

Marianne Trudel Quintet featuring Ingrid Jensen :
« *La vie commence ici* » (*Life begins here*)
(Justin Time Records)



Press (October 2014)

“Her melodies are romantic and appealing, her musicians are utterly in sync with one another, and the sense of common purpose and, indeed, celebration, is palpable.” Peter Hum, Ottawa Citizen-

“The engaging pianist (...) admirable musician and composer, always inspiring (...) offers us a brand new original work. Respect, Marianne. And thank you for this ode to nature, for this beautifully composed music and these flawless soaring lines.”
Frédéric Cardin, Espace musique, Radio-Canada (Public Radio)

“At the Quebec City International Jazz Festival, it was the concert by Marianne Trudel’s Quintet that most impressed and moved me. The Montreal pianist and composer, and her group held her audience spellbound with some deeply adventurous, lyrical and utterly personal music. The amount of musical passion and unfettered interpersonal support at that concert was verging on off the chart at times. ” Peter Hum, Ottawa Citizen- (Canada)

“Refined writing, 10 very personal tracks, an invitation to journey. Ingrid Jensen is majestic.”
Christophe Rodriguez, Journal de Montréal- (Canada)

“This quintet renders us speechless. This is what pianist, composer and improviser Marianne Trudel seems to have done best in a small ensemble. Jazz that is cohesive, relatively consonant, highly melodic, very harmonically rich. The excellent individual and collective improvisations really complement Marianne Trudel’s mature, accomplished compositions.”
Alain Brunet, La Presse (Montreal, Canada)

Marianne Trudel « La vie commence ici » was listed first on the list along with the albums of Charlie Haden, Brandford Marsalis, Kenny Barron and The Bad Plus : « 50 records to listen to before checking out that Kind Of Blue remake » Peter Hum - Ottawa Citizen – Canada

“A musician who is gifted, vivacious and always on her toes (...) impressionistic music, soaring, graceful lines full of warmth. A radiant album!” Ralph Boncy- Voir –Montreal - Canada

“There are no lyrics, but it sings, it really speaks to us! Wonderful!”
Élizabeth Gagnon - Espace musique, Radio-Canada (Public Radio)

CONCERT REVIEW:

By Peter Hum (Ottawa, Canada)

“**Trudel’s compositions are directly emotional** to begin with, and they are constructed and then executed with huge arcs in mind. Indeed, there were moments that brought to mind the uplift of **Maria Schneider’s** music, the hearty gospel-based positivism of **Keith Jarrett’s European Quartet**, and explosive episodes that brought to mind **Wayne Shorter’s Quartet**”

“Some pieces were epics for the full quintet. Although the instrumentation might say hard-bop quintet at first set, the music was anything but — Trudel’s concept is more of a piano-forward chamber group. Pieces can be extended, like miniature suites, so that their emotional journeys are long and winding. But if Trudel’s not one to follow the more usual jazz-tune structures to the letter, her way of doing things is remarkably accessible.”

Trudel, Kuster and Moore played hand-in-glove, surging with soloists and spurring each other to give their all.

She’s simply dedicated to attaining peak experiences through music — something that she and peers are surely capable of, and something that she wants to share with audiences.

The crowd was utterly entranced. I’m sure I wasn’t alone in experiencing more than a few frissons — one of the sure signs of great music.

Press (2013)

«Marianne is one of our great Canadian pianistic talents and more people need to hear her music» — Ken Pickering, Vancouver International Jazz Festival Blog (Canada)

«Someone who usually navigates the shoals between notated and improvised music with refined resourcefulness, Trudel highlighted unanticipated muscularity in her improvisations.» — Ken Waxman, The New York City Jazz Record (USA)

«Trudel, the hottest young pianist on the Montréal jazz scene.» — JD Considine, The Globe and Mail (Canada)

50 records to listen to before checking out that Kind Of Blue remake



[Peter Hum More from Peter Hum](#)

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Four of the 50 or so records in Peter Hum's list: James Farm's *City Folk*, Jochen Rueckert's *We Make The Rules*, Branford Marsalis' *In My Solitude*, Marianne Trudel's *La vie commence ici*.

Actually, the list below might number 51 or 52. I got a bit carried away.

Smarter folks than I, including [Nou Dadoun](#) and [Ethan Iverson](#), have blogged and Facebook-posted — in the affirmative or negative — about the recently released CD *Blue*, with which the always provocative band *Mostly Other People Do The Killing* offered its attempt at a note-for-note recreation of Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue*.

