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KAMLOOPS
THIS WEEK

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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It's all about that jazz

By Dale Bass
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Singing jazz “was never in the plan” Anita Eccleston created for herself.

But, thanks to her dad buying her a Wynton Marsalis CD, and then spending plenty of hours cranking up a K-Tel record of Gilbert O’Sullivan (remember *Alone Again Naturally?*), Eccleston started to realize that, even if she wasn’t sure what she was going to do with it, she was going to a musician.

So she did what those artistic souls do when they are following their muse. She learned to play the trumpet, a choice made first because her older brother played it — “that was pretty cool” — and could teach her.

She also inherently knew studying how to master the instrument would be the best way to learn her craft.

And learn Eccleston did, studying with Bruce Dunn, now the conductor of the Kamloops Symphony that counts Eccleston as one of its players.

Under his tutelage, she found herself performing as third and second trumpet with the KSO while still in high school.

She also studied with the late Kamloops composer Oliver Rinaldi — who was one of the first to tell her to start singing, too.

She went to jazz camps and to the Kamloops Interior Summer School of Music.

She was influenced by others in the city, including Steve and Syd Griffiths — all encouraging her down the path she had chosen.

By the time she was 14, Eccleston said, she realized she had talent and that she’d found her passion.

Eccleston continued performing, then headed east to McGill University in Montreal, where she studied performing and continued her love of jazz.

Coming back to Kamloops, Eccleston started picking up gigs at the former Paradiso — now the Commodore Grand Cafe and Lounge — took a break from there for several months and then returned to do some shows after it reopened as the Commodore.

“And it was so much fun I called up Kris [Ruston] and said ‘Let’s do some jazz.’”

The result is the Anita Eccleston Quartet, with its namesake on trumpet and vocals, Ruston on guitar, Neil Brun playing bass and Ian McCuaig handling the drums.

They’re performing at the Commodore, 369 Victoria St., on Feb 19, taking the stage at 7 p.m.

Eccleston said she loves her work with the KSO, but finds performing jazz is “more free. There’s more of a spirit of improvisation.”

The show goes to about 10 p.m. and, while it contains many of the classics jazz enthusiasts know, the last set “gets all dancey so people can get up and move.”

There will also be some original material Eccleston has written.

To hear the band perform, go online to myspace.com/anitaecclestonjazz.

