

Intrepid Interpreter: Kathy Kosins

NATIVE DETROITER SINGS JAZZ WITH A MOTOWN FLAIR



Kathy Kosins' travel days include tours with national blues/jazz artist Kevin Mahogany and his band.

of club hits she recorded. Her 1987 single *I've Got the Night Off* on 12-inch vinyl is still traded by collectors.)

Now she's known nationally for her smoky, sweet vocals and Motown-influenced style. With her third album, *Vintage* (2005), Kosins earned critical praise for her vocal technique, and for digging out forgotten classics from the '50s and '60s.

"A million jazz singers cut *Cry Me a River* by Julie London," Kosins says. "But another song of hers is *Nice Girls Don't Stay for Breakfast*. Nobody else paid attention to it, but I thought, oh my God, this is a fabulous song!"

Kosins has made other gutsy choices, recording effective, jazzed-up interpretations of Jimi Hendrix's *Foxy Lady* and Nancy Sinatra's *These Boots*

Vocalist Kathy Kosins broke into the jazz world by accident. In 1993 she wrote a jazz song collection with composer Jeff Franzel. She cut the demo tracks herself with hopes a producer would option the songs for an established singer. Reps from Schoolkids Records heard the demo and, to Kosins' surprise, offered her a record deal. It became her first album, *All in a Dream's Work* (1995).

"I really didn't choose to be a jazz singer," Kosins says. "Jazz chose me."

Before then, Kosins had made her mark in R&B, most notably arranging songs and singing backup for famed music producer and fellow native Detroiter Don Was. (Some '80s dance

Are Made for Walkin.'

The Detroit roots run deep, and while Kosins performs nationally, she occasionally appears at The Whitney in Detroit. She grew up on Detroit's northwest side, at 8 Mile and Woodward Avenue, where her family ran Kosins Clothes, a Detroit

institution that closed in the 1990s after eight decades dressing the city's elite, including dapper Motown stars, such as the Four Tops and the Temptations.

Although Kosins is on the road performing and teaching jazz clinics as many as 200 days a year, she maintains a home in Ferndale. "How I love Detroit. It's my home," she says. "As long

**"I REALLY DIDN'T CHOOSE TO BE
A JAZZ SINGER. JAZZ CHOSE ME."**

— Detroit-based jazz singer Kathy Kosins