

TRACEY YARAD LONG BIO

Australian-born, New York-based singer-songwriter and pianist Tracey Yarad has had an eclectic music career over the past three decades. She has recorded three CDs as a leader. She has toured Australia as a bandleader, opening (and sometimes singing backup) for multiple Australian and international rock bands—including mega group America—and appearing on national television, and having a Top 40 hit with her song 'Raining in My Heart.' She toured Europe as keyboardist leading her own jazz fusion group, appearing on Berlin television.

Born in Taree, a small coastal town about 200 miles north of Sydney, Tracey grew up in a musical household, the child of talented amateur musicians who had stopped pursuing professional careers to devote themselves to their children. She performed in local musical theatre from the age of 10, studied voice and classical piano as a child, and, at 16, after winning a Taree Eisteddfod vocal competition, was offered the opportunity to move to Sydney to study German Lieder at the NSW State Conservatorium High School. "My parents said I was too young," says Tracey. However, after graduating from high school, she studied German Lieder and opera at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music on a full scholarship.

In an about turn, following graduation, she formed the all-female rock group Maiden Oz and established herself as a rock singer/songwriter. She later co-founded the well-known Sydney funk band, Groove City—with keyboardist Sam McNally—which morphed into the band Say Yes. In another about turn, Tracey went on to spend seven years playing in five-star hotels across Asia, saving enough money to settle in her own home and to open a music school. "Opening my own school was a dream goal. I had access to the top musicians in Australia who I would bring in to run workshops and weeklong camps. Not merely teaching kids one-on-one, but putting kids together, creating bands and getting them off the streets. Changing lives."

"I fully expected to do it forever," says Tracey. But the cataclysmic breakdown of her 23-year marriage—on the heels of the shocking discovery of her husband's affair with their godchild, who they had known since she was six—changed the whole direction of her life. In 2017, she pursued another long-held, previously withheld, dream, to visit (and ultimately move) to New York City.

Arriving on an "extraordinary talent" visa, with one small bag of belongings, an Olympus camera and a cache of dreams, she immediately saturated herself in all the musical inspiration the city had to offer. Wherever there was great jazz—from the Stone to the 55 Bar—she was there, absorbing the music of young up-and-comers, such as Felix Pastorius and his Hipster Assassins, as well as established stars of the underground scene, Wayne Krantz and Dave Binney.

"I hadn't planned on moving here," says Yarad. "But each time I came back to visit, it got harder and harder to leave." So when her friend and mentor, Grammy-nominated Latin jazz pianist Chano Dominguez, invited her to be his roommate, she knew she couldn't pass up the opportunity to stay. In 2019 she starting working as the in-house

photographer and web-designer for the Soapbox Gallery—one of the few New York venues to continue to livestream music seven nights a week throughout the pandemic. It led to a second career as an in-demand jazz photographer (her work has appeared in *DownBeat*, *Guitar Player*, and *Drum Scene* magazines) and videographer, and introduced her to many of New York's top musicians, including her recording band for *All These Pretty Things*.

Blessed with a soulful, incredibly beautiful instrument and a talent for composing heartfelt and evocative songs, Tracey is now focused on a solo career. She has produced multiple projects since relocating to New York City, performing at the 55 Bar, Cowgirl, Soapbox Gallery, the Bitter End, Birdland, and at Pangea, where she held a weekly residency in the spring of 2023. She has performed and/or recorded with Grammy-nominated Chilean vocal star Claudia Acuna, bassists Jennifer Vincent and Dean Johnson, flutist Elsa Nilsson and drummers, Tim Horner, Rosa Avila and Josh Dion. Her duo performance with pianist Jim Ridl, 'Lost in Translation' (featuring stories and songs from her days as a hotel singer in Japan) got a heads-up in the *New Yorker* by Steve Futterman, who wrote, "If demanding experience leads to hard-won wisdom, Yarad and Ridl will have much to impart."

"Tracey Yarad's talents stretch out like roots from the tree of her life and she bears the musical gifts of grace, vulnerability, and humor like few others," says violinist Zach Brock (Snarky Puppy).