

ARTIST BIO 2020 - Amanda Tosoff

Amanda Tosoff is a B.C.-raised, Toronto-based pianist, composer, and educator with six albums to her credit. As a bandleader and side-woman, she has performed with internationally-recognized artists such as Emilie-Claire Barlow, Ingrid and Christine Jensen, Brad Turner, Phil Dwyer, and many more. Her own groups have been featured at festivals across Canada and abroad, and have opened for jazz luminaries such as Bobby Hutcherson, Renee Rosnes, Oliver Jones, and Luciana Souza. Amanda has received various honours, including the Montréal Jazz Festival Grand Prix de Jazz, and the Toronto Arts Foundation Emerging Jazz Artist Award – and most recently, a Juno nomination and mention on the Polaris Prize "Longer List," for her album *Words*.

Through her richly varied body of work, Amanda has gained recognition as "an assured, forward-thinking voice" (Greg Buium, *Vancouver Sun*) on the Canadian jazz scene and beyond – not only as a composer and performer, but also as an educator. She is on faculty at Humber College, and has been a featured artist and clinician at universities and conferences, including the 2020 Canadian Jazz Summit at the University of Manitoba. Amanda is also co-artistic director of online education company, Music Arts Collective, alongside bassist and educator Jodi Proznick and arts-administrator Francesca Fung.

In Amanda's artistry, one hears a rigorous, deeply felt command of the jazz piano lineage as well as an eagerness to push beyond labels, finding inspiration from various sources and disciplines. This is most evident on Amanda's recording *Words*, which featured highly-regarded singer Felicity Williams (of such bands as Broken Social Scene and Bahamas). Blending poetry, jazz, art-song and folk-pop, *Words* garnered great acclaim and revealed "a well-developed knack for animating her material with fine counterpoint and colourful sonic combinations" (Peter Hum, *Ottawa Citizen*). It also landed Amanda her first Juno nomination (Canada's equivalent of the Grammys).

With Amanda's sixth release as a leader, *Earth Voices*, she continues to pursue the creative and stylistic leap she began on *Words*, once again drawing on poetry with a deep personal and emotional connection. Along with strings and guest saxophonists Allison Au and Kelly Jefferson, she invites Alex Goodman, fellow Canadian and now one of New York's most vital young guitarists, to work wonders and broaden her ensemble texture. She also enlists a sterling and versatile cast of singers — Emilie-Claire Barlow, Robin Dann, Michelle Willis, Alex Samaras, Laila Biali, Lydia Persaud and Felicity Williams — to give new life to words by Edgar Allan-Poe, Pablo Neruda, Rumi, Marjorie Pickthall and Walt Whitman, among other original material and inventive arrangements of songs by Joni Mitchell, Luciana Souza, Chris Thile and Mike Ross of Souleppper Theatre. With a "calm demeanor and complete confidence" (*Cadence*), and with an honest, genuine and giving spirit, Tosoff stands poised to share with the world the next stages in her evolution.