

**It's About the Music** took Jill & Jack six years to record and produce.

It features them in Big Band and small band settings, plus Jill sings with a special quintet of The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's principal players.

### **It's About the Music** MUSICIANS:

**Jill Jensen** - voice on all songs **Jack Grassel** - guitars

**Frank Almond** - violin **Claude Calliet** - trombone **Steve Ceopus** - organ

**Pat Crawford** - bass flute **Rick Embach** - vibraphone **Guillermo Espinasse** - guitar

**John Hibler** - saxophones **Dean Lea** - piano **Howard Levy** - harmonica

**Tom McGirr** - bass **Joan Miranda** - viola **Ann Morse-Hambrock** - harp

**Mike Murphy** - drums **Luis Navarro Lopez** - bass **Steve Peplin** - arranger

**Jeff Pietrangelo** - trumpet **John Price** - bass **Dane Richeson** - drums

**Roger Ruggieri** - bass viol **The Singers from Tblisi**, Georgia **Kim Scholes** - cello

**Walt Stuart** - arranger **Rip Tenor** - saxophone **Paul Wertico** - drums

**Jean Yi Kim** - violin

### **PRESS RELEASE BELOW**

**October 2006, WI - Frozen Sky Records** is proud to announce the release of **It's About the Music**, the second CD featuring jazz vocalist Jill Jensen and guitarist Jack Grassel. The married couple collaborated six years on the project. In addition to producing and performing on the CD, Jack composed four new songs and created fresh arrangements to lovingly showcase Jill's diverse vocal skills. The twelve song collection artistically mixes Big and small band settings loaded with exciting jazz solos.

**The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra** principle players string quintet accompanies Jill on the Horace Silver song, "*Lonely Woman*", custom arranged by **Steve Peplin**. Legendary arranger Walt Stuart created three Big Band charts exclusively for Jill. Jill sings in Spanish on one song "*Isla Mujeres*", composed and performed by Argentine virtuoso guitarist **Guillermo Espinasse**, and recorded in Cancun, Mexico at Machine Head Studio. Other recording sessions took place in: Brookfield, WI at Public Record; Racine, WI at Andrews Brothers Recording; and in New Berlin, WI at DNA Digital Systems where the CD was also mixed and mastered. The CD design is by The Weber Group, Inc. of Racine, WI, with photography by Keith Watling and Sue Ruggles.

The twenty-four musicians listed above, who contributed their highly skilled talents to the CD, reads as a "Who's Who" of the Midwest's most accomplished. Included is nationally acclaimed **Howard Levy** on harmonica, (founding Member of Bella Fleck and the Flecktones), seven time Grammy Award-winning drummer **Paul Wertico**, and **Dane Richeson**, recognized as one of the most versatile virtuosi in percussion.

**It's About the Music** was almost never heard. In March of 2004, Jack was stricken with heart infection and toxic shock. Jill was told he had a "10-20% chance" to live. Jack beat the odds to miraculously survive, but production stalled for two years while he struggled to regain health. The Milwaukee music community rallied to give a special concert, which eased their burden of huge medical bills. The couple credit the CD's completion to the outpouring of spiritual support from fellow musicians, family and fans. Although Jack is not fully recovered, he and Jill consider the release of **It's About the Music** a triumphant finale to that difficult period.

Always a surefire crowd pleaser at any occasion, Jill and Jack are in demand as a duo or small ensemble as well as Big Band. The duo sizzles onstage. **Jill Jensen** grew up singing in a home where the music of choice was swing era and jazz standards. She is well known in southeastern Wisconsin as a vocalist, actress and television spokesperson with a smooth confident stage presence and a 'smile' in her vocal delivery. A fan says her voice is "*Victoria's Secret for the ears.*" Jill gained musical fame through singing engagements with numerous bands and shows, most notably since 1998 with her world-renowned husband, Jack Grassel. Jack produced her first CD, "Seems Like Dreams" in 2000. *Just Jazz Guitar* magazine wrote: '*Jensen's voice is strong and self-assured... Grassel's overall skill and musical approach are the perfect compliment to Jensen's smooth and confident vocal styling and phrasing.*' Dave Luhrssen of *The Shepherd Express* said: '*Jill's expressive voice sparkles with the sheer delight of singing as she wraps around lyrics and their emotional implications. Blended with Jack's stunning command of the guitar, they perform music that speaks in an easily understood and enjoyable dialect.*'