I have the disc, but can't bring myself to listen to it. I'm giving greater priority to albums listed below, among others, and I encourage you to seek these discs out. What I've heard from the list so far has made for some deeply enjoyable, and even provocative, listening.

Yes, *Blue* has stimulated worthwhile debates about conceptual art, what constitutes jazz, and more. But I feel I would be short-changing the efforts of the artists listed below, and others, if I were to expend my limited time, and this blog's space, to adding to those debates. So much great jazz, so little time, eh?

Sorry, lovers of jazz debates. You can tell me if I'm copping out. I think I'm doing the more important work, listening to the music below and hopefully reviewing it.

Lovers of great jazz, though, consider yourself well-advised. The list, by the way, begins with some recently released Canadian jazz recordings, because, if you think some music gets overshadowed by critical darlings, Canadian jazz gets really, really overshadowed.

Marianne Trudel, *La vie commence ici* (Justin Time)
Trio Jérôme Beaulieu, *Chercher l'équilibre* (Effendi)
Brian Dickinson Trio, *Fishs Eddy* (Addo Records)
Rich Brown, *Between Heaviness and Here* (Addo Records)
Eli Bennett, *Breakthrough* (Addo Records)
Tara Davidson, *Duets* (Addo Records)
Jim Head, *Zoetrope* (self-released)
Andre White, *Code White* (self-released)
Darren Sigismund, *Strands III* (self-released)
Peripheral Vision, *Sheer Tyranny of the Will* (self-released)
Andrew Rathbun, *Numbers and Letters* (Steeplechase)
Anthony Fung Quartet, *Chronicles* (self-released)
Melissa Stylianou, *No Regrets* (Anzic)
Anna Webber, *Simple* (Skirl)
Andy Milne and Dapp Theory, *Forward In All Directions* (Whirlwind)}
Jimmy Greene, *Beautiful Life* (Mack Avenue)
James Farm, *City Folk* (Nonesuch)
Omer Avital, *New Song* (Motema)
Wave Upon Wave, Jonathan Kreisberg (New For Now Music)
Charlie Haden & Jim Hall, *Charlie Haden & Jim Hall* (Impulse)
Kenny Barron & Dave Holland, *The Art of Conversation* (Impulse)
Tatiana Parra/Vadan Ovsepian, *Lighthouse* (self-released)
Jimmy Cobb, *The Original Mob* (Smoke Sessions)
Champion Fulton, *Change Partners* (Cellar Live)
The Bad Plus, *Inevitable Western* (Sony Okeh)
Jason Moran, *All Rise* (Blue Note)
Tineke Postma/Greg Osby, *Sonic Halo* (Challenge Records)
Jerome Sabbagh, *The Turn* (Sunnyside)
David Weiss, *When Words Fail* (Motema)
Jochen Rueckert, *We Make The Rules* (Whirlwind)
Randy Ingram, *Sky/Lift* (Sunnyside)
Brooklyn Jazz Underground, *Seven By Seven* (BJU)
Dayna Stephens, *Peace* (Sunnyside)
Guillermo Klein, *Live at the Village Vanguard* (Sunnyside)
Brice Winston, *Child's Play* (Criss Cross)
Matt Brewer, *Mythology* (Criss Cross)
David Virelles, *Mboko* (ECM)
The Cookers, *Time and Time Again* (Motema)
Eric Wyatt, *Borough of Kings* (Posi-Tone)
Michael Blake, *Tiddy Boom* (Sunnyside)
Marianne Solivan, *Spark* (Hipnotic Records)
Marcin Wasilewski Trio with Joakim Milder, *Spark of Life* (ECM)
Frank Kimbrough, *Quartet* (Palmetto)
Steve Wilson Lewis Nash, *Duologue* (MCG Jazz)
Kyle Shepherd Trio, *Dream State* (Sheer Sound)
Rotem Sivan Trio, *For Emotional Uses Only* (Fresh Sound New Talent)
Kyle Brenders Quartet, *Offset* (Posi-Tone)
Peter Epstein Quartet, *Polarities* (Songlines)
Larry Goldings/Peter Bernstein/Bill Stewart, *Ramshackle Serenade* (Pirouet)
Brian Charette, *The Good Tipper* (Posi-Tone)
Baptiste Trotignon, *Hit* (Naive)
Branford Marsalis, *In My Solitude* (Sony Okeh)
Chad Eby, *The Sweet Shel Suite* (self-released)



