

Juliann Kuchocki

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REVIEW: Broken Compass - by Scott Yanow, (author of ten books on Jazz including The Jazz Singers, Swing, Jazz On Film and Jazz On Record 1917-76

In her diverse career thus far, Juliann Kuchocki has performed at jazz festivals in her native Canada, toured with plays in Germany, Japan and North America, acted in television series and films, been a director, producer, dancer and choreographer, and sung everything from jazz and rock to blues, pop and r&b. Her debut CD, Don't Explain, came out in 2010.

On Broken Compass, Ms. Kuchocki not only sings but contributes all of the material. The music is as diverse as the settings which range from a duet with a pianist on her heartbreaking ballad "Missing" to a big band. Fortunately the vocalist is extremely versatile, sounding comfortable and very expressive in each genre that she interprets.

The CD begins with "Broken Compass." on which Juliann Kuchocki sings about her determination to be liberated, saying that nothing is going to stop her now. Both her voice and the adventurous arrangement for the big band are quite haunting and unpredictable.

"My Name Is' I'm With You" is a swinging 1940s-type love song with witty words that Nat King Cole could have sung back in his trio days. Much different is the hyper and complex "Society," a piece in 11/4 time dealing with surviving in the contemporary world, and being so busy that one has no time to think about what one is doing. "Missing," which could become a standard in the future, is heard in two similar but slightly different versions. It is about coming to the realization that a relationship is over.

The swinging "Again" finds the subject jumping into a new relationship with no regrets. "Like Mold" has her complaining in humorous fashion that her mate's "love is like mold." The bluesy "Catching Up With Me" gives Juliann an opportunity to engage in some lowdown singing. "Key Of Sexy" lives up to its title, being a sensual piece that is slow and saucy.

"Dancing Girl" has a light-hearted pop feel that seems happy, but there is more to the dancing girl than it seems on the surface. "15 Minutes," which is about making the most of every second, is a jumping blues that is quite catchy. Before the closing version of "Missing," "Bassdrumsaxbone" features those four instruments plus Juliann's tap dancing trading off and playing together in what becomes a happily chaotic jam.

Broken Compass is a very impressive showcase for Juliann Kuchocki's highly appealing singing and her vivid imagination. While it will keep one guessing, it is consistently stimulating and delightful.

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Broken Compass (Juliann Kuchocki)

By Paul Anderson, The [Entertainment Bank](#)

Juliann Kuchocki's "**Broken Compass**" is a great jazz album, and one that lovers of good music of any genre should enjoy. A wonderful mix of jazz, blues, and Juliann's own personal style, the 12 track CD is **enjoyable from beginning to end.**

"Broken Compass," the title track and intro to the album caught my attention with a solo acoustic bass, joined by percussive shaker on a clever five/four rhythm. The lyrics describe a determination to have a life of purpose, and not to be forgotten. The message is only enhanced by Kuchocki's voice which comes across as expressive and sincere. Creative horn arrangements allow the players stretch a little, while the guitar player adds great fills with the continuous upright bass and drums.

Swing dancers will be thrilled by "My Name Is I'm With You," in which a nice horn riff sets up the story of getting lucky with someone from across the room. Classic guitar comping like Bunky Green, and the Basie mid tempo swing, while the piano and bass stay in the pocket, and there's a nice slide trombone solo.

The band really gets a chance to blaze on the track "Society," with hot solos from the piano, and the alto. This is a song that's sure to appeal to the nonconformists in us all. The first ballad in the set, "Missing," showcases the tastefulness of Juliann's rhythm section, featuring vocals with the trio of piano, bass, and drums played with brushes, and that nice sweeping technique drummers use on slow songs like this. "Again" is a bluesy song with the tenor sax giving a growling tenor solo. The pianist has plenty of snap in his phrases, and the drummer shows how to swing with brushes on a brisk medium tempo. The background vocals Julian lays down fit very well with the sassy attitude of the song. One thing I have come to appreciate about this band's concept is that it embraces the dark, and gets down to the nitty gritty with it. The use of sustained wah effects on the guitar while the tenor runs, and the unwillingness to adhere to the norm liberate the direction of the music.

