

THINGS TO DO

Vocalist invites all to ‘Come Fly with Me’



Vocalist Judy Whitmore's new album, "Come Fly With Me," follows her 2022 release, "Isn't It Romantic." (Courtesy of the artist)



By **THE TIMES-STANDARD**

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When Judy Whitmore was a child, she liked to sit with a globe and imagine what it would be like to visit far off countries. The idea of seeing new vistas and interacting with different cultures filled her with a sense of wonder. That yearning for adventure has stayed with Whitmore her entire life, and now the vocalist is releasing her fourth album, “Come Fly With Me,” a musical journey around the world.

“Come Fly With Me” follows her 2022 release, “Isn’t It Romantic.”

Born in New York City and raised in Studio City, California, Whitmore was named after Judy Garland, a friend of her grandfather. A Renaissance woman, she is not only a respected jazz and cabaret performer and recording artist, but she is also a bestselling novelist, a theater producer, a marriage and family therapist with a master’s degree in clinical psychology, and a licensed commercial jet pilot.

Whitmore married at the age of 20 and settled with her husband in Beverly Hills. After having two children, they thought it might be better to raise the family in a more natural environment, so she put her singing career on hold and moved the family to Aspen, Colorado.

Although she learned to ski, can peaches and saddle a horse, the move to Aspen had a far greater impact on her life because she became friends with her neighbors John and Annie Denver. Whitmore had a fear of flying, and one day John, a pilot, invited her to join him on his plane to help her overcome her fears. It obviously worked since it was not long before she got her commercial jet pilot’s license.

There probably are not too many jazz singers who can say they worked search-and-rescue missions for Pitkin County (Aspen) Air Rescue or have licenses to fly seaplanes and hot air balloons. Flying is still a big part of her life. During her time in Aspen, she was also asked to serve as president of both the Aspen Playwright’s Conference and the American Theatre Company because of her significant fundraising abilities.

Whitmore gathered a stellar group of musicians for this album. She first brought on board six-time Grammy nominee Chris Walden as producer and arranger. Walden has written more than 1,500 orchestral and big band arrangements for artists including Michael Bublé, Aretha Franklin, Paul McCartney, SEAL, Stevie Wonder, Rihanna, Barbra Streisand, Josh Groban, and orchestras like the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Boston Pops. Walden immediately enlisted Josh Nelson, one of the most respected jazz pianists on the West Coast. Also joining Whitmore are David Delhomme (B3 organ), Andrew Synowiec (guitar), George Doering (mandolin), Edwin Livingston (bass), Jamey Tate (drums), Pete Korpela (percussion) and a host of others. Whitmore is also accompanied by a large string section.

Whitmore opens the album with “It’s Nice to Go Trav’ling.” She says, “I love to wander down a street I’ve never seen before, eat food I’ve never tasted before, and have the experience of something novel. I still like to look at globes and wonder what it would be like to travel somewhere new.”

As a pilot, it is only logical that she would include a dreamy version of the title song “Come Fly with Me.” Whitmore is particularly fond of Italy and recorded “On an Evening in Roma.” She has been to Carnival in Venice three times and is currently preparing to go a fourth.

Among Whitmore’s many accomplishments is producing a West End show in London, where she lived for a year and a half. Her lush version of “A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square” brings back fond memories of her time there. Whitmore’s travels have taken her far and wide, and whether she’s visiting Oxford or Avignon, she always prefers accommodations that are more intimate and inviting. Big, corporate hotels are not for her. “There’s a Small Hotel” captures her affinity for out-of-the-way lodging.

Although Whitmore is a pilot, she has a special affection for trains. She loves to sit back and take her time, just watching the passing landscape. She first heard “I Thought About You” when she was a production assistant at the St. Louis Municipal Opera Theater and has loved it ever since.

Although Whitmore has been around the world, she has never been to Vermont. “Moonlight in Vermont” conjures for her the quaint charm she envisions she’ll enjoy when she finally gets there. She has been to Paris several times, because, like so many people, she loves the food, the architecture, and the tree-lined streets. “April in Paris” is her homage to the City of Light.

When she travels, eating good food is pretty close to the top of Whitmore’s agenda.

She says, “I think Georgia has the best food in the country. They put bourbon in everything.” She sings a duet with Southern California singer Adam Aejaye Jackson on “Georgia on My Mind,” a tribute to her husband who hails from the Peach State. Although she lived in New York City for just a few years when she was young, she feels a strong family connection to it. Like the lyrics to “Autumn in New York” —“Glittering crowds and shimmering clouds / In canyons of steel / They’re making me feel I’m home” — New York feels like home to her.

Whitmore likes to stand by the ocean shore and imagine what is over the horizon, which is why “Beyond the Sea” resonates so strongly with her. She closes the album with “Around the World,” a sweet ballad and one of her favorite songs.

“Come Fly with Me” will be released Jan. 17, and will be available at Amazon and all streaming platforms. For more information about the artist, go to Judywhitmore.com.