"I associate music with joy" — The Marianne Trudel interview

BY PETER HUM, OTTAWA CITIZEN OCTOBER 22, 2014



trudel_ma.7042

Photograph by: Randy Cole, Ottawa Citizen

Last weekend at the Quebec City International Jazz Festival, it was the concert by Marianne Trudel's Quintet that most impressed and moved me. I'll be writing a full review of that show and others that I saw once time allows, but for the moment, let me say that the Montreal pianist and composer, 37, and her group held her audience spellbound with some deeply adventurous, lyrical and utterly personal music. I heard a lot of food music on the weekend, but the amount of musical passion and unfettered interpersonal support at that concert was verging on off the chart at times.

If you can, go see Trudel at one of her concerts this week in Montreal, Sherbrooke or Ottawa (the details are below). They're touring in support of Trudel's just released album, *La Vie Commence Ici*. Meanwhile, get to know Trudel's story from the lightly edited transcript of a conversation we had earlier this month.

Where did you grow up, and what did music mean for you when you were young?

I grew up in a very small village on the south shore of Quebec City. St. Michel de Bellechasse. The woman who was babysitting me was a piano player. She played great. She could not read a note and played all by ear, Canadian folklore music. She had a big upright piano at her place. She took care of me since I was two. Immediately when I heard her on the piano, I remember the feeling inside me, I

just wanted to dance it was so joyful. I loved the music. I have many pictures where I'm just dancing. For me, I associate music with joy. It was a great it was a woman too.

At some point, when I was five, I asked my parents if I could take music lessons. Apparently I came back from my first piano lesson saying, I'm going to be a pianist, and I never changed my mind. It was a passion that I discovered very early on.

I have a passion for sounds too. When I was a child, I would walk in the forest and it seemed like my ears were always open. Which is a problem now because we live in a world that is so noisy. It drives me crazy.

The piano was a passion. I felt so free. I felt music was very nourishing for me. I like improvising very early on. Yes, I would practice my Mozart and Haydn and my scales, but it was hard for my mother, now you do your 15 minutes of scales...

All I wanted to do was to play, to let my hands go freely on the piano. Just hear to the harmonies... At 5, 6, 7, 8. I still have a little music paper book, I was 7 and 8 and I wrote melodies, I composed little songs. They were all dedicated to my piano. I was in love with my piano.

I did classical music studies until I was 16. But my real passion was to compose and it still is.

When did jazz come into the picture?

When I was 16, my teacher at school really wanted me to go to the University of Montreal, in classical music with Marc Durand, and be a concert pianist. But there was something. I wasn't totally sure. I got really sick the weekend of the auditions, and I could not do the auditions. In September the class was full. Somebody told me about the jazz program at Cégep de Saint-Laurent, and it was third year of Cégep, writing for big band. I had no idea what jazz was. But just the possibility of composing and arranging really attracted me.

I spent a year writing for big band and it was the most amazing year. The program was amazing, with pros playing students' charts. Jean Frechette, Andre Leroux, playing the students' charts. I learned so much and I fell in love with jazz and I discovered this whole tradition. It was like fresh air for me. There was space for improvising.

I studied with Lorraine Desmarais at the Cégep, and then Lorraine said, "I think you should really continue in jazz."

So you went to McGill University after playing jazz just for a year.

I did my undergrad in jazz. I really liked it, but there was something again. I never really felt I was fitting 100 per cent in jazz or classical. I needed something else. I felt a bit in a box.

It's ironic. Jazz is improvisation, but within certain codes that are really strict in a way, harmonic codes.

I was doing a lot of composing, I was always very active, doing lots of projects outside of classes. I was writing for three bass clarinets and two guitars, crazy things, but I wanted to write.

Andre White once told me that he knew early on that you were working on your own thing.

I had been composing for many years even before I got to McGill. I guess I had developed a kind of sound, a taste for harmonies, a language.

And I had the fear of sounding like 90 other students. That was something that bugged me. When I was studying jazz I would go to final concerts and I remember thinking, wow, everybody sounds the same. It was not that true, but there was some truth.

So you never went through a period where you aspired to sound like Herbie Hancock or Keith Jarrett or McCoy Tyner?