When something is so played out it's "Like Mold," features a John Scofield styled guitar solo, and the alto sax lays out some great angular lines on his improvisation. I like the 4ths harmonized with the sax and vocals, and the piano gives the song plenty of love with intelligent fills, and great voicings.

Ms. Kuchocki has plenty of sensuality, sultriness, and soul on "Key of Sexy", I like the intense tenor sax, with amazing control over his tone. The organ fits just right for the mood, and the vibe from the band's arrangement.

Being a sideman on a gig is not always a bed of roses, so when I'm introduced to a song like "Bassdrumsaxbone," I'm impressed by the way in which the musicians in the band are featured. Juliann has fun presenting her players. I also like the reprise of the ballad "Missing," which gives another perspective on Julian's voice as a jazz artist, as she sings in duet with the piano. Her phrasing, and the extended range of colors while singing in a more intimate setting is quite nice. The piano solo is lyrical. In fact, I like this version better than the original. Juliann Kuchocki closes out her set with a great finale.

"Broken Compass" is a well thought out, lyrically and musically solid jazz album, that jazz enthusiasts will want to add to their collections.

Juliann Kuchocki

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Improvijazzation Nation Review

[Rotcod Zzaj - Improvijazzation Nation](#)

Juliann Kuchocki - BROKEN COMPASS:

When singers have a background in acting, they often come across in their vocals as "over-dramatic", but Juliann is able to convey her passion for the music without hamming it up (at all)... check out one of my favorite tunes in the "laid-back & melancholy" category, "Missing"... not what I thought it would be at all, & **she makes you FEEL IT! Both the vocal and recording quality on each of the tracks is superb**, but no more so than on gems like the groove-oriented "Like Mold" - there's some real "sting" to her message on this one and excellent musicianship behind her performance. **I give Juliann & crew a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**, with an "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of 4.98.

REVIEW: Juliann Kuchocki's "Broken Compass"

by John Book - This is Book's Music - www.thisisbooksmusic.com

Juliann Kuchocki is definitely someone who has a lot of talent, with much to share, and her Broken Compass (Pro Arts) album shows that she has what it takes to stay in the business of music and entertainment.

While all of the songs may sound like traditional and standards in the world of jazz and pop, she wrote each and every track on this, and produced the album too. Her voice sounds like either someone you might have heard in the 40's or 50's, or singers who portrayed singers from the 40's or 50's, and that will definitely be pleasing to fans of jazz and pop, or perhaps those who were around to hear it the first time. In songs like "15 Minutes", "My Name Is I'm With You", and "Key Of Sexy" shows how sly and confident she can be in songs that mix up romance and seduction with an allure, and she works it to its fullest potential. Her dancing skills come into play with the very cool "Bassdrumsaxbone", where she offers up a tap dance solo, something I don't come across in the music that I review.

If there has to be one drawback, it's that she only stays within a few styles on this, choosing to stay in jazz and pop contexts although "Bassdrumssaxbone" and the bluesy vibe of "15 Minutes" displays her potential skills in other types of styles. While this Compass may be broken, perhaps Kuchocki is suggesting that one doesn't need a device to be guided to where you want/need to be, just a human touch.

Juliann Kuchocki

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Chris Spector - Midwest Record Review - www.midwestrecord.com

Broken Compass:

You have to get past the opening track where Kuchocki is ostensibly working out some of her own demons.

Then you get down to the meat, **a sassy jazz vocal performance** by a cat that knows how to focus on your ears when the spotlight is on her.

A sterling example of the under the radar jazz scene in Canada, this set moves from there in fine fashion letting the depth of her chops shine.

Well worth checking out for that familiar but different kick that is needed every so often.

