

GOING FOR ADDS: AUGUST 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

FILE UNDER: Jazz Vox

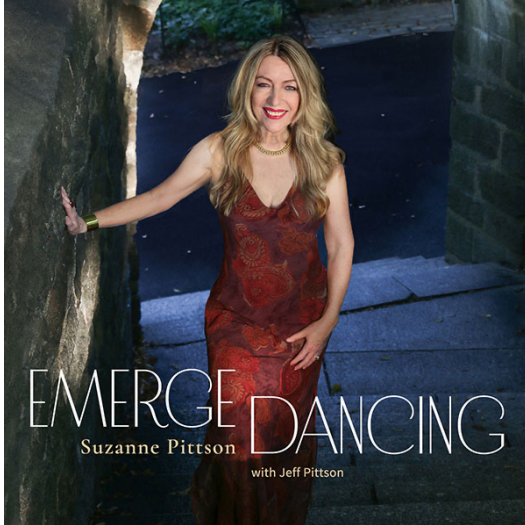
ARTIST: SUZANNE PITTSON with JEFF PITTSON

TITLE: *EMERGE DANCING*

LABEL: Vineland Records – VLCD 7761

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When you listen to the lovely Ms. Suzanne Pittson, you are being made privy to the artistry of someone who is setting the pace and creating new standards for those who follow and dare to call themselves 'jazz singers.' — Buster Williams

### Track Listing

1. Blackbird (John Lennon/Paul McCartney)
2. Everything I Love (Cole Porter)
3. The Secret Life of Plants (Stevie Wonder)
4. It All Goes Round and Round (Bernard Ighner)
5. \*Blues and the Abstract Truth (Oliver Nelson/Jeff Pittson)
6. You've Got a Friend (Carole King)
7. \*I Get Sentimental Over Nothing (Minette Alton/Nat "King" Cole)
8. Never Never Land (Jule Styne/Adolph Green/Betty Comden)
9. Without a Song (Vincent Youmans/Billy Rose)
10. \*Love's the Thing\* (Slide Hampton/Mike Holober)
11. \*Something More (Buster Williams)
12. \*What Can I Do? (Wayne Green/Brian Potter)

\**Love's the Thing* instrumentally known as *Fame for the Blues*, music by Slide Hampton, lyrics and arrangement by Mike Holober.

### Personnel

**Suzanne Pittson:** voice, piano soli (8)

**Jeff Pittson:** piano, chromatic harmonica (4)

**Evan Pittson:** viola (5,11,12)

Arrangements by Suzanne and Jeff Pittson

String arrangements by Evan Pittson

### Credits

Produced by **Evan Pittson**

Executive Producers: **Suzanne Pittson & Jeff Pittson**

Recorded by **David Stoller**, January and October 2022 at Samurai Hotel in Queens, NY

Mixed by **David Stoller**

Mastered by **Mike Marciano** at Systems Two, PA

Photography by **Janis Wilkins**

Hair and Makeup by **Shelley Van Gage**

Graphics by **Evan Pittson**

### EMERGE DANCING — Liner Notes

*EMERGE DANCING* is a very special recording for me, presenting some of my favorite music and capturing the ever-evolving musical dialogue between Jeff and myself, developed over many years. Our son Evan Pittson, as violist and producer, was indispensable in this project, with his organizational skills, musicality, and vision for the big picture.

Ten years ago, I began having serious vocal problems which made it difficult to sing and teach. Though I continued to perform, teach, and take voice lessons, I was at a crossroads — should I continue or give up? Thanks to my Buddhist practice, my wonderful voice coach, Sophie Lair-Berreby, and my family and friends, I decided to continue and embarked on a journey to find my true voice, using my art to bring joy to others. Over two and a half years of the pandemic, I spent each day practicing and improvising over hundreds of tunes. As time went on, I discovered new ways to express myself, eventually replacing fear and doubt with heartfelt freedom, authenticity, and the confidence to be truly in the moment — something I continue to strive for. I believe this comes across on our recording and makes playing music so exciting!

With this awakening, it seemed fitting to title the album *EMERGE DANCING*. This phrase is found in a writing by 13th-century Buddhist priest, Nichiren Daishonin: "You should all perform a dance... When Bodhisattva Superior Practices emerged from the earth, did he not emerge dancing?"<sup>1</sup> My mentor, Daisaku Ikeda notes that the dancing of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth symbolizes "the tremendous joy of learning the supreme truth of the universe,"<sup>2</sup> then taking on the mission to share that joy with others.

My heartfelt love and appreciation to Jeff and Evan for inspiration, creativity, and insight on a daily basis. I look forward to our family's ongoing collaboration.

Special thanks to David Stoller at Samurai Hotel for his skillful engineering and for keeping everything relaxed and joyful, and to Mike Marciano at Systems Two for his exceptional mastering. My sincere appreciation to Buster Williams, Mike Holober, Danny Nagashima, Sophie Lair-Berreby, Janis Wilkins, Shelley Van Gage, Brian Potter, Karen Potter, Lisa Green, Susan Damante, Don Sickler, Grady Bajorek, Melissa Bentley, Oliver Nelson Jr., and the late songwriters Minette Alton and Wayne Green.