First of all, there's no hope. And, I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in having enough confidence and tools to sound like the way I should sound myself. Of course I've been influenced by the pianists you've just named, but one thing that is very important for me, I've always seen music as one thing, not all kinds of little boxes.. I hate that. I don't like labels. I've always thought of music as a unified but infinite thing where you can explore.

What else did you do after attending McGill?

I went on a trip to Paris. I was 22. I was playing in a café, and was kind of discovered... I like the way you play, I could have you audition for Charles Aznavour, the biggest singer in France. I did the audition

and I got the job. I went on tour. Of course, I really enjoyed it. I stayed in Europe for two years. I felt so lucky, but in my heart, it's creating music I wanted to do.

I also did a Master's in Ethnomusicology. Approaching the music from different angles. I wanted to hear different things. I worked on the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music, I met all those guys. My meeting with Muhal was very important to me. It brought me more than my years at school. I thought that Muhal had that kind of approach to music, to approach music in a very broad, inclusive way. Not this style or that style, broader. He's so passionate about music. It was a privilege to meet him.

I went a few times to the Banff Centre. That was very inspiring, I met Kenny Wheeler — Kenny Wheeler was god to me! Chucho Valdez was there, Muhal was there, Hugh Fraser. Every time I meet somebody very passionate about music it means a lot to me.

I came back to Montreal, I started to be even more active with projects.

Your first album was a solo piano CD...

That was 10 years ago. When I think about it, I would be afraid to do that now. I was either foolish or brave to start with a solo album.

I actually want to do a solo album. I have so many albums that I want to record in my head. They are already in my head. Financially, that's the only thing to stop me. I'm all ready to record another Trifolia, and I would love to do something orchestral as well.

I was studying orchestration by myself, and three years ago, I applied to a competition for jazz musicians to write for symphony orchestra ... I found out it was George Lewis that was running the program. He knew me, I applied and I got selected, one of five people. It was quite intimidating. When I got to New York for the class, in the class, it was Rufus Reid and Mark Helias and Nicole Mitchell. I was like, oh my God, the baby. I got to write and have the chance to have my work performed. I loved it, I want to do it more.

What prompted you to get Ingrid Jensen for your latest project?

I invited Ingrid because I've always really liked her playing. It's really unique. I think she has a sound and I find it inspiring that she's a successful woman too, because we're still very few in jazz. And I think she has a strong personality. I invited her two years ago to do a few concerts with my band in Montreal and it was great. We played together five or six times and then I really wanted to record.

I've been playing with Robbie and Morgan for almost 10 years. It feels so natural, we have so much fun. I wanted to record with them. Bunny, we met at McGill and then we met again at Banff. He's really low-profile and everything, but my God, he sounds good, and he really plays from his heart and I really like that.

They met in the studio, that's the thing,... it's very challenging.. schedules and everything. Ingrid is very busy. We just needed to get in the studio, read those tunes and hope for the best. Most of the time I know what I'm doing and I trust, even if it's risky. I hear the personality of Bunny, Ingrid — yeah it's going to work. Even if we can't rehearse it's going to work.

I can't wait to play with these guys live, That's the real thing.

What does La Vie Commence Ici mean for you?

Two things. I'm someone who really likes to feel that I'm 100 per cent in the moment and I find this more and more difficult to achieve in today's world. We're always so distracted, always doing three, four, five things at the time. It's very exhausting, I find.

Music for me is one way to reach that feeling — OK, I'm in one place, I'm connected with myself, and with other people around me, and I'm doing something good hopefully. It sounds a bit esoteric, but you're in the right place and you're doing what you're supposed to do and you're 100 per cent there.

I always get that feeling when I walk on stage. OK, this is it.

Also, I'm in my late 30s. I've done this, I've done that, things happened. I feel it's something like a new beginning, but this is where I'm at now, and this is where I want to go.

The Marianne Trudel Quintet featuring Ingrid Jensen plays:

Wednesday, Oct. 22 at 8 pm at the Maison de la culture Frontenac in Montréal, Québec

Thursday Oct. 23 at Bishop University's Théâtre Centennial in Sherbrooke, Québec

Friday Oct. 24 at 7 pm at Cafe Résonance in Montréal, Québec

Saturday, Oct. 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the NAC Fourth Stage in Ottawa

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ICI MUSIQUE- Radio-Canada

20 octobre 2014



L'écoute intégrale se termine dans 5 jours.

