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## Featured Artist: Johanna Sillanpaa

CD Title: One Wish

Year: 2007

Record Label: Chronograph Records

Style: Jazz Vocals

**Musicians:** Johanna Sillanpaa (lead vocals), Tatiana Lund (background vocals), Chris Andrew (piano, Keyboards), Aaron Young (guitar), Kodi Hutchinson (bass), Tyler Hornby (drums)



### Review:

Early in December, Johanna Sillanpaa, who is quickly establishing herself as a top R&B singer in Canada released her first Christmas album, *One Wish*. The advance publicity for the CD billed it as being unique among holiday recordings, particularly because of its diversity, and this writer would concur. While there are a lot of very good, and timeless Christmas recordings, *One Wish* has the potential to reach a much wider audience than most, because it covers traditional carols such as, "O Come All Ye Faithful," original compositions like the funky, "Cinnamon & Sugarcones," and nods to her Swedish heritage with songs such as "Bright Shining Star," which Sillanpaa translated into English, from the original "Jul, Jul Stralande Jul."

Sillanpaa, who has been singing professionally since her early teens, is proficient at covering songs, or performing her original compositions, however, as one would expect her strongest connection is with the tunes that she has penned. By far the best three songs on this album were written or co-written by the singer. Her superb R&B vocals shine on "Grateful," a song that she co-wrote with co-producer Chris Andrew. Tatiana Lund's background vocals for "Grateful," are incredibly beautiful, and compliment Sillanpaa nicely.

For the fanciful, original composition "Cinnamon & Sugarcones," co-written with her old friend Aaron Young, Sillanpaa is joined, as she is throughout the CD, by longtime friends, including the virtuoso acoustic guitarist Aaron Young, and bassist Kodi Hutchinson whose work on this record, is only surpassed by seeing him perform live. Also on hand are drummer Tyler

### SPOTLIGHT



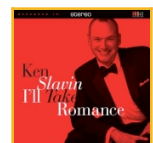
**BERNIE KENERSON**  
Just You & Me  
(The Art of The  
EWI)  
(Bernup  
Records)



**MELANI SKYBELL**  
Just A Chase  
Away  
(Independent)



**SARAH MONTES**  
Long As The  
Day Is  
(Lazsar Music)



**KEN SLAVIN**

Hornby and elegant pianist / keyboardist Chris Andrew.

It is however the title track, the soulful "One Wish," that will blow your mind, pull at your heartstrings, and have you firing up your computer to see how you can purchase this CD. About eighteen months ago, when I first heard one of Sillanpaa's songs on the Calgary radio station California 103, I recall being struck by how emotive her vocals were. The larger American markets may not yet be familiar with the name Johanna Sillanpaa, but it is only a matter of time, because she can more than hold her own with any of the great R&B / soul singers, whose music is now in high rotation. Aaron Young's guitar bridge is as beautiful as the singer's voice, and as elegant as Andrew's keys. "One Wish," is a song that will be with us for many years, and our children will probably be listening to it for many Christmases to come.

The last four tracks of this thirteen song CD are sung in Swedish, but just before she gets there, Sillanpaa delivers a beautiful interpretation of Joni Mitchell's "River." For those unfamiliar with the Mitchell tune, this is a peaceful, contemplative song.

Since I do not speak Swedish, the insights that I can provide to the remaining four tracks are restricted to the instrumental portions of the songs. The gentle, "När Det Lider Mot Jul," has a pretty piano solo. "Ett Barn Är Fött På Denna Dag," is the second song featured on One Wish that has music originally penned by Martin Luther, the other being "A Child Is Born Upon This Day." Lyrics for "Ett Barn Är Fött På Denna Dag," were written by Olaus Martini and Johan Olaf Wallin. If like me you do not understand the Swedish language, don't worry there are enough great instrumentals provided by Andrew, Young, Hornby and Hutchinson to keep you listening. The remaining songs are, "Jul, Jul Strålande Jul," recorded in English on an earlier track, and "Dagen Ar Kommen."

**Record Label Website:** <http://www.chronographrecords.com>

**Artist's Website:** <http://www.johannamusic.com>

**Reviewed by:** Joe Montague

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