

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DYNAMIC SINGER-SONGWRITER INGA SWEARINGEN INFUSES HER SIGNATURE JAZZ  
STYLE WITH A GOOD HELPING OF FOLK AND FINDS HERSELF RIGHT AT HOME WITH  
UPCOMING RELEASE, *FIRST RAIN***

With her new release, *First Rain*, Inga Swearingen ventures into new territory while staking a claim in what she knows best: music and song rooted in family, nature, love and human spirit. *First Rain* is a compelling mix of homegrown folk, and soulful, bluesy jazz, with acoustic layers of guitar, stand up bass, violin and cello that frame Inga's clear, translucent voice. Whether putting her personal stamp on a jazz standard or combining the understated grooves of bossa nova with Swedish folk melodies, Inga captivates her audience with her gift of joyful melodic invention.

"Inga has a gorgeous voice, very fresh and evocative and note-perfect, and that's the sort of person you want to sing harmony to" - **Garrison Keillor, *Prairie Home Companion***

After two successful releases, Inga and her band explore a new sound with a diverse range of moods, textures, and grooves on *First Rain*. From the opening chords of "April Afternoon," through the last track, (a take on Emily Dickinson's poem "Ample,") the album embraces harmony not only in the music, but also as a way of life. Deeply personal, all of the songs were written or arranged by Inga and feature silky vocal harmonies with her sister Britta.

While continuing to be rooted in jazz, Inga is now revisiting her folk and classical influences and creating a sound all of her own. "I studied voice and choral conducting in school," Inga explains. "In fact, I first sang, "Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair", as an art song with lots of vibrato. It was fun to arrange it as a bossa nova on this album. I like to blur the line between genres and draw inspiration from anything that speaks to my heart. I was influenced early on by Ani DiFranco, and at the same time I love how Bobby McFerrin used his voice as an instrument. I also admire the joy I heard when listening to Ella Fitzgerald sing with all of her being, as though she held nothing back for her next gig. I think the commonality is that all three made music that reflected their life experience." With *First Rain*, Inga is digging in and singing from her heart.

A small farm in California, where Inga grew up with her musical family, inspired the sound and lyrical content of *First Rain*. The opening track "April Afternoon" sets the scene of grassy hillsides and jasmine perfumed air, and waltzes the listener into her world. "Brick by Brick" compares her experience of living in a home that was being remodeled for seventeen years, to a transitional place in life where one must rebuild from the ground up. Her arrangement of "Heart and Soul" is a little Betty Carter, a nod to Shirley Horn, and a touch of Gene Autry. Inga revisits her time growing up in Sweden, in the haunting and evocative Swedish folk song "Visa från Järna", and plays guitar in a rich open-tuning on "Rooted."

Living near Los Angeles, Inga has the opportunity to work with players steeped in a thriving music scene. She chose to compliment the sisterly vocal harmonies with two guitarists on the session, Jeff Miley and Larry Koonse. The result is elegant and sparse in terms of accompaniment. In "Before the Journey," an original Darek Oles composition, Inga adds her own lyrics and unites her counter melodies with Oles' unmistakable bass playing. Inga enthuses about each of the musicians that worked on the project and refers to them as kindred spirits. "I was drawn to each of them personally as well as musically," she explains.

It was not the first time Inga acted on that desire to connect with a specific musician. In 2003, she began to study with the acclaimed jazz singer Susanne Abbuehl (ECM Records), which was a transformative

experience. In her first competition after her six-month experience with Susanne, Inga won first place at the Montreux Jazz Festival Shure Vocal Competition.

Inga finished her masters in choral conducting at Florida State University in 2005. During that time, she received her first invitation to appear on Garrison Keillor's renowned radio show, *A Prairie Home Companion*, an opportunity that has led to over a dozen appearances on the show. Inga relates, "Garrison spins a story just like jazz musicians improvise. It's a thrill to witness live."

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

### **INGA SWEARINGEN TOUR DATES**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>VENUE</b>
October 4	Santa Barbara	Soho Restaurant & Music Bar
October 25	Arroyo Grande	Clark Center for the Performing Arts
October 29	Studio City, CA	Vitello's
October 30	Los Angeles, CA	LACMA (LA County Museum of Art)
November 14	Berkeley, CA	Anna's Jazz Island
November 20	Los Angeles, CA	Cafe Metropol

### ***First Rain* Instrumentation:**

Inga Swearingen – vocals, guitar, composer, arranger

Britta Swearingen – vocals, percussion

Larry Koonse, Jeff Miley – guitar

Darek Oleszkiewicz, Dylan Johnson – upright bass

Brian Kilgore, Darrell Voss – drums, percussion

Brynn Albanese - violin, Ken Hustad – cello

### **Press Information**

Media copies of *First Rain* and photos are available upon request. Inga is available for interview. Photo credit: Barry Goyette.

Contact: **Pamela Lipshitz**

**Lip Service Media**

**[pam@lipservicemedia.com](mailto:pam@lipservicemedia.com)**

**917-859-6852**