Marianne Trudel : *La vie commence ici*

Marianne Trudel n'a pas chômé! Après le succès de son sympathique trio *Trifolia* (gagnant du prix Opus), la concrétisation de son projet de *big band* et sa signature des arrangements du disque de son amie chanteuse, Sonia Johnson, l'attachante pianiste nous offre une œuvre originale et toute nouvelle, en parfaite harmonie avec... sa nature.

La vie commence ici ne fait pas table rase du passé récent de l'admirable musicienne et compositrice qu'est devenue Marianne, cette abeille butineuse, toujours inspirée. Disons toutefois qu'à l'approche de la quarantaine, notre amie a ressenti le besoin de marquer une pause et d'établir un lien entre son cheminement artistique et ses convictions écologiques avouées.

La pochette du disque est d'ailleurs ornée de superbes photos de feuillages et de sous-bois. C'est dans cet écrin d'eau et de verdure qu'on lit le texte suivant :

Dans chaque feuille, chaque vague, chaque pierre. Chaque geste, chaque regard.

Un sourire, un baiser, une larme. Oh! Un héron! T'as vu? La vie. Ici. Là. À chaque seconde.

Immense et fragile.

Respect, Marianne. Et merci pour cet hymne à la nature, pour cette belle écriture musicale et ces envolées sans ratures. Précisons que dans cette recherche d'une douce et sereine lumière, il y a aussi quatre musiciens qui s'impliquent et la suivent dans sa quête contemplative. Ce sont Morgan Moore (contrebasse), Robbie Kuster (batterie), Jonathan Stewart (saxophone) et l'artiste en vedette Ingrid Jensen, la trompettiste de Nanaimo, qui réalise ici l'un de ses plus beaux enregistrements.

Ça vaut bien une écoute intégrale! (Frédéric Cardin- Espace musique, Radio-Canada)

MARIANNE TRUDEL (4,5/5)

LA VIE COMMENCE ICI

Avec Ingrid Jensen Justin Time

Pianiste compositrice, Marianne Trudel est l'une des interprètes les plus actives sur la scène montréalaise. Si nous avons en mémoire *Trifolia*, doux voyage poétique, cette nouveauté avec la trompettiste Ingrid Jensen fera bien des heureux. À une fine écriture et véritablement une note bleue pour tous, les dix plages toutes personnelles sont encore une invitation au voyage: Le vent est une chanson, *Night Heron*.

Ingrid est «impériale».



« LE BLOGUE D'ALAIN BRUNET »»

- **Alain Brunet**

Mercredi 22 octobre 2014 | Mise en ligne à 19h30 |

Marianne Trudel: La vie commence ici



Si l'écriture pour ensembles de grande taille (septuor ou big band) me semblent être ses plus grandes réussites jusqu'à ce jour, ce quintette impose notre silence. Voilà ce que la pianiste, compositrice et improvisatrice Marianne Trudel me semble avoir fait de mieux en petite formation. Le noyau qu'elle forme avec le batteur Robbie Kuster (Patrick Watson), le contrebassiste Morgan Moore et le saxophoniste Jonathan Stewart a gagné énormément en maturité. Ce noyau peut accueillir la grande trompettiste Ingrid Jensen. Et produire un jazz cohésif, plutôt consonant, hautement mélodique, très riche harmoniquement. Improvisations individuelles ou collectives d'excellent niveau sont au service des compositions matures et abouties de Marianne Trudel. Quant à l'esthétique préconisée, on est certes en terrain connu. Cette esthétique relève d'un jazz de chambre à l'euro-péenne (traversé par la musique classique moderne, fin 19e début 20e) qui remonte aux années 70 et 80. On vous laisse le soin de juger. Notamment ce mercredi à la Maison de la culture Frontenac et vendredi au Café Résonance; le quartette de Marianne Trudel et Ingrid Jensen y afficheront présent. Si vous ne pouvez pas vous y rendre, procurez-vous l'album paru cette semaine chez Justin Time: *La vie commence ici*.