**Jack Grassel** was voted one of the "Ten Best in the U.S..." by **Guitar One** magazine, March 2000. "*Upon hearing him seamlessly weave bass lines, rhythm chords, and melody lines - all at the same time - as well as noting his incredible command*

*of the instrument, we knew he was a shoe-in. Simply put, he sounds like no other guitarist.*" He is a winner of six W.A.M.I. (Wisconsin Area Music Industry) Awards as Guitarist or Jazz Artist of the Year. For decades, guitarists all over the world have studied his many books, columns, compositions and recordings. Jack is known for his invention "The Superguitar," on which he plays bass and guitar simultaneously. He enjoyed the personal tutorage of his mentors, Tal Farlow and George Van Eps, which helped father his unique style. He has accompanied the biggest names in entertainment. A short list includes: Luciano Pavarotti, Rosemary Clooney, Nancy Wilson, John B. Williams, Roy McCurdy, Frankie Laine, Maureen McGovern, Cab Calloway, Jay Leno, Bob Hope, Louie Bellson, Vic Damone, Tom Jones, Al Martino, Joel Grey, Mel Rhyne, David Benoit, Ira Sullivan, Ed Thigpen, Howard Levy, Buddy Montgomery, Doc Severinson, Eartha Kitt, Helen O'Connell, Roger Williams, Percy Faith, Lucas Foss, McCoy Tyner, Rufus Reid, Slide Hampton, John Scofield, Ritchie Cole, Stu Katz, Michael Feinstein, Stanley Jordan, Hod O'Brien and Stephanie Nakasian.

To purchase **It's About the Music**, or for more information about Jill Jensen and Jack Grassel, discography, sound samples, photos, and schedules, bios, press clips, visit their websites: [www.jilljensen.com](http://www.jilljensen.com) and [www.jackgrassel.com](http://www.jackgrassel.com) **Frozen Sky Records, P.O. Box 367, Sturtevant, WI 53177 262 552 4012**

#### **Some early comments:**

*This is world class. An art form. A true gift. One of the finest, most creative, ensemble recordings ever done. It is marvelous, wonderful, tremendous, fresh, exciting, superb; it more than entertains, it tells a story. Jack's playing is outstanding. Jill 's gorgeous voice is thrilling. Musicianship throughout is remarkable. So much work! All emotions are covered in this musical journey. I laughed at 'Benny's'; choked up at 'Come in From the Rain'; I was totally touched deeply inside. Oh, and the gorgeous strings in 'Lonely Woman'! I felt Jill was singing just to me, she makes a listener feel so special, it warms your heart. This music will be around for long time. Dr. Nickolas J. Contorno, Marquette University Director of Bands and Orchestra*

*The CD is incredible,,,and definitely worth the wait. Jill with the big band is a treat to hear. Although "Small Day Tomorrow" is one of my favorite all time songs...I find it is really hard to pick a favorite moment... 'It's About the Music' is brilliant from start to finish. I played it at Caroline's...and people thought it was great. Anyway, thanks again for a brilliant recording that I will treasure for a long time to come. Scott Lehman - Caroline's Jazz Club, Milwaukee*

*Jill Jensen is one of those rare vocalists who has the pipes to perform equally as well with a big band or a small combo. She can go from sweet to sultry. With the band she can belt out with the best of them or when the tune calls for it give a warm and intimate interpretation. Jill is a true talent. Gano & Beverly Evans; Big Bands Blues and Ballads Too! Two's Company - Jazz Sessions. WHQR-91.3FM, Wilmington, NC*

*Great diversity of sounds and material, Great playing by a lot of great players-nice touch getting Howard and Paul Wertico, but everyone is right up there, and of course Jack, you sound great throughout. Jill sounds very breathy, expressive; she is communicating. I especially liked the larger bands. The arrangements are interesting and the section is CRISP. Great production; obviously a lot of care taken here. You really pulled off a good one Nice Job! Steve Cohen, Blues Central Booking and Management, Milwaukee*