

Melissa Cox—Biography

Performing on the unusual combination of violin and vocals, Australian jazz singer-instrumentalist Melissa Cox is an exciting new addition to the ranks of touring international jazz artists. In addition to her flair on her instruments, her background in television, radio and live theatre has given her an engaging stage persona that has delighted audiences in UK, Japan and Australia.

Her jazz band, CINCIN, in which she sings and plays violin, performs regularly at jazz clubs and special events, and was a finalist in the Australian 2006 Golden Fiddle Awards. Since 2000, Melissa has performed at exclusive hotels, such as Sydney's Four Seasons and Sofitel Wentworth, and the Tokyo Hilton, with a string of international jazz musicians, from the US, Europe and Asia. Melissa also performs on the Sydney contemporary music scene with her band Black Sesame, which showcases her haunting, jazz-fused original songs.

Melissa began singing jazz in UK clubs in the late 1990s, then returned to her native Australia where she completed jazz performance studies on violin at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (being only the third violinist ever to do so). Soon afterwards, she spent six months performing as resident artist in the Tokyo Hilton. Here she encountered a steady stream of touring international jazz stars, and was exhorted by the likes of Natalie Cole and Joe Zawinul to “keep doin’ it!”.

As a freelance violinist, Melissa has recorded and toured with international artists such as Jenny Morris (NZ) and Afro Moses O’Jah (Ghana), and Australian artists Dominique Fraissard and Wei-Zen Ho. She has performed on some of Sydney’s biggest stages, supporting high-profile Australian bands such as The Waifs and The John Butler Trio.

As well as performing on the customary “soprano” violin, Melissa was inspired by hearing recordings of bebop violinist Harry Lookofsky to construct a tenor violin—an instrument midway in range between a viola and a cello. This gives her a distinctive muscular sound rarely heard in jazz.

“Outstanding... this ensemble exudes class”

—Jonathan R. Schwarz, Worldwide Business Development Manager, Microsoft Corporation, 1st July 2003
[after hearing a performance at Tokyo Hilton]

“You sound great! Keep doing it. You have a great tone.”

—Joe Zawinul, 7th October 2003
[after hearing a performance at Tokyo Hilton]

“I can’t rate this highly enough. It’s chilled, it’s sexy, it’s original—and importantly for me at least, it’s musically interesting.”

—DrDr Aardvark, aka Andrew Joyner, Sydney-based electronic musician.
[reviewing a showreel of Melissa’s original songs]

“[CinCin performed] a sharp version of *How High the Moon*. This surprising burst of energy showed, not only the band’s ability to swing like mad, but also Cox’s innovation and knowledge of the jazz tradition as an arranger. ... Worthy of particular mention is Cox’s original piece, *Someone New*. Biting, but subtle lyrics met with a sad, longing melody about the transmogrification of individuals through the process of loving.”

—Jasmine Crittenden, The Drum Media
[reviewing a live performance by CINCIN at The El Rocco Jazz Cellar, August 2005]

References

- 1 Hildegard Anzenberger
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Reference for MELISSA COX

Melissa has played and sung at The Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney since 2003. She has always been punctual and is very well suited to hotel work. Her combination of violin and vocals has been very popular and we have had many favourable comments from guests. Melissa's repertoire extends beyond the well-known jazz standards to include latin tunes and new interpretations of classic pop tunes.

I would recommend her for a similar position and if you need any more details please contact me.

Sincerely,

Guy Simpson
Musical Director
Cove Musicians



December 5, 2003

To Whom This May Concern:

This is to certify that the "Three Sisters" band composed of Vashti Sivell (piano), Melissa Dorothy Cox (violin,vocal) and Sandra Leanne Klose (vocal), have performed at the St. George's Bar of the Hilton Tokyo from June 6 to December 4, 2003.

The St. George's Bar is an English-style upper-scale pub where the local residents and foreign visitors of Tokyo get together for meetings and/or unwinding after a long and busy day. It offers top of the line beverages and exclusive wines from the great vineyards of the world and is the seat of the Hilton Wine Experience – an award-winning concept of Hilton International.

With their modern-day ensemble, the Three Sisters assisted in attracting a clientele of future executives and businessmen to our hotel, positively adding to our customer base.

We thank them for their services and wish them success and happiness in their musical career.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'THOEBORN'.

Thomas Hoeborn
Hotel Manager

:lmg

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The General Manager
Hilton Tokyo
6-2 Nishi-Shinjuku 6-chome
Shinjuku-Ku, Japan, 160023

1st July 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

I usually only write letters to the management of corporations/establishments to complain about some aspect of service that I found lacking, or some other disservice. This is not one of those letters; it is a note of appreciation.

Last week, I brought a team of fourteen personnel to Tokyo for an event called "Windows Printing and Imaging 2003". It was an important conference for our team and our corporation, wanting to educate and engage with the Japanese market on the printing and imaging aspects in Microsoft Windows. We stayed for six nights at the Hyatt across the street.

I spent the first couple of nights taking my team to the Rhapsody bar in the Hyatt to relax after our day, basically going with what is known and convenient. I come to Tokyo at least four times per year, and have never found the musical act at the Hilton compelling. I just hang out at the Rhapsody based on the view, the service, and the whimsical nature of the bands the play there. On the second night of my stay I happened into the Hilton and caught "The Three Sisters" final set. They were outstanding; as was the service we received by the personnel in the St. George's Bar. The atmosphere was relaxed, comfortable and the repertoire of the band was fresh and engaging. It is great to be able to have a conversation and then halt the said conversation when the group sings a moving tune like Norah Jones' "Come Away with Me." This ensemble exudes class; while not blowing out my eardrums so I can't hear my colleagues or clients speak.

I want you to know how much I appreciate the fact that you have finally brought in a band that is both contemporary and conducive to doing business. There is nothing like being able to have a conversation with your colleagues and business partners while a beautiful jazz ensemble is playing away. I brought some senior executives of a Japanese corporation to the bar and they sang along with every one of the group's tunes, reminiscing along the way. They had a great time and the evening helped build our business relationship.

I am impressed enough that I will most likely book all my future travel to Tokyo (Shinjuku) at your Hilton, and will encourage my team to do so as well.

I want to express my gratitude for making me and my team feel very welcome in Tokyo, and hope that you will pass on my kudos to The Three Sisters and the staff at the St. Georges Bar.

Best regards,

Jonathan R. Schwarz
Worldwide Business Development Manager
Microsoft Corporation
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REFERENCE FOR MELISSA COX

To Whom It May Concern,

I have known Melissa Cox for approximately three years, since she successfully auditioned for a place in the jazz studies programme at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. During this time she has developed into an excellent musician due partly to her enormous application and dedication to developing her craft, and due mainly to her flair and talent for jazz.

Melissa was a model student in every respect- she was diligent in her studies, excelling in aural skills, arranging, performance studies and concert practice.

Furthermore I am glad to say that I have had the opportunity to perform with her own band on several occasions and I can honestly say that the professionalism, panache and musical excellence were of the highest calibre.

Melissa is a highly professional, expert musician with exceptional people skills and I am delighted to provide this reference for her. I cannot recommend her highly enough for any musical engagement she may seek and am certain that she will have a long and outstanding career.



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