Montréal Changer

ACCUEIL SOCIÉTÉ **MUSIQUE** CINÉMA SCÈNE ARTS VISUELS LIVRES CHRONIQUES BLOGUES VOIR LA VIE RESTOS GASTRONOMIE CONCOURS
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Accueil › Musique › Disques › Marianne Trudel : La vie commence ici

La vie commence ici

Marianne Trudel

La vie commence ici

(Justin Time)

2014

Voir recommande

CRITIQUE

15 OCTOBRE 2014

Voici une musicienne douée, pétillante et toujours allumée, bien capable de courir plusieurs lièvres à la fois. Après son aventure avec le trio équitabile Trifolia, suivie d'une expérience fort concluante de musique avec big band au cours de laquelle elle recrute **Robbie Kuster**, le batteur de Patrick Watson, **Marianne** la pianiste sans peur saute à pieds joints dans un nouveau projet, remettant les pendules à zéro. *La vie commence ici* est une immersion en pleine nature, avec une musique impressionniste, des envolées pleines de grâce et de douceur. Avec la trompettiste **Ingrid Jensen** en très grande forme, tout le disque baigne dans une bienfaisante lumière, et la compositrice s'émerveille de voir un héron ou même une goutte de rosée sur une feuille.



par RALPH BONCY

Commentaire

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UN AVANT-GOÛT...



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PAR LE MEME ARTISTE



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Tuesday, October 21, 2014
OTTAWA JAZZ SCENE

[Marianne Trudel: the joy of being surprised, in the moment, by music](#)



Sunday, 19 October 2014

Montreal pianist Marianne Trudel's new jazz CD – which she releases October 19, and debuts in Ottawa at the National Arts Centre on October 25 – is about paying attention to life, about being in the moment.



Marianne Trudel and Ingrid Jensen (Photo by Andre Chevrier)

Entitled *La Vie Commence Ici (Life Begins Here)*, it's her reaction to a life in which “we're constantly stimulated by so many things. We're often doing two, three things at the same time, talking on the phone, checking email, doing this and that. It's hard to get a feeling of full presence and attention to one thing and attend at the same time, to be fully present in the moment and at peace.”

Looking at the people around her on Montreal's Metro, "everybody's on their iPhone doing stuff. Nobody looks at each other. Nobody is even aware of what's going on around them, and it frightens me. I don't like it, and I'm guilty of it, too."

"So *La Vie Commence Ici* means in this specific moment, right now, there is La Vie happening. Life is there and we need to be aware and thankful and respectful."

For Trudel, music is her way to "be present, open, in real relation with my band." It's how she's related to music – a full immersion – since she was six years old and first put her hands on the keys of a piano.

So it's not surprising that the music on her new CD is rich, multi-threaded, and melodic, with intricate compositions leavened by improvisation. It's not music you only give half your attention to.

Collaborating with Ingrid Jensen

While very much in the tradition of her previous five releases, it features a new collaborator: innovative trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, an ex-pat Canadian who now lives in New York, but frequently plays with Canadian musicians. Jensen joins three musicians Trudel has recorded with before: Jonathan Stewart on tenor sax, Morgan Moore on bass, and Robbie Kuster on drums. The same quintet will be joining Trudel on her [current Quebec/Ontario tour](#), which includes the Ottawa concert.

Trudel said her collaboration with Jensen started a three years ago. "I invited her to Montreal just to play a few concerts and it really worked out well. So then I invited her again to play at the Festival du Jazz du Quebec last year, and then I put this recording project together and we recorded it last November." They will premiere the CD at this year's Festival du Jazz du Quebec.

What does Jensen bring to *La Vie Commence Ici*? "First of all, I love trumpets, and I think Ingrid has a really unique voice on trumpet. The way she plays it, she plays a few notes and you know it's her. Mostly in her improvisation – she has a very unique approach. She has a strong personality as a soloist and she has a beautiful tone, too."

Trudel said she particularly enjoyed the piano-trumpet duets on the CD: "you can really hear her tone then and her sound. It actually made me want to do duet album with Ingrid. Also, I don't want fall into the generalizations about women and men, but there is a difference between the approach and this sensibilité. I like to have a woman in the band, and she is a strong woman, but I feel that there is a connection. It blends well with the energy of the other musicians and that was important. That was an aspect that's important to me, to mix the energies between the men and the women."

There's also a mix of English and French, both in the song titles and even on the album cover.

"It just came out that way, because I work as often with francophone musicians than with anglophone musicians. My band [on the CD] is Anglophone, obviously, Morgan, Robbie, Jonathan and Ingrid. So I don't know, composing and thinking of these guys playing the music, it just came that way. Some titles came to me in English."

