

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Theatrical Spark and Musical Chemistry Grace the Concert Album Jana Herzen "LIVE" Produced by Charnett Moffett

Herzen's Warm Vocals and Strong Guitar Work Interplay
with Ace Jazz Band on Audiophile Recording

Out March 12 (cd/digital), June 11 (vinyl) on Motéma

"There's something special anytime that Jana Herzen and Charnett Moffett make music together. It's pure, soulful, and especially beautiful to hear now, maybe more than ever. Together their magic." – AMERICAN SONGWRITER

"A rather wonderful musical partnership" – JAZZWISE (UK)

With fans and musicians longing for a return to the joyful communion of live performances blocked by COVID-19, internationally acclaimed jazz artist Charnett Moffett suggested to his long-time music partner and newly wed bride, the acclaimed singer/songwriter Jana Herzen – that they release a special concert which they had recorded live at Joe's Pub in New York City on October 29, 2019.

The celebratory and soulful performance featured an all-original set with Herzen on vocals and guitar, veterans Moffett (on fretless electric bass) and **Brian Jackson** (on piano and keyboards), alongside the spirited young drummer **Corey Garcia** on drums, and the gifted **Irwin Hall** (known best for his work with Melody Gardot) on multi-reeds and woodwinds. Slated as a preview for Herzen's 'Nothing But Love' studio album (which came out to critical acclaim in January of 2020) the concert had an electric, anticipatory vibration. Little did they know that the COVID crisis was crouching around the corner, the group would not be able to gather and perform together to an unforeseeable time to come.

Soul refreshing and vibrant, Jana Herzen LIVE is a perfect album for this moment. Herzen's warmly expressive vocals and lyrics sail into the mind to soothe and groove away troubles while the band's rich musicianship, deep-as-the-ocean grooves, highly sensitive ensemble work, and inspired soloing transport the listener to front and center of the famed NYC club in 2019.

In March of 2020, Herzen and Moffett who were married just a month before, found themselves caught together in the pandemic shutdown, so they began broadcasting online as a duo from home to support the release of Herzen's album 'Nothing But Love' and in June they self-produced thirty Facebook Live concerts and were invited to join a variety of "Quarantine" series shows produced by The Blue Note (NYC), JAZZIZ, KUUMBWA Jazz Center and others reaching over half a million online viewers.

2020 saw a flurry of positive international write-ups for Herzen and Moffett. UK's JAZZWISE Magazine noted that they have *"A rather wonderful musical partnership,"* American Songwriter observed *"Together they're magic."* The companion full-length concert video from Joe's Pub, being released along with the album that shows Herzen bears visual evidence to that magic.



Herzen credits Moffett's great groove and selection of personnel and instrumentation as major elements of the successful chemistry heard on Jana Herzen LIVE. Moffett explains, "Working with Jana in a live setting is truly a joy. I love her spontaneity and the diversity of styles she brings as a musician. She sings every note from her heart, and the way her compositions flow from one style to another always amazes me. Janis Joplin, Ella Fitzgerald, Julie Andrews, are just a few of the diverse influences that I hear in her sound."

In addition to her work as an artist, Herzen is known as a savvy A&R Exec whose Motéma label has launched such top acts as Gregory Porter, Joey Alexander, and Deva Mahal. She is now experiencing a watershed moment as an artist, thanks in no small part to her musical partnership with Moffett that was initially sparked in 2011, and has brightly rekindled over the past few years. Her label also continues to make jazz history having released, the multi-award-winning *Waiting Game* by Terri Lyne Carrington & Social Science, GRAMMY-nominated this year for Best Instrumental Jazz Album.

Asked about the difference between her studio album, *Nothing But Love*, and this live recording, Herzen answers "The studio album features the fabulous violinist Scott Tixier and the wonderful drummer Mark Whitfield Jr, and leans more towards an Americana sound. The live album has more improvisation and swings more into jazz territory. Irwin Hall's impressive arsenal of alto, tenor, and soprano saxophones with clarinet, flute, and alto-flute adds a world of textural variation. Also, there's more history in this combo. Brian, Corey, Irwin, and I have now recorded and toured together with Charnett for several years, while Irwin and Charnett also have a special hook-up that dates back to when they worked together backing Melody Gardot's meteoric rise to fame in 2010 and 2011."

