

NICOLE PASTERNAK is a native of Hartford, Connecticut. The sixth of seven children, she absorbed music like a sponge from an early age, reaping the benefits of parents who made sure music was always in the house and of having siblings who became musicians themselves. Singing came naturally to her, but her formal musical training began at age nine when she was awarded a scholarship to study violin. She later studied acoustic guitar and classical piano. In high school she was drawn to the jazz program where she started out on piano, then moved out front to sing when a permanent hand injury ended her days as an instrumentalist.

She traveled abroad to attend the American College in Paris, immersing herself in the language, culture and bohemian life of the city, singing in the metro and small clubs. A three-year stint in Northern California led to her first professional gigs. She returned home to the Northeast and continued her singing career. In 1986 she formed a group with then-husband, bassist George Sheck; "Nicole and Friends" soon became known as one of the region's favorites.

In 1987 "Nicole and Friends" recorded "Winter Samba," an album of original work. In 1989 she released "Nicole/The Song Is You" with Cexton Records. A 1996 recording by flutist/tenor saxophonist, composer and arranger Charles Haynes entitled "Paris/Rio Express" demonstrates her range from improviser to chanteuse and debuts her original lyrics to Django Reinhardt's "Nuages." On her CD, "Don't Go, Don't Leave, Please Stay" (Whispering Pines/1998) she teams up with famed tenor saxophonist Ralph Lalama, in collaboration with Alan Simon, piano; Joel Forbes, bass and Tom Melito, drums. It includes new arrangements on old standards, plus more originals from the singer — the title cut and the hard swinging, "Rain On, Reverie."

The mother of two, Nicole has lent her talents to a number of projects for children. In addition to in-school performances, she has been a collaborator on the *SoundWorkshop* recordings released in Korea to promote English language education for children. She has been a contributor to the "Songs of Love" organization, creating personalized songs for children who suffer life-threatening illnesses. Her inspired song, "The Baby Is Here," was chosen in 1997 as the theme for the Adoptive Parents Committee of Long Island, NY.

Festival highlights include the New Haven Jazz Festival, West Palm's Sugar Fest, Berkshire Jazz Festival, and the Berks County Jazz Fest. New York City venue highlights include Birdland, Tavern On the Green, Latin Quarter, Metronome, Tribeca Grille and Chez Suzette.

She has worked with a number of notable musicians, among them: Lew Anderson, Rob Aries, Eddie Bert, Paul Bollenbeck, Phil Bowler, Sarah Jane Cion, Bill Cofrances, Sonny Costanzo, Joel Forbes, Vernel Fournier, Don Friedman, Jeff Fuller, John Hart, Tim Horner, Lee Hudson, Dennis Irwin, Bob Kindred, Dave Lalama, Ralph Lalama, Carmen Leggio, Bob Leonard, Tony Leonardi, Pete Levin, Dennis Mackrel, Joe Magnarelli, Pete Malinverni, Chris Morrison, Mike Musillami, Adam Nussbaum, Phil Palombi, Pat O'Leary, Gil Parris, Joe Puma, Joel Rosenblatt, Harvie S., Alan Simon, Gary Smulyan, Leroy Williams and Harold Zinno.

Aside from fronting her own groups, Nicole appears regularly as the featured vocalist with pianist Alan Simon's Quartet, the Harold Zinno Jazz Quintet, the Billy Cofrances Jazz Quartet, the Joe Holmes Swing Band and the Sonny Carroll Orchestra. She has also performed at New York City's Birdland with Lew Anderson's All-American Big Band. In concert with the talented Lalama Brothers, Ralph and Dave, she has grown in popularity with jazz audiences in New York City, the Tri-State area and beyond.

Nicole currently resides in Yonkers, New York. She continues to write and record her new material while she promotes herself and her fellow musicians through concert, festival and nightclub appearances.