



Singer/songwriter Suzi Katz, who has been compared to Joni Mitchell and Suzanne Vega, will bring her style to the Willamette Valley Folk Festival next Saturday night.

## Katz seeks place in folk tradition

Suzi Katz is what I'd call an Impressionist songwriter," Patty Larkin said. "She's great — sets a mood and takes you to another place. And incidentally, she kills on the guitar."

Suzi Katz will perform at 7 p.m. next Saturday at the Willamette Valley Folk Festival.

Katz released her self-titled album six months ago. Katz has been compared to other singer/songwriters such as Joni Mitchell and Suzanne Vega. She, however, has been very successful standing on her own.

Part of this comes from the musical talent of Katz's supporting cast. She plays with vocalist Jan Reimer, bassist Enrique Toussaint, percussionist Marc Anderson, and guitarist and recording artist Steve Tibbetts.

Katz met Tibbetts, who was a guest instructor, at the University of Colorado. He took immediate interest in Katz's work. Only two years later, she was signed by East Side Digital and has now released her first album.

"I play a lot of songs that have jazz chords, and I play in open tuning," she said. "I don't play a lot of basic folk chords. And then I write the lyrics in a kind of stream of consciousness. I keep a notebook and write word after word after word. It doesn't have to make sense until

*'She's great — sets a mood and takes you to another place. And incidentally, she kills on the guitar.'*

— Patty Larkin  
Philo recording artist

I put the lyrics and the music together."

Katz enjoys both the musical as well as the songwriting part of her job, but has found songwriting to be a difficult step.

"It's hard not to be cliched or overly sentimental and still be meaningful," Katz said.

Her music grasps many "wry, jazzy inflections" in combination with her understated voice and depth of songwriting. These characteristics of her music are often compared to other artists, such as Mitchell known for jazzy inflections and Vega known for her understated voice.

While Katz has opened for such bands as the Samples, Big Head Todd and the Monsters, and David Wilcox, this is not really the audience that she is looking for.

"The audiences really don't listen to me," she said. "They wanted more of a rock 'n' roll show."

Now Katz wants to find audiences who come specifically to listen.

"I hear the Indigo Girls on the radio, and I know they've got a big following, but I don't know if that's good for me," she said. "Their songs are simple — they've got that groove, and I associate that groove with rock music. And I don't know if my songs have that groove or not."

Katz was born in Detroit and moved to Boulder in 1982. She believes that region of Denver inspires her. She said she wrote bad songs in Detroit.

"I hated the area," she said. "It was ugly, an endless stream of shopping malls. You couldn't walk anywhere—you had to drive."

Had she stayed in Detroit, Katz said she would have had to write songs for her album about Walmart and plastic flowers.

Katz is very determined to be a strong addition to the new acoustic movement. She wants to explore her talents and find an audience that really wants to listen to her.

— Teresa Isabelle

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