Moffett and keyboard wizard Brian Jackson do bring a wealth of improvisation, imagination, chops, and history to this music, while Corey Garcia, the youngest member of the band, brings skilled and imaginative percussive sizzle. Meanwhile, Irwin Hall's impressive sax, flute, and clarinet lines paint impressionistic highlights that at times recall Branford Marsalis's indelible contributions to Sting's 'The Dream of the Blue Turtles,' an album that Herzen recalls playing 'non-stop' when it first came in 1985. At that time, in 1980's New York, a teen-age Charnett Moffett was making jazz headlines alongside the Marsalis brothers as an important 'young lion' of jazz, and Herzen, a graduate of NYU was contributing to theater history as a Founder and Dramaturge for NYC's trend-setting MCC Theater which remains a major force in theater today. Their feet shared the same NYC Village streets, they heard music in the same clubs, but it was to be years later that their worlds would collide when a chance meeting led to Herzen signing Moffett to Motéma in 2007. He has since released seven fine albums on the label .

"I urged Jana to share this music with the world. Her poetic lyrics speak truth, her songs have beautiful melodies and a gripping story to hold onto, and her guitar accompaniment is subtle with a deep groove that's punctuated by her melodic solos," explains Moffett, "and as a native New Yorker, the electric vibrations that night brought me back to my early days of club-hopping in Greenwich Village when I would experience a few different kinds of music on the same night. I believe the concert recalled those experiences because the music had so much variety, and the audience came with so much love. Now, given the recent turn of events, we're really happy to share this live performance moment as a gift to all during these very difficult times."

Track highlights abound on 'LIVE', from the timely anthem 'In The Name of Love' to the cool vibe of 'Lightening the Load' with its strong guitar work by Herzen; from the danceable romantic Reggae-pop of

'Like A River' (with subtle backing vocals by the band,) to the high-spirited groove-heavy crowd-pleaser, 'On The Outside'. There are also magnetically quiet moments: The timeless beauty of Herzen's 'Night Blooming Jasmine' where Hall's alto-flute and Jackson's delicate piano circle like butterflies around the lush melody, and 'Precious Air', an anthem that first appeared on Moffett's Bright New Day, evolved further on Nothing But Love, and reaches new heights here as a mesmerizing and dreamy meditation on important issues of life.

Produced by Moffett, mixed by Eric Glauser at Hyde Street Studios in San Francisco with additional engineering by Paul Rollnick, and mastered by Multi-GRAMMY-winning engineer Alan Silverman (known for award-winning work with Judy Collins and many other top artists), Jana Herzen LIVE is a winning 'moment in time' for audiophile ears and all lovers of timeless, live music from the heart.

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A private link to Jana Herzen LIVE is here:

https://soundcloud.com/jana_herzen/sets/jana-herzen-live/s-pQhOSzCilwA

For more information, please visit: motema.com janaherzen.com charnettmoffett.com



ABOUT MOTÉMA MUSIC:

Motéma Music is an award-winning independent label founded by Jana Herzen in San Francisco in 2003. The label has garnered 25 GRAMMY® nominations with five wins in the genres of jazz, Latin jazz, reggae, and R&B. Motéma has launched recording careers for international stars Gregory Porter, Joey Alexander, Pedrito Martinez, and Deva Mahal and supported a wide array of innovative jazz artists including Randy Weston, Monty Alexander, Geri Allen, Charnett Moffett, David Murray, Donny McCaslin, Mark Guiliana, Ben Wendel, Melissa Aldana. The label has released the politically conscious projects: Playing for Change "Listen to the Music," Jaimeo Brown's Transcendence, Kentyah's "Evolutionary Minded (The Music of Brian Jackson & Gil Scott Heron) and the Terri Lyne Carrington & Social Science award-winning album Waiting Game (nominated in 2021's 63rd Annual Grammy Awards for 'Best Instrumental Jazz Album.' Motema means 'heart' in the Lingala language of central Africa.

