

Just wait 'til you hear the marvelous BD Greer!

By CP Christopher Peppas

In her role as Les Clefs d'Or Chef Concierge (or Head Concierge) at the Pfister Hotel, BD (Briana Davis) Greer is charged with helping guests get the ultimate experience during their stay in Milwaukee.



Whether that's getting primo seats to Hamilton at the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts or courtside seats for a Milwaukee Bucks playoff game.

In her role as vocalist extraordinaire, BD is tasked with doing much the same for her audience. And we can say without equivocation or fear of contradiction that she never disappoints.

It would seem, to the casual observer, that BD Greer has burst onto the local music scene (mostly jazz) from out of nowhere.

All of a sudden, we're seeing BD Greer & The Gents at Blu at the Top of the Pfister, The St. Kate Arts Hotel, The Corners at Brookfield Beer Garden, Riverwest Pizza, Open Flame...you get the idea.



But a deeper dive reveals that BD is a seasoned pro who moved back to Wisconsin to raise her family after a most impressive career in different musical groups and settings. Her curriculum vitae matches up against the best and overshadows many, many others.

"I just found that there's nothing I love more than singing," BD said in a recent interview. Greer hails from the Fox Valley and went to New York to pursue music up her graduation from Neenah High School.

She continued her education, concentrating on the arts at AMDA, the American Musical and Dramatic Academy.

BD appeared on Broadway, sang in commercials, was a USO Girl entertaining our troops, performed on the Norwegian Cruise Line ships and, lest we forget, did about a two-year stint with the Forrest Gump actor Gary Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band.

She met her husband and moved back to the "Land of Cheese" to raise a family.

She is known mostly for being a jazz singer with her BD & The Gents group, but she can drift in and out most other genres including, but not limited to 50s and 60s, Doo Wop, Classic Rock, showtunes...the list is endless.

"I just look for songs that I can connect with...songs that tell a story that I can put my mark on," BD said. "It's all about finding the right people to play and mesh with."



The Gents, her Gents as she says, are most often Mark Davis on piano, the founder of the Milwaukee Jazz Institute, Dave Bayles on drums also from MJI and Joel Lehman, a trumpeter with unrivaled chops who has been chronicled on these pages not long ago.

In addition, BD performs in the Greater Appleton area at clubs with Jazz Orgy.

Greer's musical influences include Sarah Vaughn, Dinah Washington, Racine's Nancy Wilson, Peggy Lee, Etta James and the breezy bluesy Bonnie Raitt.

"I don't find it to be too hard to connect with an audience," BD explained. "I can do "Summertime" three or four different ways...different flavors and style depending on who I'm playing with."

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As far as playing gigs goes: "It still has to work for my family." And, in four short years since her return, "I'm known more here and in Chicago".

BD can speak first hand about the differences in the community of musicians in New York versus here on the Third Coast.

I feel that there's more support here," BD said. "It's a very Midwest thing. There are so many artists, it's a big community to make good music with. It's a 'live or die' thing in New York."

Greer is excited about the prospects of the things happening here in The Athens of The Midwest. "The Fresh Coast Jazz Festival and other projects" are fast making this a hotbed.



While The Estate has an abbreviated schedule of music, many places continually support "Live Music" like Bar Centro and Riverwest Pizza, Transfer Pizza, Brewtown Eatery, The Lodge, The Final Approach, The Packing House, Yemas, and Ally's Bistro.

Just you wait to hear the marvelous BD Greer. On second thought, don't wait another New York minute. You will not regret it.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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