

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

CHRISTINE ROSANDER: SMOOTH RIDE

APRYL LUNDSTEN: Singer Christine Rosander has one of those voices that sticks with you. Just listen to this...

SONG: KITTEN

LUNDSTEN: That's "Kitten" from Rosander's new CD, "Smooth Ride." If you live in Southern California, chances are you've probably heard her. Rosander's been belting out jazz standards at clubs and festivals all over Southern California for the last ten years. You can even catch her sultry vocals on Doc Rutherford's Big Band albums. But now -- Rosander's treading new territory.

CHRISTINE ROSANDER: This is my first studio album and it has a lot of original songs -- by me and also by Jane Getz, my producer and co-writer.

LUNDSTEN: Teaming up with Getz is a major coup. Getz has played piano with jazz great Charlie Mingus. And she's tickled the ivories on albums by John Lennon, the Bee Gees, and Don Henley. Another big score was landing Grammy winner Bob Tucker as co-producer. Tucker's worked with the Temptations and India Arie. Rosander attributes Tucker and Getz with her sound on this album -- which is a bit of a departure from her earlier work.

ROSANDER: The style definitely has my jazz influences, but then it also has a lot of pop influences of things that, that I love and listen to -- like Rickie Lee Jones and Joni Mitchell. Then also there's kind of a western country roots music sort of influence in there which I guess is, you know, from my childhood growing up in kind of a rural farming community. My dad used to have a record collection of Hank Williams and Patsy Cline -- I hear that coming in.

LUNDSTEN: Rosander grew up in Elk Grove, California -- outside Sacramento. She learned to sing from her mother -- a voice and piano teacher -- and honed her talent singing in church. She started soloing at age five. Many of the songs on Smooth Ride have gospel influences and evoke a spiritual quest.

ROSANDER: It's funny because I see this theme running through a lot of my songs, which is about looking for relief, looking for some kind of peace and asking, asking for help.

LUNDSTEN: "Traveling Mercy" is one of those songs.

TRAVELING MERCY HERE

ROSANDER: I read a book by Anne Lamott and she wrote a book called “Traveling Mercies: Thoughts on Faith” and she, you know, talks about her journey in life toward finding faith and spirituality and she talks about her prayers. One of her favorite prayers is “Help me, Help me, Help me” and I can really relate to that. So after reading her book I started writing a song called Traveling Mercy and it’s really about a journey, about asking for strength, asking God for help.

LUNDSTEN: Rosander says her songwriting process has also been a journey.

ROSANDER: A lot of things just start to come into it that I don’t even realize – there’s like a conscious thought of what the song is about and then other things that are just kind of under the surface. Of course the best, most fun way is when you’re doing something usually totally not planning to write a song, but driving, or washing the dishes or taking a walk or just doing something and then an idea comes to you – kind of like a light bulb going on.

LUNDSTEN: In fact, that light bulb went on while Rosander was listening to the car radio – she had one of those “National Public Radio driveway moments.”

ROSANDER: One of the first original songs that was written for the album was “Cattle Press.” I’d heard this NPR interview with Temple Grandin. She’s an autistic woman who has become an animal scientist. When she was a kid she was on her aunt’s farm and she saw cattle being put into a squeeze chute to doctor them or whatever and she noticed how calm they became. So then she asked if she could be put inside there to feel that nice feeling of having a hug. That feeling for her was really relaxing and in her life she’s created these squeeze machines for animals and actually for humans. So I heard this story and it was really intriguing to me and really attractive because I guess my background of being around cows and animals – and then also what would that be like to really need that pressure...and so then I started to write a song. In the chorus it goes:

SINGING HERE

LUNDSTEN: Grandin’s story also hits home because Rosander teaches voice to a girl with autism named Lexi. Both of them were recently part of a documentary.

ROSANDER: It’s about several autistic kids. They come together and they do a musical. So it’s called Autism: The Musical. They follow the students around and one of the things they do is they came to Lexi’s voice lesson.

LUNDSTEN: She says working with Lexi has taught her a lot.

ROSANDER: She just has the agenda to sing the music, to enjoy the music for the pure love of the music, without worrying what other people think of her. One of my goals, or something that I’m coming to in my journey of music is just that I really, I put too much

emphasis on it: I need to sing well, I need to play well, I need...you know...but rather it's better to let it happen and enjoy the process. The way that Lexi sings the music it's more of a surrender.

LUNDSTEN: Listening to Smooth Ride, it's easy to surrender to the soulful power of Rosander's voice...and her words.

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