Shari Vandermolen Long Bio

Few music artists have the ability to transport listeners to a time when the sounds of jazz first escaped the front doors of venues like The Cotton Club and Preservation Hall ... but that is exactly what music lovers get from Shari Vandermolen and Quarter to Nine. Based in Grimsby ... the heart of Ontario’s wine country ... Shari has performed at some of the region’s top music festivals as well as popular destinations as far away as New Orleans and Cuba.

Shari and Quarter to Nine released their self-titled debut album, *Quarter to Nine*, in 2015. The album featuring ten popular jazz covers was recorded and produced at Studio 13 Live Sound Recording under the watchful eye of producer Urmas Soomet.

“Umas and I knew each other through music prior to the recording session so there was a nice comfort level there,” Shari explains. “He gathered us together in the studio, and we walked through what my goals were for the session, the flow and logistics of the day and the technical set up. The entire process of recording the album was a joy.”

“Working with Shari recording her new album was fun,” says Soomet. “She made some really interesting choices in selecting the songs she wanted to record, and she made some pretty wise decisions in choosing the musicians she wanted to work with. I think her background in musical theater has taught her how to deliver real and meaningful emotions when she sings.”

The album is available for streaming and digital download on all major platforms, including iTunes, Spotify and Apple Music. Physical copies are also available for purchase through the band’s website, [www.Q29.ca](http://www.Q29.ca).

Considering Shari’s energetic and commanding presence on stage, it can be hard to imagine a time when nerves would hold her back from performing. While she would sing around the campfire with her parents ... her father played guitar, and her mother played tambourine and sang ... Shari spent many years working up the courage to perform in front of others.

“I was a bundle of nerves when I auditioned for my seventh-grade talent show,” she recollects. “I was singing so softly, the teacher walked up behind me and pushed me closer to the mic.”

But that moment offered a glimpse of things to come as Shari remembers a group of students who’d been mean to her on occasion instead stood up and cheered when Shari performed during the talent show. A similar situation happened many years later when she was attending a work party at which co-workers were singing karaoke. It took looking back at another major struggle in Shari’s life, overcoming cancer, to find the strength to sing in front of a crowd.

“I sat there wanting so badly to get up and sing, but I just couldn’t get myself to go put my name on the list. I was shaking just thinking about it,” she remembers. “I began to think about how disappointed I was that I was letting fear get in the way of doing something that I truly wanted to do. I made the decision right there that I wouldn’t let fear keep me from doing the things I wanted to do anymore.”

Quarter to Nine was officially formed in 2011 after Shari was invited to perform prior to the start of shows at a local theater. What started out as a duo evolved into a much more comprehensive music project offering live entertainment in the form of a trio, a six-piece (Quarter to Nine) and a ten-piece jazz ensemble (SwingLine.)

The band has since gone on to perform at some of the region’s top festivals, including the Steel City Jazz Festival in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, the band graced the Alumni Stage at the long-running and prestigious Festival of Friends in Hamilton, Ontario. Established in 1976, Festival of Friends has led the Hamilton community in celebrating the arts by attracting music talent from local bands to major acts like Tom Cochrane and Randy Bachman of Bachman-Turner Overdrive.

“The stage was set inside a building where the festival was showcasing photos and keepsakes they had collected over the years from the talent that had played the festival,” Shari recalls. “I remember walking through the exhibit, looking at all the photos, reading the letters and gaining a unique understanding of just how loved this festival was. It was an honor to perform there.”

Shari is no stranger to singing internationally as well. She participated in the International Jazz Safari to Cuba, which included an impromptu performance with five-time Juno Award winner Jane Bunnett. The show took place at Sanctuary at Grand Memories Varadero Resort. Shari has also performed at Broussard’s, a luxurious dining destination nestled in the heart of the New Orleans Vieux Carre since its opening in 1920.

In addition to performing, Shari is the founder of Jazz in the Sanctuary, a monthly concert series celebrating Hamilton-based artists. Founded in early 2018, Jazz in the Sanctuary features live shows every month at the Laidlaw Memorial United Church.

Away from music, Shari can be found spending time with friends and family as well as enjoying a glass of wine while relaxing with her two cats, Nola and Frenchie. Shari remains fond of theater, both acting in and spectating as a show of support for her friends in the theater community. She is also an avid traveler, having visited cities like Dublin, Rome, Tuscany, Florence and Venice. To learn more about Shari and Quarter to Nine, visit their official website at [www.q29.ca](http://www.q29.ca).