

My name is Tia Rix and I'm a jazz musician in Atlanta, Ga. Specifically, I'm a vocalist.

I grew up listening to jazz music. Both of my parents were professional musicians. My mother, Phyllis Rix, sang with big bands and toured mostly in the eastern and southern parts of the United States.

My father, Bob Rix, played the upright bass. He toured with the Buddy Morrow Orchestra, Bob Crosby and the Bobcats, and many other big bands throughout the United States. He also worked as a bandleader here in Atlanta.

Needless to say, I heard the jazz genre since I was in the womb!

My mother was a big influence in my early singing life. She often led me and my siblings in family sing- a-longs. We sang everywhere! I especially enjoyed singing on long trips in the car. Instead of the usual songs of the day, we sang fun jazz standards. My father would even join in. Cement Mixer and Straighten Up and Fly Right were a couple of my favorite songs to sing with the family.

As I grew older, I learned about other genres of music. I expanded my listening to folk, pop, and music of the church. I sang with auditioned choirs in high school and into college. Choral music became my main focus. I received my music degree from Brigham Young University where I attended on scholarship in conducting.

While in college, I bought my first Ella Fitzgerald album at an Atlanta Sears and Roebuck store. It seems humerus to me that I would find such a treasure at a catalog retail store, but there it was. I was hooked. I started listening to everything Ella that I could get my hands on. It just felt like home to me.

I believe that true jazz involves taking many risks. Every time I stray from what is written on that music paper, I'm taking a risk. Every time I try a new rhythm or approach, I'm taking a risk. I have learned that the art of improvisation is all about taking risks. It takes hours of practice, study, listening, and dedication to even

remotely begin to understand what this music is. It takes real courage to jump off the tree branch. Sometimes you land on your feet and sometimes on your face. But, the thrill of making music is always worth the risk. With time, you learn to soar with freedom and intelligence!!

I owe many thanks to my jazz heroes! I must first acknowledge the many people who have supported me through the years. I give thanks for my parents who gave and encouraged the gift I have been given. There were teachers that nurtured me and gave me courage to find my voice. There are friends that continue to believe in me. I recognize the jazz legends who have influenced my style and my appreciation for the art form. Those heroes include Ella Fitzgerald, Shirley Horn, Sarah Vaughn, Anita O'Day, Johnny Hartman, and many others.

I also want to give a shout out to the local musicians that have been great mentors and sources of inspiration. First, I thank Kevin Bales. He has believed in me and worked with me on numerous occasions. It's always a pleasure to play with him. He allows me the freedom to express myself in ways that no one else does. It's like magic how we can weave a song into something so beautiful. Next, I would like to thank, the bassists, Neal Starkey, Delbert Felix, and Billy Thornton, for always providing such a sure foundation and are a source of joy with which to work. I must also remember my friend, Larry Wilson, who has encouraged me and directed me through my recent recording entitled "Where You Live". Lastly, I want to recognize Joe Gransden, Audrey Shakir, and Gordon Vernick for their support. Really, there are just too many to mention.