

Rebecca Angel Bio

If one were to hear **Rebecca Angel**'s *Love Life Choices* without knowing the singer's backstory, it's doubtful that the listener would ever guess it's a debut album. Here, within these 10 songs, are maturity and poise, well-honed craftsmanship and a steely confidence, smart musical choices and an innate sense of self. Rebecca Angel's individuality shines through on each diverse track, whether it's one in which she had a compositional hand or a well-chosen interpretation. Sophisticated performances like these are more commonly the mark of an artist who's been at it much longer than Rebecca.

Although she has previously released an EP and a handful of single tracks, *Love Life Choices* elevates Rebecca Angel's artistry to a whole other level. "This album by far is my heart and soul, and I believe it's a step above anything I have done in the past," she says, confirming what the music makes readily clear.

Love Life Choices doesn't emerge out of a void though. Although she is still in her mid-twenties, Rebecca Angel has been building up to this moment since her childhood, when she first came to the realization that singing was her destiny. Growing up in Scarsdale, New York, with her two loving older sisters, Stephanie and Michele, Rebecca had been told by her parents that she began singing while still in her crib. That's not surprising at all, considering that Rebecca comes from such a musical family: her uncle, drummer Steven Angel, still in his teens at the time, played with Jimi Hendrix, and Rebecca was encouraged by her artist mom, Linda, to be creative and to think out of the box.

Rebecca's dad, trumpeter/flugelhornist/composer and lawyer Dennis Angel, also emphasized to Rebecca the importance of pursuing what you love and, from the start, fed her a steady diet of music, ranging from the Beatles, the Beach Boys and Elvis to Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday. She took it all in, but listening wasn't enough. "I remember at a young age going to a Broadway show, and the whole time I felt jealous because I wanted to be the one on stage and not in the audience," Rebecca says.

With rigorous training and an unfettered desire to absorb and learn everything she can about the art of singing, Rebecca has already developed into a formidable talent. "I started in the musical theater realm but eventually found more liberty in the jazz field," she says. "Jazz always felt most natural to me."

One music business veteran who's known for years that Rebecca Angel has what it takes is Jason Miles, who produced, arranged and plays keyboards on *Love Life Choices*. For nearly a half-century, Miles has worked with a lengthy A-list of major artists, including Miles Davis, Luther Vandross and Grover Washington Jr., while also helming nearly two dozen solo and tribute projects involving numerous music-world greats. Jason first heard Rebecca sing when she was 15.

"She was pretty intuitive but needed to understand the skill it takes to be a great vocalist and artist," Miles says. He began working with her, helping her to find herself musically even as she went through college, worked with vocal coaches and customized her approach. Miles produced Rebecca's debut EP, *What We Had*, which served as an impressive introduction, but he knew that he needed to bring his own best game to the floor when it came time to work on a full-length album.

The first thing they needed, of course, was songs that would demonstrate Rebecca's range and depth. Rebecca already had several she wanted to record. Jason had a few others in mind. The track list was then fleshed out with new original compositions.

Love Life Choices features a roll call of some of today's most versatile, intuitive players, who as an ensemble bring out Rebecca's greatest strengths. Steeped in jazz, her skills as an improviser are especially potent.

"Life is about improvisation," she says. "You have to take what is thrown at you and roll with the punches. Improvisation is a fine balance between spontaneity and preparedness. You need both; if you haven't learned the music front to back you will have a harder time improvising, but once you know the music so well that you could play or sing it in your sleep, you can learn to take some steps away. You can always come back to the base melody, because it is ingrained in you at that point. I love that jazz has that freedom to it."

Love Life Choices begins with Rebecca's unique contemporary take on "For What It's Worth," the 1966 protest anthem written by Stephen Stills and made famous by Buffalo Springfield. Released as a single at the end of 2020, "For What It's Worth" has already garnered the IMN (Independent Music Network) award for 2020 for New Artist Breakout Single and charted at number 1 on AC40 Indie Chart/NMW, AC40 Chart/NRH, Mainstream Top30 Chart/IMN, Most Increased AC40/NRH, and 94.7 (CIWV) The Wave.

