



Rene Marie CD release party at
Dazzle this Friday

Credits: Marylynn Gillaspie

Rene Marie stays true to herself with new CD

By [Michelle Humphrey](#), Denver Jazz Music Examiner

What is there to be said about Rene Marie? She is an awe-inspiring person, and has quite a story to tell. This award-winning singer incorporates elements of jazz, soul, blues and gospel into her style of music. She is a woman of great strength. Rene didn't start professionally singing until after the age of 40. She was married at 18 and a mother of two by the age of 23. In 1996, her eldest son encouraged her to follow her dreams of a music career, and that's exactly what she did. Her then husband of 23 years gave her an ultimatum: stop singing or leave their home. Fortunately for herself and her fans, she followed her path to music.

Rene is such an inspiration and I had the pleasure of interviewing her before the CD release party at Dazzle on Friday night. When asking her what her biggest moment is up to this point in her career, she tells me that it's hard to qualify just one thing. She provided much insight during our conversation, and said, "in general, one is faced with a decision that causes fear." Rene told me that when she feels that way about something, she knows that is the route that she needs to take. She believes that taking a difficult route leads to inner peace. Rene also believes that small and insignificant things always lead to the next thing in one's life.

For the first time in her career, Rene recently performed in six different cities throughout Israel. She told me that she had some concerns because of the American humor and perspective. Rene said, "It was an eye-opening experience." At the end of her travels there, she realized that music is universal.

Rene grew up in the segregated South for the first ten to twelve years of her life, and this has helped her grow as both a person and an artist. She told me about her experiences as a child, as well as her parents' experiences. Her father was a World War II veteran, and was very bitter that he fought for ideas, but didn't have the full benefit of them in his own country. Growing up, there was no one to help a child process what was going on, and she learned not to ask. When the Jim Crow laws were lifted, there were no follow up conversations. Instead, she and her family focused on what they had, and thanked the Lord for every day. As Rene got into her 30's and 40's, she felt like she needed to process everything that she had gone through. To do this, she "processed it artistically and musically" and "it finds itself in her musical expressions, in her arrangements."

This is a very strong and thoughtful woman who continually looks within herself. When I asked who her musical influences are she replied 'what', not 'who' – her influences are "pain, wisdom and beauty." Rene said these are her influences no matter what formation they take: through art, people or herself.

Rene lived in Atlanta before moving to Denver. She eventually decided that Atlanta was too big for her and she didn't care where she lived as long as it was "safe, sunny and near a major airport." As she tells me the story of how she ended up in Denver, it was undoubtedly fate that drew her here. She has a friend who owned some property at the time who was looking for someone to rent the place. When Rene asked him how much he wanted per month, it was the exact amount that she could afford. She signed the contract that day, without looking at the property, and was in Denver within two weeks.

Four months after moving to Denver, she met her husband at KUVU, a jazz station in Denver. Rene was working a pledge drive and when she walked into a room full of people, there was one empty chair; and this chair was in front of her future husband. Two months into their relationship, fate took another turn for Rene. Two years earlier while working at KUVU, her husband heard "Black Bird" and immediately went to purchase the CD. When he saw her picture, he felt something powerful. Before Rene met him, she told me that "something called her here (to Denver)." They just celebrated their five-year anniversary. A higher power definitely pulled Rene to Denver.

Rene has just released an extraordinary album *Voice of My Beautiful Country Suite*, an ambitious jazz and soul tinged melody of the patriotic anthems, "America the Beautiful", "My Country 'Tis of Thee", "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing", and "The Star-Spangled Banner." Rene says "I love the original melodies for 'America the Beautiful' and 'My Country 'Tis of Thee'; my eyes get teary when I hear them, but there is another emotion altogether that gets touched when I sing over these new melodies, and I have found that audiences really get moved by bringing this new context, this new way to love our country."

This new album is definitely about processing the things she went through as a child. Rene told me she is "making a statement to herself and what it was like for her." She says that she is staying true to herself.

Rene will be performing two shows at Dazzle on Friday, July 1st at 7 and 9 p.m. You do not want to miss this show. It's the perfect way to spend part of your 4th of July weekend!

For ticket information: <http://www.dazzlejazz.com>

For more information about Rene Marie: <http://renemarie.com>

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