Living and working in Montreal, it's not something she worried about. "In Montreal, when I have rehearsals with musicians on different projects, it's always bilingual. We say one part of the sentence in French and then the other part in English, because some people are Francophone or they are English. I seem to evolve in a réseau, in a network, where it's always a bit of both. Again, I just didn't fight it. I just put it that way, and that's it. Even on the cover, *La Vie Commence Ici*'s in French and then we wrote, 'Featuring Ingrid Jensen,' but you know what? I live in Montreal and that's the way it is."

Melodic, and inspired by nature

Trudel said she aimed for diversity in the pieces on the album, although overall it's all melodic. "From one piece to the other, I think, the mood, the ambiance is very different, and I like that. We tell stories with many things happening in the stories."

The album also reflects Trudel's love of nature – in particular, “Night Heron”, which was inspired by an experience she had in Tadoussac, in the Charlebois region of Quebec. She was there hiking and near dusk saw a bird with white and blue-grey plumage which she didn't recognize. “It was so beautiful and it looked a bit like a heron. I wasn't sure what it was. It was quite big, but it didn't have the long neck that usually a grey heron would have. I stayed there looking at this bird that was looking at me for, I'm telling you, for at least 20 minutes, and it didn't move. I think he blinked twice. It was so quiet. It was a such beautiful moment.”

“Le Vent est une chance” is also inspired by nature and Trudel's love of windy days. The piece ends with an *accelerando*, she said, which speeds up, and then at the end, everyone spirals to a close.

One musician who has influenced Trudel's style of composition – and Ingrid Jensen's playing – is [the late Kenny Wheeler](#), with whom Trudel played while studying at the Banff Center for the Arts about a dozen years ago. “We had Kenny Wheeler working with the band for ten days, so I got the chance to accompany him. My God, it was amazing. It was very inspiring. He is one of my favourite trumpet [players], he was, well, he still is, it's hard, and he's a big influence on Ingrid Jensen, a huge influence on Ingrid Jensen. I love Kenny Wheeler both as a trumpeter and as a composer. He is a magnificent composer.”

Another is jazz composer and orchestra leader Maria Schneider, with whom Jensen also plays. “I listen to her music quite a bit. I think everything that we love somehow influence us. It nourishes us, so consequently, it influences us.”

The challenges of creating a jazz CD

Trudel said the album title also reflects a transition in her life, as she approaches the end of her fourth decade (she is 37). “I feel like I'm at certain point in my life where I can look back a bit now. I did enough things, so I have things to look back, and I am asking myself question about the future as well and where I would like to go and with my life.” While it's not exactly a turning point, “I have a few grey hairs now [laughs].”

She's changing how she works. “I'm very perfectionist and I'm very driven, too. I do many, many projects, and I always get involved like 100% in everything I do professionally. Sometimes, I wish I would have done this or that better and that's not quite the way I would like it to be. But at some point, I think – and that's new to me, just the thought of 'Okay, you know what? It's not perfect. It might not be the greatest thing in the world, but it happened that way and I can accept it because it's challenging.’

Trudel's last album, *Le Refuge* (Trifolia), won a Prix Opus (a major Quebec music award), and was nominated for a jazz Juno Award in 2014. Her previous album, *Espoir et autres pouvoirs*, was an Opus finalist.

“You go in the studio you have one day and half to record the whole album, because we are not in pop music where they take three months to record an album. We don't have that kind of budget. So it's like two days including the set-up that takes pretty much half of a day in the studio, with a band that, actually, I had never played together before. I played with these musicians individually and groups, but this specific formation with Ingrid and Jonathan Stewart as horns, we have never played together. So it's challenging. So you get in the studio, it's all new music. We have a very tight schedule and we do the best we can.

“That's another thing I hear. There are always strengths and other things that are bit weaker on every project we do, every album, every concert. Everything is not always great, but I feel that I can accept it more now. 'OK, well, this is OK', and then 'Oh, this is great!' I feel a bit more at peace with it just happened that way. That chord just sounded that way in that movement, and it's part of the game. I'm not going to go and change it or try to hide it.”

But isn't there always the opportunity to improve things in live performance? “Exactly, and that's my approach in studio most of the time.”



Marianne Trudel at the 2013 Guelph Jazz Festival. ©Brett Delmage, 2013

Trudel is also known for playing live creative improvised music, which is neither planned in advance nor edited afterward. Several of her albums include improvised sections, and one is a live recording. “Actually, I think my next album will be a live recording, because that’s what I prefer the most. You get the energy of the public.”

