

ANDREA MENARD

Andrea Menard is a powerhouse Metis performer who bridges cultural and language boundaries by speaking from her heart. Her voice is lyrical, raw, and reminiscent of the jazz and blues singers of the 1940's, yet captures the depth, humour and wisdom of her ancestors. With long-time collaborator, Robert Walsh, Andrea creates music that is relevant to her Indigenous community and inspiring to all the tribes of humanity.

Andrea has recorded four critically acclaimed albums, *Lift*, *Sparkle*, *Simple Steps*, and *The Velvet Devil*, and written and starred in two made-for-television programs: *The Velvet Devil*, which was adapted from her hit one-woman musical stage play; and *Sparkle*, which aired on APTN for six consecutive holiday seasons. She debuted two symphony shows with the Regina Symphony Orchestra and spearheaded a positive music initiative called "The Music Messengers." Andrea has shared the stage with Buffy Sainte Marie, Tom Jackson, Aaron Pritchett, Murray McLaughlin, Colin James, Robbie Robertson, the Rankins, Susan Aglukark, Derek Miller, Tanya Tagaq, and even sang *Big Yellow Taxi* in front of Joni Mitchell.



Always highlighting her Métis culture and her people's resilience, Andrea uses her voice to empower the Indigenous and Feminine voice. Her new theatrical cabaret and her new symphony Pops concert, both called *Rubaboo*, which is the Michif word for "leftovers stew," is a musical feast that invites audiences to discover their role in reconciliation. Andrea released a single, "Silent No More," that was written as a companion piece for her TEDx talk to end the cycle of violence against Indigenous women and girls. "Where is God in This Place" is Andrea's latest single meant to raise awareness about Canada's traumatic history of Indian Residential Schools. On July 20, 2013 in Batoche, Saskatchewan, Andrea released the single, "Return of the Bell of Batoche" to commemorate the "Return of the Bell" ceremony that finally saw the bell of Batoche come home to the Metis People after 135 years of forced exile.

<https://andreamenard.com/thesinger>

ROBERT WALSH

Most of my career I've been all about music – writing it, performing it, recording it and teaching how to do it. I've worked with famous people, should-be-famous people, and countless amazing musicians whose names you will never know, but who perform at the highest levels. I've been a solo artist, the guy-behind-the-artist, songwriter, composer, producer, arranger, musical director, hired gun, session player, front-man, invisible background musician, critic, author, teacher, student. There have been many nominations for awards, a bunch received, good reviews, some bad ones, unforgettable moments and a few I'd like to forget. And I've been based out of three Canadian cities – Montréal, Toronto and Edmonton.



In Montréal, I was a member of legendary retro-rockers Johnny Jetblack and the Comeback. We were discovered by music mogul (and future jailbird) Guy Cloutier, when he was having a pint with Guy Lafleur at a club by Dorval airport. The electricity went out, we sang some 50's tunes a cappella, and this led to recording 2 albums and touring the arenas of Québec with the iconic René Simard. After that, I co-fronted a band called The XMEN (before the other XMEN became a deal), and went on a New Wave crusade, touring Eastern Canada and the U.S for several years. The band entertained record and management deals; it all fell apart; I moved to Toronto.

It's always been about music. Except when it wasn't.

Although I never left music, I took a detour for 8 years where I became a hospital security expert, managing departments at two major Toronto hospitals, sitting on boards at community colleges that offered Law & Security Programs, and taking a turn as the President of the Ontario Hospital Security Association. I learned volumes about business and management (which serves me well as a musician) and dealt with some pretty serious issues; but most importantly, I rubbed shoulders with "real people" who weren't musicians, and gained a perspective about music that I would never have otherwise. Always a bit of an over-achiever, I finished my Music degree at McGill, and my wife and I signed a record deal with a Nashville label while I was still working in this industry. Eventually, however, the pull to return full-time to music became undeniable.

I'd always heard great things about the Edmonton music scene. My wife, who is from Alberta, showed me around when she did a one-woman show about her life as a Supreme (look up Supreme Dream by Frank Moher and Rhonda Trodd). What I saw impressed me, and, foregoing benefits and a pension; I excused myself from Toronto and built a life as an artist out west.

It was a good move. Since settling here I've released three solo albums, two albums as a member of an ensemble (Allez Ouest, Two Blue), and collaborated with many other independent artists as a producer, co-writer, arranger and performer (I'm particularly proud of the ongoing collaborative partnership I've had with Andrea Menard over the last two decades). I've also worked with great musicians either as a for-hire guitar player or as a member of the Edmonton Symphony. Highlights include being featured with the Pointer Sisters, Renée Fleming, Petula Clark, Tom Cochrane, Luck Mervil, and playing the music of Frank Zappa with two ex-Zappa-band members.

And I've been able to connect with community; built a French-language Popular Music Program that is offered in French schools throughout Alberta; become a faculty member at MacEwan University's Music Department; written music for three musicals and several films, and authored a book. Oh, and we had two kids.

Future plans include sharing what I've learned along the way as a speaker and author, and of course, creating more music.

<https://robertwalsh.ca/about/>



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