Rebecca's recording of the song brings to it a new relevance during this time of so much divisiveness. The song is "empowering," says Rebecca, who as an activist has taken part in street protests in New York City, where she lives. "Music is an outlet for me to pour my frustration in, seeing the way it was all unfolding. It felt like some people were waking up from a long, ignorant slumber."

"For What It's Worth" is followed by "Gymnopédie No.1," written in the late 19th century by Erik Satie and arranged by Jason and Rebecca; she also added lyrics to the piece. "None of the other classical pieces I heard in my music history class struck a chord with me the way that song did," she says. "The lyrics were inspired by a dream I had. I've turned it into a symbolic song on self-discovery and love—'I didn't know what was missing in life till now.' My then-future husband Jonah was the missing piece, and I didn't realize what I was missing until we started dating."

"Side by Side," cowritten by Rebecca and Jason with beatboxer Butterscotch, is followed by a quintet of covers, each given a makeover by Rebecca and her collaborators. "Just the Two of Us," the 1981 smash duet between saxophonist Grover Washington Jr. and vocalist Bill Withers, has special meaning to Rebecca, as it was the first song that she and Jonah, her collaborator and a steadfast supporter since they met, played together in college.

Next is Bob Marley's reggae classic "Waiting in Vain," followed by a pair of songs from the genius Brazilian composer Antonio Carlos Jobim, "Corcovado" and "Waters of March." Brazilian music, says Rebecca, "is so cool, laidback and smooth," adding that "Corcovado" and "Waters of March" are, to her, symbolic of the pandemic. "Covid hit in March [2020] and kept hitting us in waves," she says. "Similarly, the song was written about Rio's rainiest month, March, which causes storms, heavy rains and strong winds that cause flooding. This pandemic came so abruptly and kept coming in waves, injuring people, taking lives with it. 'Corcovado' was also symbolic of the pandemic as so many of us were alone together with our significant others at a time of quiet during social isolation. As the song says, 'Quiet nights of quiet stars, quiet chords from my guitar, floating on the silence that surrounds us.'"

The last cover on the album, “Maureen,” also bears a connection to the pandemic. The song is from singer Sade’s 1985 album *Promise*, written as a tribute to a late friend of hers, “in memory of all the lives tragically lost in the past year due to Covid.”

Finally, *Love Life Choices* takes its leave with back-to-back Rebecca Angel originals, “Thoughts and Prayers” and “Summer Song.” The former, which serves in a way as a companion piece to the album-opening “For What It’s Worth,” finds Rebecca’s sultry vocal delivery creating a pronounced juxtaposition to the song’s biting sentiment. “I am extremely saddened to see so many mass shootings, with no end in sight,” she says, “and it seems that our government values gun rights over human lives.”

“Summer Song,” Rebecca says, “was basically an open letter to my younger self. It is a song about growing up, coming into my own and not taking life so seriously because it is fleeting—essentially, shake off the small stuff.”

Throughout the album, even as she glides easily from style to style, Rebecca puts her own stamp on each track. “I never try to be someone I’m not,” she says. “My voice is my voice alone, and nobody else has my exact life experience or perspective, so I am the most me there is.”

In addition to her budding musical career, Rebecca has trained in yoga and aromatherapy, and is presently studying law. She has discovered surprising similarities between law and the art of vocalizing. In her studies, “My improvisational skills taught me how to be good on my feet, and I knew the material forwards and backwards,” she says. “So once the questions started coming, I was able to have a dialogue and not be frazzled by challenging or thought-provoking questions. It’s terrifying to most people but I haven’t found it very intimidating, and almost fun! I like creative thinking.”

That becomes all the more obvious even during an initial listen to *Love Life Choices*. Now, says Rebecca—who has already performed at some of the most prestigious venues in the New York City area—she can’t wait to bring her new music to the stage. “I don’t think music means much if you can’t connect to yourself or your audience,” she says. “The most important thing is believing in what you sing or play, because if you don’t believe it nobody else will. Whether I’m performing live or recording, I’ve always been driven by my desire to evoke a meaningful emotional response. Music has always been part of how I think and do things in my life, and moving forward, I simply want to touch these audiences with the stories I tell.”