Juliann Kuchocki - Broken Compass

D. **Oscar Groomes O's Place Jazz Magazine**

DI.P.O. Box 38430 Charlotte, NC 28278 <http://www.OsPlaceJazz.com>

O's Notes: Canadian vocalist Juliann Kuchocki surrounds herself with a wealth of talent for her first recording of all original material. She is up for the challenge trading off with her band for some excellent exchanges. The bulk of the material is swing with a large ensemble featuring Juliann out front with soft sweet vocals. The harmony is great especially on "My Name Is I'm With You"! Her style has country western roots but it fits in to this contemporary jazz program nicely.

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Juliann Kuchocki

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Snakebit singer comes out on top

susan.gamble@sunmedia.ca,

It's no accident that Juliann Kuchocki's newest album is full of angst, anger and determination. It is, in fact, the result of four accidents.

The dancer-turned-sultry-jazz-singer has exposed herself in a series of songs that come from the heart, telling about the dramatic turn her life took after she was hit by a car in 1998.

"This is not your typical female-jazz-artist-light-and-fluffy stuff," Kuchocki says during a phone interview. "It's all original and about my life and not being able to dance."

Life turned upside down for Kuchocki in Vancouver, where she was just finishing a run in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and the accident derailed her career for nine months. A stage performer, the former Brantford woman, who now lives in Port Dover and Toronto, had also dabbled in TV ads and movies.

After countless hours of physiotherapy she got back on the boards in a German-produced version of Cats but in 2000, she was hit again in Simcoe. "I couldn't dance at all after that. I tried for two years in therapy but I couldn't jump properly and if you can't jump, you can't dance."

It turns out, that was just the beginning of Kuchocki's problems.

The insurance companies turned to argue with each other about which accident caused her injuries and declined to settle while they fought. She had finally come to terms with the end of her dancing career when, in 2003, she was hit again.

"I was just about to settle the first two accidents. And none of these were my fault! There were always witnesses. "I started to think that I'm target practice."

The third accident was serious, damaging Kuchocki's abdomen and affecting her singing as well as her dancing.

"All my livelihood was just gone. I had to wait two more years to prove to the insurance companies that it was serious and permanent, even though I was on crutches or a cane. For a while, I couldn't even sit up."

She kept the accidents quiet for a long time, not wanting to destroy the last shreds of hope for her career in show business.

But she had to come to terms with the fact that her whole life -- "everything my parents sacrificed for" -- was gone.

Juliann Kuchocki

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She was able to establish herself in teaching the same "triple-threat" talents as she was growing up as director-choreographer of the Pro-Arts school, but that came to an end as well, after the fourth accident in 2009.

So after almost 10 years in litigation, being followed by insurance investigators and having her trajectory to fame seriously derailed, Kuchocki's angst has come spilling out.

"There are some angry songs on here," she says about the new album, Broken Compass.

"It's called that because I didn't know what to do with my life. It's about trying to make my life happen."

But despite the frustration and anger, Broken Compass is resonating with jazz and blues fans.

Kuchocki has maintained her ties to the Toronto music scene and a strong connection to some of the best blues musicians there. She entered two song-writing contests and was shocked to win them both, including the new jazz category of the Barrie Music Fest.

"I only had one song each time I entered and they won, so that really lit a fire under my butt," Kuchocki says with a laugh.

Her last CD - Don't Explain - was well received, especially outside of Canada.

Kuchocki has record deals on four continents at this point and is doing so well in Japan that she's considering a tour there.

"I'm thinking about going back to Tokyo, where I did Disneyland for about two years. It seems like you have to go somewhere else to get famous in Canada. I've seen it happen over and over again."

Her songs are programmed on several jazz stations in Canada, along with some in Mexico and the U.S.

And she's received some sterling reviews from jazz experts like Scott Yanow, who called the new CD an "impressive showcase for Juliann Kuchocki's highly appealing singing and her vivid imagination ... it's consistently stimulating and delightful."

Broken Compass is also available on www.cdbaby.com which Kuchocki calls the best website for the indie artist.

She's hosting a private CD release party Saturday at 6:30 p.m. in Toronto, but fans can purchase tickets through her website, www.juliannkuchocki.com.

And there's a bonus: she may not be able to jump but she can still tap, so Kuchocki has choreographed several numbers to go along with the Saturday show.

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