

Darlene Cooper

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Darlene Cooper (formerly Ketchum) started singing solos in church at the age of 3, and later found her musical passion in the soul, gospel, funk, and jazz music of the 1970's. The vocal freedom of soul, combined with the rich chords and funky laid-back groove, continue to inspire her songs today. For Darlene, music is about connection and she uses her soulful and sultry voice to take her listener on an emotional journey through the song. In addition to being an **experienced singer**, Darlene is a **songwriter, arranger, choral & musical director, keyboard accompanist** and **educator**.

She performs and collaborates with a variety of artists, singing select covers, jazz standards, gospel, soul/R&B, funk, and her original tunes. Darlene has sung with the legendary **Leon Bibb, Eric Bibb, Shari Ulrich, Dee Daniels, Jane Mortifee, Ann Mortifee** and many other Vancouver artists. She has performed at various festivals including the Vancouver Jazz Festival, Harmony Arts festival, Filberg Festival, Fort Langley Jazz and Arts Festival, Mission Folk Festival and at summer Music in the Park (**Darlene Ketchum Quartet**) throughout the Okanagan and Kootenays. **Wild Blue Herons**, a jazz/soul band that she co-leads with Bill Sample, has performed at Frankies Jazz Club, Pat's Pub, Vernon Jazz Club, The Columbia, Silk Purse to name a few. Expanding her versatility as a singer, Darlene is now part of a new soul/rootsey Americana style band called "**Heavens to Betsy**".

Darlene is the choral director, a composer/arranger and soloist for the **Marcus Mosely Chorale** (MMC), working as a team with **Marcus Mosely and Bill Sample**. As MMC chorale director, she has worked with **Jim Byrnes, Eric Bibb, Dee Daniels, Blu Mankuma, David Steele**, the **UBC Choral Union and Singers, City Soul (Brian Tate)** and **the Sojourners**. She was assistant musical

director for the 2016 **Gotta Sing Gotta Dance** production and she has done session work as a conductor and vocalist at various recording studios around Vancouver (**Boulevard, Michelle Creber, Shari Ulrich, Carolyn Arends, Brian Doerksen**, and others).

Darlene was one of 100 featured artists in the *We Make Stuff* book, published in 2012, and released her first solo CD, **Soul Connections (Extended Edition)**, in October 2014. Her Christmas song, **Joy! Joy to the World**, was nominated for the 2013 Word Guild Best Lyrics Award. Her song, **I Will Not Be Shaken**, was nominated for *Urban Song of the Year* by the 2014 Gospel Music Association of Canada (GMA) – Covenant Awards. In 2017, her song “**Hear Our Prayer**” was nominated for that year’s GMA awards. The same year, she and Bill Sample released their first album of their original songs, “**On the Outside**” with their band, **Wild Blue Herons**.

As a music educator, Darlene designed and directed the music programs and curriculum for the Institute of Music Ministry (IMM) from 2003 to 2014. She specializes in teaching contemporary/jazz music theory, song writing, charting and arranging, piano and vocal coaching. Darlene has been a vocal jazz adjudicator for the Con Brio Whistler Festivals and she teaches vocal jazz workshops and masterclasses. In addition, Marcus Mosely, Bill Sample and Darlene have created curriculum and are teaching **Gospel-style singing workshops**. Darlene has organized and moderated a number of music events, including artist seminars and training, retreats, and concerts. She was part of a team that brought in performing artists for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, organizing concerts in venues across the city.

Darlene loves to connect with, encourage, inspire and empower others whether it is through singing, teaching, mentoring or just chatting about life over a cup of dark coffee...or ice cream!