Track By Track Music notes by Charnett Moffett (Producer, Bassist, Music Director)

>> Jana Herzen "LIVE" is a fun and groovy jazzy/pop recording of Herzen's unique original music that crosses over to many facets of music.

1) NOTHING BUT LOVE The performance opens with the swinging reggae/country feel of "Nothing But Love." Herzen's bluesy and soulful vocals and lyrics touch on the humanity of life and inspire strong solos by Irwin Hall on tenor sax and Brian Jackson on piano. Herzen's guitar solo continues her narrative with lyrical lines filled with passion.

2) SPEAK The next song "Speak" is a marvelous composition. The 3/4 time has an African waltz movement and gives a feeling of being on a journey to freedom. Herzen's poetic lyrics and energetic vocals are powerful with a cry that captures the essence of life. The warmth and quality of her voice on this transformational song evokes an almost operatic experience.

3) ON THE OUTSIDE This song echoes the vibe of Deborah Harry (Blondie) in some ways. It's a funky groove with an angular melody that is centered by Herzen's vocals and lyrics. The story is about love in the pop culture sense. As an artist of surprising diversity, Herzen switches vocal styles effortlessly. Highlights include Herzen's intense vocal improvisation that has the feel of a "fiddle" duo with Irwin Hall's sax playing in unison.

4) MY LATIN LOVE Resets to Herzen's elastic warm open tone on this cozy performance night, settling the audience with a relaxing Cuban Montuno. This romantic composition from the pen of Herzen features brilliant interplay between Herzen's guitar, Hall's delicate clarinet, and Jackson's twinkle-toes style piano, supported, by a classic bass line that Herzen's guitar often doubles.

5) NIGHT BLOOMING JASMINE Here, Herzen's misty voice mesmerizes the audience and reminisces the great Dinah Shore. This beautiful ballad has a classic jazz standard feeling that's timeless. As the performance becomes more intimate, the song blossoms with harmonious energy led by Herzen that weaves from the fans to the band and back again.

6) WITH AN OPEN HEART This song starts with a tight backbeat swing groove by the band. Herzen's catchy lyrics then swing in, in a Joni Mitchell/Shania Twain kind of way. It's a story about trust. As the feeling of comfort settles in the space for everyone to continue to enjoy, the band opens up for a little improv moment. Corey Garcia's drumming stays in the pocket while adding musical crescendos. Herzen centers the groove with her great rhythmic guitar work. The bass dances with Herzen's guitar and Irwin Hall's soprano sax shines bright while Brian Jackson adds spotlight chords to accentuate Herzen's poetic lyrics.

7) LIGHTENING THE LOAD "Lightening The Load" has the audience in the vibe right from the downbeat. The audience continues to show their enthusiasm for the integrity of the musicians who perform each song with musical character. At times Herzen's voice reminds me of the great Mae West on this sassy number. 8) LIKE A RIVER This is a romantic reggae-swing tune that features Herzen's melodic voice and rhythmic swing. She chooses a softer tone to deliver this poetic story about the 'river of love.' Her reggae skank and melodic soloing on guitar sings out and brings to my mind the great Ernest Ranglin.

9) THINKING OF YOU "Thinking of You" Takes us on another realistic journey called life that lets us remember loved ones who have gone to other realms. Herzen's angelic sound is pure with a depth that captivates mind, body, and soul. The beautiful melody and lyrics give a feeling of calm to balance the harsh realities of life.

10) PRECIOUS AIR This gem of a composition shows a graceful marriage of pop and jazz. It starts with a melodic bass solo and as the story progresses, it inspires a soulful, brilliant solo section by Irwin Hall on tenor sax and Brian Jackson on piano. Herzen then comes back for the last verse the song closes with a spontaneous call and response moment between the bass and the vocal.

11) NAME OF LOVE "Name of Love" concludes this extraordinary live performance. This love anthem with gospel undertones features Herzen's riveting vocals and an extraordinary solo by Jackson. Herzen's poetic poise has the audience totally rapt throughout this final performance, leaving them with an inspirational feeling of love and spiritual uplift.