

# Songs in the Key of Sea

Introduction by Diane Buccheri

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*She sits on a cliff overlooking the vast Pacific Ocean. Below, her son rides the waves on a surfboard.*

*She watches.*

*She trusts.*

*She listens.*

*The waves her son so thrills in crash upon the daunting rocks, tossed and frothing. Grabbing at the sand in their rush back to Mother Ocean, pebbles and shells scatter and chink, shift and tinkle.*

*Here, there is a largeness so large we can't quite grasp it, put words to it. Here there is inward peering, introspection and reflection, exposure, recognition. We feel the world widening, the horizon expanding, a timelessness, and a self-recognition. Here where there is everything come from mountaintops and sky, our deep consciousness surfaces, revealed only to us. A moment in time speaks forever. Here, where land slips into surf, we grasp what we can nowhere else.*

*In this rounding of the spirit and soul in the waves, she hears music. She hears its patterns and shapes, hears entire songs. A wave crashes. Pebbles and shells chink. She hears all the notes, all the notes of music. Is this her unconscious becoming conscious, an opening and drawing out? Or is it a channeling? A message, universal, certainly feeling divine.*

*Here, in these moments she leaps the gap between her lifelong love of nature and her lifelong love of music. Or is there no leap at all? The leap only exists in our minds, in our perception of the here and now, the material, what we can prove exists with our five senses. So much more exists.*

Photograph © Kim Kavish

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Kimberly Ford grew up with a fiddling grandfather. She first learned to read and play music at age seven when her family put a piano in her bedroom, having no place else in their home. The guitar came next, then the mandolin and singing and performing in school productions, including Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

Her childhood was divided between her family's almond farm in California's Central Valley and the San Francisco Bay area. The Sierra Mountains drew her strongly. Every chance, she hiked, biked, or simply enjoyed being in the presence of nature. Within the grandness of Yosemite National Park, she worked weekends while earning her college degree in biology.

"I took a leave of absence from my conventional education and, with my guitar on my back and a mandolin in hand, began what would become a ten year quest for a life inspired by a desire to be close to nature while attempting to make a living playing music.

I actually succeeded at both, at least to the standards of a twenty-something, wonder lusting, single artist, and had unique opportunities which included opening for Seal & Crofts, Queen Ida, and others, while working as a whitewater river guide in the summers and as a ski instructor in winter.

It wasn't until the early eighties and after ten years on the road that I would find my way to the sea. Santa Barbara was the place that embraced me in what I thought would be a restorative stopover. I've been here ever since. The glory of the Pacific Ocean was the perfect balance to my life in the

rugged Sierras, Tetons, and Grand Canyon where I had guided, and a much needed respite from the life of a musician on the road.

When my future husband suggested a honeymoon circumnavigating the islands off the coast of La Paz in Baja California, I knew I had met my match. Two children later we coordinate the surf team at the local high school and spend as much time near or on the water with our surfers as possible, our favorite beach break just a six minute drive from the school.

A fascination with natural history filmmaking led me to a small underwater filmmaking company in Santa Barbara where I dove in and worked as office manager, voice over artist, composer, and coffee maker. I was introduced to the vast spectrum of the underwater world and an infrastructure of individuals and organizations who had found the ocean to be their life's calling. I began pulling together songs about the sea, first as a hobby but soon as a mission.

The National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation, for whom we made short films, invited me to write a song for their twenty-fifth anniversary. From the Chumash Indian 'I sari wa yuqire' meaning 'It continues indefinitely, hooray!' I wrote the musical score and lyrics with a Native American sound and performed *I Sari Wa Yuqire* for the gala celebration held at the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Barbara. Jena Michel Cousteau was the honored guest and Christopher Cross also played 'Sailing'. This was my turning point for ocean awareness and conservation.

I was also invited to the screening of *The Blue Planet* at the Hollywood Bowl with the soundtrack played live by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Underwater filmmaker, Mike deGruy, my boss, had won an Emmy for his work on this film and *The Titanic*. This was the turning point for my own tiny seed of an idea, and *Songs In The Key Of Sea* was born.

Three years later I released *Songs In The Key Of Sea*, an ocean themed vocal jazz CD, with a companion underwater DVD with footage offered by Mike deGruy, photography by Jim Knowlton of Ocean Futures, and an added public service announcement from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF). I offer a portion of the proceeds to the NMSF to give music lovers an opportunity to increase their awareness of our magnificent yet fragile marine environment, and to also give back.

Three of the songs on the CD are original, composed by myself and my band members, one of which serves as the soundtrack to the DVD of underwater footage. The other nine songs come from the Great American song book. These are jazz standards with ocean themes: *How Deep Is The Ocean* by Irving Berlin, *Between The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* by Harold Arlen, etc.

Through this fanciful journey of song tributes and beautiful photography inspired by the sea, I have connected with a global community of people who are likewise smitten with the magic and beauty of the ocean; individuals who have also immersed themselves in her mysteries in an effort to understand them; stewards who have been called to protect her, and help others to hear the music in the water and feel the rhythm of her universal dance."