

# Ready to explore her *Fiery Angels*

Stephanie Urbina Jones shares a sultry, simmering, and sexy set of songs *Texicana Sessions*  
by Tom Geddie

**S**TEPHANIE URBINA JONES HOPES TO RE-lease her new CD in January or so, and new CDs — new pieces of art—are always special to any real artist. But it's *The Texicana Sessions*, which came out more than a year and a half ago, that helped, without being too dramatic about it, saved her career.

Jones had moved to Nashville from Texas but didn't have the recording deal she hoped to get. She went through a divorce, and was generally just kinda dissatisfied with everything, perhaps, except for her daughter, Zeta.

*The Texicana Sessions* was basically a collection of Jones' demo recordings — country-rock with a sometimes fiery Latin edge.

"I didn't know if I still had music in me, or a fan base," she said, after 20 years in music. "So I kinda put it out there to see what would happen and a life and a career just kinda grew up around me."

## Three singles chart

THREE SINGLES OFF THAT album hit the charts. Jones found a sponsor and found new ways to focus her life and to help other people.

"It made me happy, got me back engaged in life and music," she said. "I'm so grateful. I laugh a whole lot more after having those life experiences of losing everything. In a way, that was such a gift. I had to make a decision, a choice to be happy and grateful for what I had. I found I needed very little."

Coming from a bicultural family, she also began to explore the Latin side of her roots more fully, partially inspired by a book "The Four Agreements," by Don Miguel Ruiz, that advises: 1) be impeccable with your word, 2) don't take anything personally,

3) don't make assumptions, and 4) always do your best.

Advocates take people to ancient Mexican pyramids where "people would have these profound healing experiences," Jones said.

"I became a student two years ago, and for a year once a month I spent three days in a dreaming practice learning to shift my perceptions of life. It was very powerful. I have a great passion for transformation — my own personal transformation and watching other people transform. Sometimes that happens with people when they hear a song; something about it moves them. Music is potent."

She also participates in Native American sweat lodges and meditation.

Jones remains busy giving back, often with Zeta.

"I don't have nannies and can't fly her here and there. I am honorable to my gift and livelihood and feel good about parenting. Zeta just turned 7 and she's a road warrior; she started going out with me at six weeks."

Jones also makes room in her shows for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) that works with children who have been neglected and abused and are in the foster system.

"We have been incredibly successful in getting 25 advocates signed up in the last few months — that we know of — which will change 50-75 kids lives," she said. "I am also donat-



She will perform at Poor David's Pub Spirit of Christmas Show: Stephanie Urbina Jones

*"I'm excited to step into it, To me, it sounds like a grown up version of me. The Latin's a little more fiery and it's more mature. It's fun and passionate and there is the resurrection of my heart. I was at the bottom. Thankfully, I had music to write me through it."*

—STEPHANIE URBINA JONES

ing \$1 from every t-shirt and *Texicana Sessions* to Texas CASA through 2011."

A song, "Gracias," that she wrote with Mark Marchetti and Jack Williams, reinforced the idea of happiness and of both giving thanks and giving back.

"I was in the pit," she said. "One of my co-writers came over and he'd been consoling me and said, 'You know, it's time to put your attention on waking up every day and being grateful instead of focusing on what's not right in your life.' At first it pissed me off, then I took it to heart and very quickly I worked myself out of my funk, focusing on gratitude."

The song turned into a video featuring other people from all walks of life sharing what they are thankful for.

"I am continuing to add these little snippets," she said. "It's beautiful to see what people are grateful for. It's inspiring; it's always my mother, my father, my daughter, food on the table."

She just came off of about six months nonstop touring that included a major role in an independent movie, "Courage," with Guy Forsyth and a performance for the "Troubadour, Texas" TV series.

Much of that touring included a year and a half of five-hour, free family shows with her band, mariachis, and traditional folklorico dancers that Jones booked and promoted herself.

"It was a lot of work, and it was fun," she said. "It all starts with the song and builds beyond that. It's a fiesta-like celebration experience. When I was a kid,

my favorite things were music, mariachis, and piñatas. I wanted to bring those together free for families, because I'm a mom, too."

Jones plans to take a deep breath or two before releasing *Fiery Angel* and beginning more projects. "I'm kinda hungry right now for getting it really stripped down and musically simple," she said. "After I finish something, I have to take a deep breath, I know next year I'm going to be working with a film and TV company out of Los Angeles, auditioning for another part in a Texas mystical western movie, and focusing on going to Europe sometime during the year."

"At this point in my life, it's important to make a living but it's also important for me to be engaged in life, in whatever creative project I'm in."

Jones will do a Christmas show at Poor David's Pub on Dec. 1 that will feature songs from most of her CDs, with the majority of those coming from her Christmas album, which remains one of the most sensual celebrations most people will ever hear.

It's a CD that almost never happened.

## Christmas songs

"RIGHT WHEN I WAS STARTING my career and doing house concerts and sleeping on couches, some folks said in October that it was too bad I didn't have a Christmas album because they'd buy 150 copies," she remembers.

"I thought at \$15 apiece that would be a lot of money, and told them at 2 in the morning that if I woke up with a Christmas song in my heard or my heart, jokingly, that I'd record one. Then I couldn't sleep and in a week or so wrote five or six songs and the next week we booked one night in a studio and did all the vocals with the band in six hours. It might have cost \$3,000 to make, and sold like \$10,000 worth by Christmas."

The more recent *Texicana Sessions* is a sultry, simmering, and sexy set of songs delivered through Jones' appealing voice. Sometimes delivered with bitersweet humor ("I'm Not A Piñata" and "After The Fever Breaks," with its lines "I guess I fell into your burning ring of fire, but will you love me after the fever breaks," come to mind) and sometimes with drama, the songs — recorded in 2004, 2005, and 2007 in San Antonio and Nashville — ring true with accordion, bass, drums, guitars, keyboards, steel guitar, trombone, trumpet, and violins.

On "Revolucion En Mi Corazon" (literally, revolution in my heart), a man makes her want to live with her heart wide open.

On "Como Se Llama, Mama" (what's your name, baby), a duet with Augie Meyers, a man who might be "a little bit crazy" but "looked like a dream" sucked her right in until the fairy tale ended. On the lovely, slow-burning ballad "Canta Me" (sing to me), she'll "find company in the arms of a song."

The upcoming *Fiery Angel* is, in its own way, more of the same.

"I'm excited to step into it," she said. "To me, it sounds like a grown up version of me. The Latin's a little more fiery and it's more mature. It's fun and passionate and there is the resurrection of my heart. I was at the bottom. Thankfully, I had music to write me through it." ■