

Mp3 Denise La Grassa - April Dreams



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With a jazzy, pop/rock backdrop, April Dreams is La Grassa's soul bearing poetic search for honesty, truth true love. 10 MP3 Songs in this album (35:49) ! Related styles: POP: Pop/Rock, JAZZ: Jazz-Pop

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Details: With the release of April Dreams, her first CD in nearly 7 years, La Grassa can't help but look back on her childhood in suburban Chicago. Her infectious laugh bubbles out of her as she remembers the beginning of her songwriting career. "I was 5, maybe 6 years old and I was writing songs like mad. Once I had a fistful ready to go, I would head out and knock on my neighbors doors and sing the songs right there on their doorstep! I was hoping they'd like the songs enough to buy them. I thought if I sold enough songs, I could buy birthday Christmas presents for my family. I tell you, I was on my way, but once my family phone started ringing with those, ahh, entertained neighbors, my Mom, uh, politely asked me to stop. But I did get a few dollars in my pocket, and more importantly, I got confidence at an early age as a songwriter." Her song-selling may have been stopped prematurely, but Denise continued writing. "In third grade, I decided to tackle playwriting. My teacher, Mrs. Collins, read my stories, thought I was pretty good and arranged a meeting with the elementary school principal. She allowed me and my group of third grade thespians the chance to perform a Christmas play for the school. We rehearsed in the library after school, we got parents involved typing scripts, finding props and designing costumes. The play was a huge success and I was on my way to fame and fortune. But then, 4th grade blindsided me. My new teacher was, how should I say this, a wee bit underwhelmed by my endless creativity. I did write a few plays and songs, but my grades suffered, and I was "diagnosed" as a hyper-creative child. Back then I was misunderstood. I still wrote songs and plays, but when I was done, I tucked them inside my piano bench. I was really bummed." On break one summer from college, Denise traveled to a place called

The Second City in Chicago and discovered a school for performers and writers. "I couldn't believe what I found. A SCHOOL for people LIKE ME!!!! I left college and soaked up improv writing and acting. Within a year I was traveling with The Second City Touring Company and having the time of my life. One of my favorite improv techniques was called "Make-A-Song." The audience would shout out topics and ideas and I had to make up songs on the spot. I had a blast writing and singing melodies parodies under pressure. My only regret is that I don't have recordings of those performances ... then again, maybe that's a good thing!" Following her stint at The Second City, Denise continued to work in professional theater, performing in plays and musicals. She also wrote and produced two musical One-Person shows. In between musical theater, she landed small parts in a couple of made for HBO movies, including *Hometown Boy Makes Good* with Anthony Edwards (She's the funny secretary). And you can still occasionally catch her portrayals of real life people on the TV show *Unsolved Mysteries*. Despite her busy acting schedule, Denise made time for her music. She performed with her band at nearly every Chicago music venue, and produced two CD's of original music. *The Tracks* was released in 1999 and *Pieces of Peace* three years later. "My old Professor and mentor Bill Russo, who was a big band arranger - he arranged for Stan Kenton among others - kept telling me that I was a talented songwriter and that I should keep writing songs. So I produced those CD's by myself and shopped them around to a few labels. But I was so busy acting and performing my One-Person musical shows that I wasn't able to give it the big push that it needed.". Recently, Denise moved downstate to Bloomington. "Boy that move forced me to focus on songwriting, I sure wasn't going to get cast in movies or TV living in Central Illinois." The move turned out to be a blessing. "Overall, these are the best songs I've ever written." You can hear those songs on her *April Dreams* CD. "I feel like I've returned to my early years of skipping door to door selling songs to raise money, except now people are on MY doorstep/website where they can sample and buy my new songs! ----- Critics Corner: "With catchy melodies, a strong ensemble performance and well-written lyrics, *April Dreams* weaves its way through the entire spectrum of modern pop/jazz in a highly entertaining fashion." - Matt Warnock, *AllAboutJazz* La Grassa is a singer of serious jazzy talent and an artful writer Rick Kogan, *Chicago Tribune* There is something thrilling about watching her and that girl can sing! Jack Helbig, *Chicago Reader* "La Grassas performance and compositions are filled with a great deal of talent, originality and panache! Chris Jones, *Chicago Tribune* "La Grassa's strong singing voice has a radiant folk quality" Lloyd Sachs, *Chicago Sun Times*

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