

April Varner LONG Bio

“I am music” was one of April’s first proclamations as a very young child and it holds true to this day. Since singing her first notes as a four-year-old, inspired by none other than the Disney Princess movies, her journey toward growing as a musician began. In fact, April has spent the majority of her life performing and competing in the arts.

NYC-based jazz vocalist with the curly red hair from Toledo, Ohio, April Varner is a name you won’t soon forget. She began taking voice lessons at the University of Toledo as a classical vocalist at age 8 and began studying piano from her grandmother at age 6. No stranger to the stage, April began displaying vocal, musical theatre, drama, and piano talents at the local, regional, national, and international levels at a young age. This includes being a guest vocalist at the Toledo Symphony Orchestra Pops Concert, a 2-time All-National Honors Ensemble member in Nashville, TN, and a National Finalist at the Michael Feinstein Great American Songbook Academy in Carmel, IN. By age 16, April had made her Carnegie Hall debut in Weill Hall following a first-place award by the American Protégé International Vocal Competition, and had traveled to Edinburgh, Scotland as part of a drama group to share the stage with world actors at the renowned Edinburgh Arts Fringe Festival.

April is often described as a “direct, authentic singer...”, demonstrating “vocal dynamism... authentic jazz phrasing... electrifying numbers...” and possessing a “profound command of deep scat and vocalese...” (Marilyn Lester, *The New York City Jazz Record*). Grammy-Nominated jazz and adult contemporary vocalist, Jane Monheit, describes Varner as “an incredibly talented vocalist who has clearly put the work in to understand and express this music on a high level.”

At the age of 26, April has already performed/studied with a multitude of legendary artists and jazz luminaries such as Darmon Meader, Sachal Vasandani, Jane Monheit, Tierney Sutton, Peter Eldridge, Walter Smith III, Kurt Elling, Sunny Wilkinson, Kate McGarry, Michael Feinstein, Benny Benack III, Dayna Stephens, Russell Malone, Theo Bleckmann, Ted Rosenthal, Elio Villafranca, Jean Baylor, Rogerio Boccato and Damien Sneed. Countless appearances at many of the city’s top jazz spots have followed, including The Django, 55 Bar, Dizzy’s Coca-Cola Club, Ornithology Jazz Club, Birdland Theater, Minton’s Playhouse and more.

April graduated in May of 2022 with her Master’s degree in Jazz Voice Performance from the Manhattan School of Music. She most recently was awarded the 2023 Winner of the International Ella Fitzgerald Jazz Vocal Competition. She is excitedly awaiting the release of her debut full-length album, entitled “Dear April”, on June 28th, 2024. It was produced by Grammy-Award winning drummer, producer and educator, Ulysses Owens Jr. and will be released under Cellar Live Record Label and La Reserve. The personnel of the album include Caelan Cardello (piano), Reuben Rogers (bass), Russell Malone (guitar), Miguel Russell (drums), Dayna Stephens (saxophone), Benny Benack III (vocals and trumpet) and Theo Bleckmann (vocals). April will also be making her debut at the world-renowned Birdland Jazz Club on April 21st, 2024 as well as Mezzrow Jazz Club on April 28th, 2024.