*Suzanne Pittson*

<sup>1</sup> The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, Vol. 1, 1119

<sup>2</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, The New Human Revolution, Vol. 7, 36

<https://suzannepittson.com/>

## Biography

### SUZANNE PITTSO

**Suzanne Pittson** is an accomplished jazz vocalist, pianist, lyricist and educator living in New York. She grew up in a musical family and began piano studies at age 8. She subsequently earned a Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts in Music (as a classical pianist) from San Francisco State University, before turning her attention to jazz voice. Suzanne has been recognized for her musicianship and improvisational skills, called "more than just a singer, but a jazz musician. With a fluid phrasing and stunning tone, she uses her voice as another instrument, improvising and playing with the melodies." (*All About Jazz*). *Jazz Inside New York* says: "Some controversy exists over just what makes a jazz vocalist. Listen to Suzanne Pittson and you'll know."



*Suzanne Pittson is a risk-taking jazz singer and lyricist who often thinks like a horn player. a sensitive interpreter of lyrics or an intellectual, cerebral scat singer.*

Suzanne considers herself an improvising musician based primarily on jazz; however her phrasing and style have developed from very diverse musical influences including classical, pop, R&B and rock.

She grew up in a family of artists and musicians, hearing jazz in her home while also focusing on classical piano studies and immersing herself in the popular music of the time. Choosing to pursue training as a classical pianist, she completed a BM and MA at San Francisco State University, where she played repertoire for solo piano, two pianos and chamber ensemble, and wrote a master's thesis entitled "Developmental Techniques in the Late Piano Pieces of Johannes Brahms." This training created a structure for her overall artistic development; however, **when a hand injury forced her to seek other means of musical expression**, she embarked on a career as a jazz vocalist. With years of piano study under her belt, **she moved toward intensive study of the jazz instrumental language, transcribing and assimilating solos by great jazz instrumentalists and working to hone her style.** In a personal conversation with the great jazz educator, David Baker, he said: "You've set a huge mountain for yourself, so you're going to have to keep going."

While continuing to perform and develop her craft as a jazz artist, Suzanne also did regular pop music performances as a solo singer/pianist as well as with a band. She also studied classical voice for ten years, presenting recitals of such diverse repertoire as Schubert and Schumann lieder, Handel and Mozart arias and "Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson" by Aaron Copland.

These diverse elements have over the years merged into a unified and authentic musical concept, enabling Suzanne to freely move from simple melodies to complex phrasing, to burning scat solos, to such difficult jazz compositions as "Blues and the Abstract Truth" and "A Love Supreme."

Suzanne has released three critically acclaimed CDs: *Blues and the Abstract Truth*, *Resolution: A Remembrance of John Coltrane* and *Out of the Hub: The Music of Freddie Hubbard* where she also contributed original lyrics and wrote and sang original lyrics to Coltrane and Hubbard solos. She has performed in the United States, Japan, and Europe at such major venues as Yoshi's, Birdland, Catalina's, Town Hall, Symphony Space, Aaron Davis Hall, Cornelia Street Cafe, Enzo's Jazz, and has performed and/or recorded with John Patitucci, Buster Williams, Dave Liebman, Steve Wilson, Mike Clark, Jeremy Pelt, Shunzo Ohno, Mark Soskin, Jack Walrath, Chip Jackson, Harvie S, & more.

Suzanne's most recent recording is a duo with her husband, pianist Jeff Pittson and features their son, violist Evan Pittson. The recording, which will be released in 2024, is a mixture of standards, jazz and pop tunes and showcases the duo's longtime partnership and musical dialogue.

In 2005, Suzanne was hired as Assistant Professor of Jazz Studies at the City College of New York, where together with her colleagues, she has helped to build a world-class jazz program that focuses on musicianship, performance, composition and arranging, while fostering a feeling of friendship, cooperation, and inclusion. Through the unified efforts of the faculty, CCNY Jazz has become a respected part of the Harlem community forming partnerships with the National Jazz Museum of Harlem, Friends of St. Nicholas Park and Jazzmobile and produces a high percentage of graduates who go on to have professional careers in music. She is currently the Associate Director of the CCNY Jazz Studies Program.

Suzanne co-leads a band called *Future Tense* where she sings and plays keyboard along with Jeff Pittson on piano/keyboards and Evan Pittson on viola. They are joined by Bryan Copeland on bass and Dave Meade on drums. *Future Tense* plays predominantly original material.

Suzanne studied piano with John Heirsoux and William Corbett-Jones, voice with Jane Sharp, Karen Connor, Vivian Mordeau, Jeanie Lovetri, Kate Baker and Sophie Lair-Berreby, and has completed Levels 1-3 of Somatic Voicework™ The Lovetri Method.

Her first album as a leader, [Blues and the Abstract Truth](#), released in 1992; and followed it up with the excellent [Resolution: A Remembrance of John Coltrane](#) in 1999.

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