. Built on the friendship formed with Vox Arsana, a Slovenian vocal jazz quartet that attended the domestic camp, they conspired to bring the camp across the Atlantic to rest in this charming medieval town and the graciousness of their community. They are wildly successful ventures that admit students from all over the world at different ages and stages in their musical lives.

They have cultivated a philosophy of teaching over their storied career and designed a roster of electives that students choose from while also participating in one of four jazz

choirs directed by one of the New York Voices and the all camp piece directed by Greg Jasperse. It is a six-day summer intensive that is instructive while also being personal and nurture based. To learn more about it, visit our Camp page at our website.

Individually, the four members are involved in a variety of projects including solo performances and recordings, teaching, writing and arranging. To learn more about the NYV individual members, please visit their websites ([Kim](#), [Darmon](#), [Peter](#) and [Lauren](#)).