

# Jeannie Gagné

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“Moving, soulful and powerful” are three words you often hear when the music of Jeannie Gagné is described. “A Class Act, the girl can sing,” writes Music Technology Magazine.

And sing she can. Jeannie Gagné has worked with Philip Glass, George Duke, opened for Bare Naked Ladies, performed for NBC-TV with comedians Penn and Teller, toured with reggae legend Frankie Paul, and sings on the soundtrack for the feature film "Anima Mundi" (1993). She has received extensive press coverage such as feature stories on PBS's All Things Considered and the CBS Evening News. Literally singing with the soundtrack of West Side Story before she learned to speak and writing songs since a toddler, Jeannie has always known that music is her life..

A veteran performer, Jeannie is a voice professor at the world-renowned Berklee College of Music in Boston, where she teaches voice lessons and performance skills in pop, rock, blues, jazz, singer/songwriter, and classical styles. She has developed into a rare vocalist and teacher with seemingly limitless styles and chops at her disposal. Her four-octave+ range and unique vocal style go from strong blues-influenced singing from-the-gut, to lyrical, beautiful and oftentimes haunting singing that is very moving. She is also known at Berklee for her wellness approach to making music, which is a focus of her new liberal arts course with Stan Strickland.

Some of the remarkable musicians Jeannie has worked with through her 25 year career are Terri Lynn Carrington, Livingston Taylor, Walter Beasley, Stan Strickland, and George Russell Jr.

Jeannie began singing professionally at the tender age of four with the renowned Tri-Cities Opera in upstate New York. She was a percussionist with the acclaimed West African ensemble Talking Drums. Singing in perfect tune since babyhood, Jeannie grew up in a musical family, studying classical piano for ten years and teaching herself guitar at age eight. A lyrical soprano with a 4-octave range in contemporary styles, she began vocal training at 16. She received a BA in music from Wesleyan University, and a M.A. from Lesley University in Voice and Wellness. Jeannie is now equally comfortable singing Rachmaninof, jazz standards or with Boston Big Band, or simply the blues.

NYC's Downtown Magazine writes about Jeannie's solo singer/songwriter work, "Few vocalists create images and stir emotions merely with the sound of their voice. All the great ones do, and Jeannie does, too." She has been interviewed by People Magazine, on radio, by New York City TV and by numerous newspapers.

Jeannie has a way of reaching audiences. People often come away from performances beaming and moved. Incredibly, one woman, who was battling cancer and heard Jeannie sing, said Jeannie's singing had moved her so much it made a profound impact on her struggle with the disease.

Jeannie leads workshops around the country on personal empowerment through singing, jazz/pop improv techniques and joyful movement. She is currently working on a new book on this topic that includes interviews with notable performers including Ysaye M. Barnwell of Sweet Honey in the Rock and Bobby McFerrin.

Jeannie is now working on her third album of her original songs, together with her son Dylan Wolff of the bands *Seeing Anatomy* and *Something About Horses*. Still in high school, young Dylan is already budding into an accomplished producer, drummer and bassist. Meanwhile, she and partner Mark

Stallings are building a new philanthropic music organization they call **Soundation.org**, which they expect to launch in September 2009.

As a former board member and active clinician with the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Musician's Network, Jeannie donates much of her time to creating music that is nurturing and inspiring. In September 2003 she was personally appointed by UU president William Sinkford to be part of a six-person team from across the US that created *Singing the Journey*, the new contemporary hymnal for the denomination that has outsold all other UUA publications to date. She was also the Music Director of a UU Society in southeastern Massachusetts for 13 years.

Jeannie's debut album, **Wide Open Heart** earned considerable play on college, commercial and internet radio. With its virtuosity and fresh sound, this recording boasts some of pop music's hottest players including Shawn Pelton (Letterman, Saturday Night Live Band, Jon Bon Jovi), Zev Katz (Donald Fagen, Judy Collins), Marc Shulman (Shawn Colvin, Suzanne Vega, Jennifer Kimball) and Everett Bradley (headliner in Broadway's *Swing*, Billy Joel, original cast of *Stomp*). The album reflects Jeannie's years of growth as an artist. The songs are real, and poignant. In Jeannie's uniquely honest and straightforward style, these songs illustrate both hardship and joy, and the choices and compromises we make. Some look at how to find healing in difficult situations, some tell a story, and others are just plain fun, finding humor even in daily routine.

Jeannie's second album **Must Be Love** was recorded at Berklee College of Music with outstanding musicians and features both original songs by Jeannie and classic blues tunes such as Stevie Ray Vaughn's *Pride and Joy* and Etta James' *Something's Got a Hold on Me*. Jeannie was awarded a Faculty Grant for this project from Berklee.

Jeannie was the Artistic Director of The Halalisa Singers, Boston's leading world-music and eclectic chorus, from January 2003 to June 2004. She helped the group enhance its unique world-music style and broaden its repertoire and venues. In 2004 she directed *The Circle of Life* at the celebration concert for retiring Berklee President Lee Berk.

Originally from New York City, Jeannie her two children live in rural Massachusetts, where Jeannie has become well known for her singing, writing, and as a musical leader in the community. With the release of **Wide Open Heart**, the local paper wrote, "Every hometown has its share of celebrities, and ours may very well be the home of the next musical mega-star when Jeannie Gagné does, as she says, 'What I do best.' "

[www.jeanniegagne.com](http://www.jeanniegagne.com)