

FRANCESCA BLANCHARD

BIOGRAPHY

Francesca Blanchard is a young French-American singer-songwriter whose lyrics and melodies reflect her bilingual and multicultural upbringing. Born in the south of France where her family resided until she was ten, Francesca recalls her Mediterranean childhood as one of bare feet on terra cotta tiles, fuchsia sunsets, and mistral breezes. *La vie douce* (the sweet life) aptly describes the rhythm and rhyme of those early years, where hours spent daydreaming and gazing off at the white-capped waves further nourished a love of wild, open spaces and the solitary peace of simple living in the heart of a family that was anything but conventional.

With parents who've worked for international humanitarian agencies worldwide, Francesca lived and went to school in Ethiopia and Burundi. Family journeys have taken her to over 30 off-the-beaten-path countries such as South Korea, Mauritania, Rwanda, Kenya, Egypt, Thailand, Australia, Honduras, Tanzania, Guatemala and India. She's learned to travel light and invite surprises, but also to rely upon an open mind and a listening heart as she's encountered such a varied sampling of humankind. Growing up in a household consisting of a French father, an American mother, and adopted siblings from Ethiopia and Guatemala, Francesca's own family reflects a spirit where the sense of "belonging" comes not from a particular place or heritage but from the bonds of being passengers on the same metaphorical ship. This, she says, is why she sings: to nourish these bonds.

Francesca was, by circumstance, born into a world of music; perhaps it was the **Chopin** played to her through headphones on her mother's pregnant belly, or **Vivaldi's** "Concerto for Guitar and Mandolin" playing in the delivery room where she was born, or maybe even that every time she'd walk outside as a child, she was serenaded by cricket choirs and the cooing of provincial lovebirds. Records were constantly played in the Blanchard household; Francesca was raised to a wide array of voices. Her musical backdrop consisted of **Tracy Chapman, Eva Cassidy, Diana Krall, Norah Jones, Carla Bruni, Françoise Hardy, Edith Piaf, Francis Cabrel, Alain Souchon, Aaron Neville, Stevie Wonder, I Muvrini, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, Simon & Garfunkel, Virginia Rodriguez, Andrea Bocelli, Khaled...** an eclectic assortment of styles, sounds and languages, all extremely vocally expressive and rich in musicality.

Francesca took piano lessons and sang in choirs growing up, but it wasn't until she moved to the States in 2002 that she started taking guitar lessons. She writes in both French and English, choosing whichever language best fits the mood and poetry of the song. Aided by Vermont singer-songwriter and producer **Gregory Douglass**, Francesca recorded her first 6-track EP, ***Songs on an Ovation***, in 2011 and began selling the collection of original compositions and well-chosen covers in French and English to friends, family and neighbors. Soon, the EP began earning Francesca local acclaim, leading Burlington, Vermont weekly *Seven Days* to rave "*Barely out of high school, the local singer-songwriter already displays guile and artistic sensitivity that would be the envy of many tunesmiths twice her age — and, for that matter, music critics of a similarly mature vintage. Her debut EP is quietly and profoundly stunning. It is a humble ode to love, heartbreak and home that says more about all three topics in the span of 17 minutes than some songwriters do over entire careers.*"

A graduate from Boston University with a BFA in Theatre Arts, Francesca has been gaining musical experience over the last few years, opening for **Joan Armatrading, Suzanne Vega, The Parkington Sisters, Caravan Palace, the Von Trapps, Yuna, Lissie** and others. She performed at the prestigious **FrancoFolies** Festival of Montreal in 2013 and 2015. Francesca's rendition of the classic French ballad "Sous Le Ciel de Paris" was featured on the **Putumayo** collection *Vintage France*, along with a gentle cover of the children's song "Petit Papa Noel" on Putumayo's *French Christmas* collection.

In the summer of 2014, Francesca began work on her debut full-length album, ***deux visions***. After a successful Indiegogo campaign that raised nearly \$30,000, Montreal producer **Chris Velan (Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars)** assembled a lineup of top local musicians at **Lane Gibson** studios in Charlotte, Vermont to record 12 original songs – six in French, six in English. Acclaimed producer **Jean Massicotte (Lhasa, Patrick Watson, Arthur H, Jorane)** mixed the album in Montreal at Masterkut Studios, and the album was mastered at world-renowned Metropolis Studios in London. The all-star contributions to the album continued with the graphic design, which was overseen by the trend-setting Burlington, VT design studio Solidarity of Unbridled Labour. The result is a true labor of love, supported by a community of friends, fans and family who are united in the belief that Francesca's talent deserves to be discovered by the world.

Deux visions has already been met with tremendous acclaim. The Vermont daily **The Times Argus** raved "*Deux visions* shines on the strength of Blanchard's accomplished compositions, tasteful guitar work and gorgeous vocals. A seamless mix of folk, jazz and roots-rock with some French *chanson* thrown in for good measure. The most ambitious and impressive debut album to come out of Vermont since Grace Potter."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FRANCESCA BLANCHARD VISIT WWW.FRANCESCABLANCHARD.COM OR CONTACT:

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