Getting closer to her fans through crowdfunding

The album was partially funded by an Indiegogo campaign, which surpassed its \$8000 goal by another \$106 (but was helped by a single, quite unexpected, \$4000 donation). Trudel also received a grant from Musique Action that covered half of the CD’s production budget.

It was her first experience with crowd-funding, after having funded her previous projects herself. “After many years, it’s difficult. It’s a small market. To be honest, we hardly sell any CDs in stores. We sell CDs when we play in concerts, that’s where most of our CDs get sold, but it’s just very difficult when you invest because an

album can easily cost \$15,000. You're going to be lucky if you get back a 10th of what you put in, and after a while it gets very heavy.”

“I think it's a very cool model. I participate a lot myself in other people's campaigns. I think it's exciting and I think it's a new way of bringing the public and the artist a bit closer. It's not like they just come and listen to you or they just come and buy the CDs. They participate in the thing they love and the projects they think are worth to participate in.”

She said she might repeat the approach for another album, but not right away: “I would give a rest to my fans. It's like you don't want to be asking for support every month or something, but it worked well for me and I am very, very thankful. I can't thank these people enough. Many of these people wrote to me either on Facebook or on my personal email and they say they are excited about the project.”

“I'm going to be a pianist” – at age 5

Trudel has wanted to be a musician since she was five years old. She was introduced to the piano by her babysitter, who played Quebecois folklorique music by ear.

“She was an amazing musician. So you know, at her place, there was a piano, and I would hear music a lot. I asked my parents, when I was five, if I could play piano as well. It's my passion and I knew right away. Apparently, I came back from my first piano lesson saying 'I'm going to be a pianist', and my parents laughed.”

She studied classical music in CEGEP, and was planning to study that as well in university. But “I got super sick the weekend of the audition. I got mononucleosis, and I could not do the auditions.”

When she was well again, the only course that was open was a third-year CEGEP course on arranging for big bands. “I didn't have any idea about jazz, but I have always loved composing. Even when I was six, seven, eight, I would compose little melodies. I was attracted to that program just because we could arrange and compose. That's where I discovered jazz, and I again, I just fell in love with that music. Then I went to McGill studying jazz instead of classical music which made my classical music teacher very sad, but, you know, that's life.”

“I still think classical music had the a very strong influence on me in terms of harmonies and melodies and I love the romantic composers, Chopin and Brahms and Liszt and all those guys. It's in my music, for sure.”

Ultimately, she said, she has to be a pianist, a composer and an improviser – all three.

“I could not be just a pianist. I could not do that. I found out very early on, because when I first started to work in music, I got a few calls just to go to a place and just play what's on the page, and I got tired really fast about that role. Yes, I want to play the piano, but I want to have a bit more freedom to create at the piano. So now, most of the projects I work in is projects where I have freedom where people want to me improvise to add something to their music you know. That's why they hire me. That part of improvisation or composing or arranging or creating is very important to me.”

For her, jazz is “creating in the moment” and she has little time for musicians who are not 100% in the moment when they're improvising.

“Of course, we all have better days than others, but you can feel that some players, they are pretty much there on the stage kind of just playing the licks that they played 3 million times before, and they don't even seem to enjoy themselves. You don't feel that they're really into it. They're kind of typing on the dactylo kind of thing, and I can't stand that.”

“The reason why I like this music is I want to be surprised. I want to feel that the musicians that are on stage are really in the moment and that anything can happen and that they're enjoying themselves and they want to give to their public. Because when that happens, that's the greatest music. When you see a jazz show that when it's really happening and the people are really generous, it's so great.”

The Marianne Trudel Quintet featuring Ingrid Jensen is performing from *La Vie Commence Ici* this week:

- October 19: Festival Internationale de Jazz de Québec, Quebec City
- October 22: Maison de la culture Frontenac, Montreal
- October 23: Bishop's University, Sherbrooke
- October 24: Café Résonance, Montreal
- October 25: NAC 4th Stage, Ottawa (as part of NAC Presents)

See also:

- [Guelph 2013: Espousing music of the moment \(review\)](#) (Marianne Trudel, William Parker, Hamid Drake)
- [NAC Presents to feature Petr Cancura, Marianne Trudel, and Tanya Tagaq this fall](#)
- [Trifolia: adventurous jazz at the Montreal Jazz Festival \(review\)](#)
- [Orchestre national de jazz Montréal scores with Joni Mitchell tribute \(review\)](#)
- [Sonia Johnson: not playing it safe with jazz](#)