

Anita Suhanin

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ONCE A SINGER, ALWAYS A SINGER CATCHING UP WITH ANITA SUHANIN

by Kier Byrnes

For the past two decades, Anita Suhanin has been one of the most prolific singers in the Greater Boston area. As the silvery-voiced front woman of Groovasaurus, she has won critical acclaim, even nabbing herself a Best of Boston award. As the strong soulful voice behind the band Shwang, Anita held court to one of Boston's longest running residencies, winning respect of fans and fellow musicians alike. In her latest pursuit, she has taken on a different role: trading her time in the limelight to help others get their own share. Helping singers as a vocal coach has kept Anita close to the Boston music scene and has helped her pave the way for a new generation of up and coming performers.

Noise: One of your past bands include Shwang, a band that fused jazz, country and Americana. With them, you had one of the longest running residencies in Boston playing every Monday night with Tim Gearan for over a decade. How was that?

Anita Suhanin: It was fun getting to play with amazing musicians every week, and sing a million great songs. We played the early show at Toad for 11 years, sharing the night with Tim and his kick ass band.

Noise: What stopped it? That is a hell of a streak!

Anita: I was honored to have the gig, but eventually I decided to focus all my energy on teaching, which suits my personality better.

Noise: Who are some of your favorite musicians you have played with over the years?

Anita: Boston is such a magnet for amazing players, and there's not enough room in this article to list my favorites!

Noise: Another band you performed with was Groovasaurus, a heavy, melodic, blues funk band that won Best Local Band in *Boston Magazine* in its day. What were your favorite things about that band?

Anita: I loved those guys—great players and funny as hell. It was my first band, and it was like making music with the brothers I didn't have growing up.

Noise: You have an impressive catalog of songs as well. What are your favorite songs that you recorded?

Anita: There are a few that come to mind. On a snowy Sunday morning, Peter Mulvey and I sang "For No One" in the Davis T station for his *Ten Thousand Mornings* album. Steve Sadler and I recorded a lush cover of The Magnetic Fields' "The Book of Love" for photographer Michelle DeBakey's website. Mike Dinallo, Joe Barbato, Chris Anzalone, and I had a lot of fun recording my song "Rest Easy" at the Somerville Armory recording studio. Now I'm in the process of recording a new album with David "Goody" Goodrich, which includes a beautiful song written by Goody, Peter Mulvey, and Barry Rothman called "Where Did You Go?" Peter and I sing duet.

Noise: Managing such an epic career can be difficult. What were some of the most difficult challenges you have had to face?

Anita: The hardest things have been self-promotion and trying to balance my love for music with my shyness. I'm fortunate to be surrounded by friendly faces and good musicians, but being the center of attention isn't easy for me.

Noise: What is some advice you have for musicians trying to make it these days?

Anita: Take care of yourself, explore all the amazing music that came before you, remember the nice people you meet.

Noise: Your new career path has kept you close to the music industry. You now own and run Sing and Be Happy Voice Lessons. How did you move from being a singer to a vocal coach?

Anita: My first real teaching gig was at the Fabulous School of Music in Beverly. When guitarist David Fabris and I met at a gig, he offered me the job and the name Fabulous felt like a sign from the universe. After my first full day of teaching, I knew I had found my calling. Singing is so personal and cathartic, and I love being present when someone discovers their voice.

Noise: You also are a voice instructor at Page Music Lessons and The New School of Music. As a voice instructor, what are some tips you can share with singers?

Anita: Take care of your instrument; you carry it with you all the time. Stay hydrated with lots of water, do your warm ups, use a healthy speaking voice; sing with your whole body and from your heart. I always say, "You can get new guitar strings, but you can't get a new voice, so treat it right."

Noise: Any plans for returning to the stage in the future? What does the future hold for Miss Anita?

Anita: On Tuesday, Dec 17, I'm sharing a bill with Juliet Simmons and her awesome band at Passim in Harvard Square. Soon, I will head to Austin to continue work on my album with David Goodrich, and next year I plan to join Chris Smither and his band for some tour dates. But my love is teaching, so that's my life now, and it's alright with me.

For more on Anita Suhanin, including upcoming recording news, tour dates and most of all singing lessons, please visit anitasuhanin.com or singandbehappy.com.

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