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Musician Jenn Grant in Carla's Corner

Carla Gillis

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After high school and a few unrewarding semesters at Saint Mary's University, [Jenn Grant](#) and a friend wandered around Europe, specifically England and Spain, for almost a year, letting life take them wherever. This sense of exploration and spontaneity finds its way into Grant's songs, which borrow from folk, country and pop genres, and are imbedded with impressive fluidity. The melodies, rhythms and arrangements on her new CD, *Orchestra for the Moon*, move up and down and around, constantly taking Grant and her listening audience to curious new places.



But it is Grant's voice that commands the most attention. Singing, for her, seems effortless. Her voice flits upwards like a bird in flight, plummets a breath later, and then flies off again into the clouds. It is nuanced with trills and inflections and a wee hint of Maritime accent. And though her songs tend toward the melancholy, off record, exuberance fills Grant's words; her sentences brim with gleeful exclamation points. (I culled a couple dozen from her responses.) She loves to swim in the ocean! She loves her family and friends and Stanley, her old dead dog! She loves to paint! Her paintings make great gifts! (Feist got one recently when Grant opened for her at the Marquee!)

Released on [Paris 1919 Records](#), *Orchestra for the Moon* features guest appearances by Ron Sexsmith, Jill Barber, Matt Mays, Tyler Messick, Dale Murray and Rose Cousins. Heavy Blinkers Jason MacIsaac and Dave Christensen produced it. A mere half an hour before leaving for a weekend of shows on Grant's native Prince Edward Island, she found a moment to chat about instruments pressed with flowers, Atlantic Ocean swimming and banjo purchases. Tour dates can be found directly after the interview.

Where are you right now? Right now, I am in my mother's house. She is making green tea. I have clothes and paints scattered everywhere that I need to organize before I leave for PEI in half an hour! This all takes place on Jubilee Road in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

What are your current fixations? I love to spend the night at home, have a bath and watch a movie. But I have been doing a little shopping as well. This week, I made two purchases - one baby guitar for the van and one banjo. I am also into pressing flowers onto instruments. You can see some on my red guitar, which I usually play on stage. All the flowers come from special people or places. I am also really into little socks with strawberries on them, and I really like the show *Grey's Anatomy*, even though I usually don't get to see it.

What is your favourite cause to rally behind? I'm excited that I'll be in Toronto during Gay Pride week. When my dog was still alive and my brother was still living here, I made Stanley, the dog, this long colourful necklace full of plastic beads and he wore it very proudly. And once when Daniel took him for a walk downtown, they got stuck in the middle of the Pride parade. We think Stanley fit in very well. I have a lot of gay friends so I plan to jump around and be very prideful with them. But there are a lot of causes I stand behind. My mother recently had a mastectomy due to breast cancer and she's potentially facing chemotherapy and has been unable to work. She's a nurse but isn't covered financially while she's been ill. I find this very hard, and so does she, obviously. I wish that there were more access to financial help to women with breast cancer.

Name the last thing you bought. A banjo!

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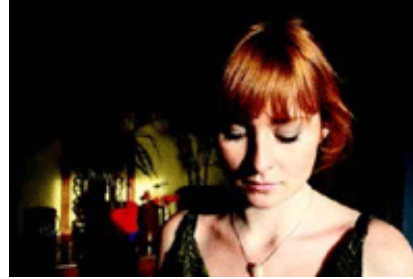
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What's in heavy rotation on your stereo? Willie Nelson will be this week.

And gathering dust on your bedside table? I am trying to find enough time to sit down and enjoy Stephanie Domet's new book, *Homing*. Steph is a great supporter of Halifax artists and one herself and sounds great on the CBC.



When you think of Atlantic Canada, you think of...? All the sand dunes that I love to slide down in Bothwell Beach, PEI. And I think of the smell of salty air and the blue herons dancing. I think of my family and my old dog, my friends and all the great musicians I love.

What has inspired you most during the last 24 hours? The banjo. And sitting on a lake yesterday having a picnic with Tanya Davis. Oh summer! Swimming is my favourite! But it was too cold for me. I had a mild heart attack and ran out. But Tanya was swimming around like a little PEI fish. I am always colder than her. Not fair!

If you weren't a writer, what would you be? A painter. I love to paint.

What has been your career high? My CD release at Queen Elizabeth High School. It was a magical evening with lots of friends and gold stars and people. It was amazing.

Tell me about a hometown issue you'd most like to see resolved. I love to ride my bike in Halifax (I miss Jack Nauss) and I wish there were bike paths so we could ride safely. Those cars and bikers together can be scary sometimes.

What's up next? I am taking Tanya Davis with me on my CD release tour, which is a modest tour through Ontario in June. I'm really excited for the show in Toronto at the Horseshoe with a local band called Bellewoods, who is great, as well as the magical, infamous, A Northern Chorus. That is going to be on Friday June 15th.

On whom do you depend most and why? I have very supportive friends and family and, without them, I would be lost in a canoe somewhere up the creek.

Jenn Grant Upcoming Tour Dates

June 6, Montreal, Shaika Cafe (w/ Tanya Davis)

June 13, Hamilton, The Casbah (w/ Tanya Davis, Dan Griffin)

June 14, Guelph, Jimmy Jazz (w/ Tanya Davis)

June 15, Toronto, Horseshoe Tavern (w/ Tanya Davis, Bellewoods, A Northern Chorus)

June 16, Ottawa, Barn Party (w/ Sarah Hallman, Tanya Davis)

June 17, Quebec, Blacksheep Inn (w/ Tanya Davis)

July 1, Lunenburg, Bandstand/Matinee

August 8, New York City, Joe's Pub

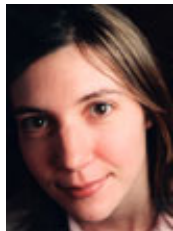
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Author's Biography

Carla Gillis is a freelance writer for Halifax's weekly, **The Coast**, and **Exclaim!** magazine. As a columnist for **aliant.net**, she profiles news-making Atlantic Canadians that run the gamut of musicians, politicians, and anyone else trying to shake things up. Send profile suggestions to carlascorner@hotmail.com

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