

## PENNY LANG FALL 2007 TOUR

Canada's grand dame of folk-blues, **Penny Lang**, is following up the biggest summer festival tour of her career with a fall and winter tour of Canada's folk circuit, her fourth since the release of her highly praised come-back CD, *Stone+Sand+Sea+Sky*.

Lang returns to the road with one more honour to add to the stack of awards and critical praise she's received since the album's launch in May of last year: during August's Ottawa Folk Festival, Lang was presented with the Helen Verger Award for her significant and sustained contribution to Canadian folk music.

Appropriately, the current tour includes a stop at Ottawa's famed Rasputin's coffee house, the venue founded by Verger in 1981. Other highlights include Lang's first major tour of the Maritimes in years, following a couple of preview gigs earlier this year, and a concert in her home town of Montreal featuring a host of special guests. The tour sees her pairing up with some of her favourite roots-based players from across the country, including Rick Fines, (Quebec, Maritimes and select Ont. dates), Ken Whiteley (Montreal) and Dave Clarke (select Ont. dates), and son Jason Lang (Toronto).

The Helen Verger Award is the latest in a series of honours bestowed on Lang since she resumed her music career in the late 80s. The others include Canadian Folk Music Awards for Best Album Contemporary and Best Solo Artist, a Juno nomination for Best Roots and Traditional Album and a Lifetime Achievement Award from FOLQUEBEC.

What's more, Lang's appearance at the Ottawa Folk Festival came near the close of a tour that saw her play the biggest string of prestigious festivals she's ever played, including the Winnipeg and Edmonton Folk Fests. And her daytime concert at Edmonton was recorded for CBC Radio's *The World In Performance* and *Saturday Night Blues* programs. *Stone+Sand+Sea+Sky* has been described by critics from *Maple Blues* to *Exclaim* as the finest album of her career.

Lang began her career on the Montreal coffee house circuit in the 1960s at the age of 21. Before long, she'd established a reputation as "the queen of Montreal folk" and was touring all over Eastern North America, narrowly missing at least one shot at major stardom. By the mid 70s, however, the pressures of the music business had taken their toll and Lang chose to retire to rural Quebec to recover her health and raise her son, Jason (now a successful Quebec sideman and an emerging solo artist).

Lang spent the 1990s re-establishing her career, releasing seven albums and touring three continents in the process. She was the subject of a television documentary on CTV Quebec and of a tribute concert at Montreal's La Sala Rossa. Then, in 2000, she was sidelined once again, this time by a stroke.

She began her second come-back in 2004, entering the studio with the Grammy nominated production team of Roma Baran and Vivian Stoll. With Stoll, Baran, who played guitar in Lang's band in the 60s before earning Grammy and Oscar nominations as a record and film producer, created an innovative and intimate new sound for Lang, marked by gentler vocals and innovative acoustic arrangements. *Ottawa Xpress* called it "a spare and sublime collection of late-night, back-porch roots lullabies".

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