

## MOST INTERESTING THINGS

# COUNTRYPOLITAN DUETS

Mention Anna Wilson's name around town and you will likely hear, "THE jazz singer." Arguably Nashville's most acclaimed jazz singer, Wilson has produced a unique musical offering this year fusing a little bit of country and a whole lot of jazz in her new project *Countrypolitan Duets*. The word "countrypolitan" originated as a Nashville sound—a type of country music engineered by Chet Atkins and Owen Bradley incorporating string sections instead of banjos and fiddles. It was revolutionary then and remains so now.

Wilson has added a bit of intrigue and sophistication to *Countrypolitan Duets* by featuring the likes of Keith Urban, Lady Antebellum, Connie Smith and Ray Price. "I Will Never Know" is the only original song, but the country songs infused with jazz are decidedly rich and the who's who guest list compelling. Anna says she set out to demonstrate how country and jazz are similar. The two-year project offered "an amazing journey," she believes.

"Making this record taught me so much about music and my place in the industry, Nashville in particular," Wilson says. "The time I spent creating this record felt like a rite of passage because it is the intersection of so many relationships, experiences and years in the business. This album is a culmination of my artistic journey that started in country as a songwriter, moved to pop as a recording artist and then ultimately found its way to jazz, as a songwriter, recording artist and record company president [Transfer Records]."

"I have so many influences from all three genres that it seemed only right to try and find a place where they could all blend together in one project," she continues. "*Countrypolitan Duets* is that project. With a little help from my friends, I was able to document that and be the voice that could connect it all."

Wilson says the idea for the compilation came from a reoccurring question: What is a nice jazz singer like her doing in Nashville, the country music capital of the world?

"I have always clearly seen a strong connection between my brand of vocal jazz music and classic country music. Back in the late 1950s early '60s, there was an era called The Nashville Sound, where the two genres sonically shook hands for a while. Vocal jazz artists tend to recycle tunes from the Great American Songbook, but rarely do contemporary country artists do that with classic country songs. I thought that since I had a toe in both genres, country as a songwriter and jazz as a singer, why not honor the songwriter and record some of the most beloved country songs from that era—but in a jazz styling? I love to write country songs and sing jazz songs, so it made perfect sense to me because I was able to truly marry both."

Collaborating with so many great artists produced many memorable moments for Wilson. "A book full!" she says. The biggest moment came early on as singer Kenny Rogers replied to Anna's email request to him to participate in the project.

"And I quote his response, which came back to me in all capital letters: 'THANKS SO MUCH FOR INVITING ME TO BE A PART OF YOUR PROJECT. IT SOUNDS LIKE FUN AND SOMETHING I WOULD REALLY ENJOY DOING... I WOULD LOVE TO DO IT.'"

[www.annawilson.com](http://www.annawilson.com)

