



www.bettbutler.com

Bett Butler

a short biography

Recuerdos....

Bett Butler still remembers the morning they delivered the dusty old upright piano, badly in need of tuning. Three years old at the time, she immediately attempted to imitate what she heard around her: the crazy mix of musical treasures her father scoured from second-hand stores, platters serving up Billie Holiday and Beethoven, Ernesto Lecuona and Louis Armstrong, Willie Nelson, Ray Charles, the Platters, the Andrews Sisters. The living room became a refuge from the smoggy Houston air that took her breath away, a magical place where imagination soared on sound.

She made her stage debut at age four, on a family vacation, in a swank nightclub in Mexico City. The pleasure came as much from the place as from the applause; it was a place of magic and mystery and sophistication, like in the old movies she loved to watch.

As Bett grew older, that sense of place was also fed by the stories she voraciously read. As a teenager, she spent hours prowling the libraries and art museums in downtown Houston, savoring the fragrance of moldy books and drinking in the rich colors of Gauguin and Degas. A theater geek, acting enabled her to live the stories she read.

Bett went to college on scholarship, planning to major in theater, and instinctively switched to music at the last minute. Chaffing against the stuffy rigor of classical training, she spent most of her time listening to Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith records and the school's jazz radio station.

After graduating, she worked in professional theater as a writer, actor, musical director, composer, and accompanist. Eventually, she moved into the club and festival circuit, where she met and married bassist/composer/producer Joël Dilley. Together, they formed Mandala Music Production and independent co-op label Dragon Lady Records. Her first CD *Short Stories*, a mix of jazz and blues originals, earned a "recommended" rating from *All Music Guide*, noting "Butler's uncommon compositional and performing ability to work successfully with diverse musical themes and within a variety of frameworks," and critical acclaim from John Swenson of United Press International, who raved "Bett Butler brought me to that place where music can salve the deepest wound, mend the heart most broken." Her second release *Myths & Fables* was deemed by KRTU 91.7 fm's *Sound Check* as "a must-have for jazz fans" and won a grant from the Artist Foundation. Featured on KPAC 88.3 fm's *Classical Spotlight* and enthusiastically described by host Ron Moore as a "fine example of post-modern lieder," her song "When Love Has Left the Room" won First Place—out of 10,000 entries—in the Jazz Category of the much-lauded International Songwriting Competition (ISC).

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Bett Butler's CDs

are available at

www.jazzartstore.com