

ACCORDION



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THE EVOLUTION OF
Marie-Josée Houle
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s an entertainer, she can light up a room with her smile the moment she takes the stage. As a songwriter, she's got a gift for penning emotionally-charged, incandescent

playing it, and it's landed in the hands of a flame-haired bohemian siren.

Marie-Josée describes her musical endeavours in recent years as "French café, folksy gypsy jazz." It's a rich and sensual style of music, the kind that definitely brings to mind hot summer evenings outside a Parisian café and nights fully intoxicated with l'amour. From the playfully seductive to the heartwrenchingly melancholy, her verses will grab you relentlessly by the soul.

She is gifted with powerful pipes, but on-stage she is so much more than her voice. Swaying to the sound, she can somehow sum up the delight and anguish of an entire romance with a tilt of her head and a pointedly arched eyebrow. Her live act has travelled the world, from the Vienna Accordion Festival to Ottawa's Bluesfest.

tracks in both English and French. As a fiercely creative woman, she's spent her life resisting convention and blazing her own path. And lately, she's on fire. Meet Marie-Josée Houle.

This former punk-rocker blossomed from a grunge-era rebel into a poster girl for vintage chic, a lady who could carry a

glass of fine wine as easily as she could sling an electric bass. These days, her instrument of choice is a more unusual one: the piano accordion, which has accompanied her sultry vocal stylings on two splendid albums and has enchanted audiences from coast to coast and across the ocean.

Marie-Josée's self-proclaimed mission is to make the accordion sexy again. But can the accordion's reputation really be reclaimed from the ranks of your Grandpa's music? Can this old-world instrument become a sex symbol for a modern generation? Luckily for this particular accordion, an instrument is as sexy as the person

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This autumn, Marie-Josée will be taking a walk on the darker side, exploring new themes as she records her third album. Tentatively titled *Nocturne*, the bilingual disc is due out in spring of 2010. She's currently writing and arranging more than a dozen new original songs for the record, but hopefully she'll make room on the track list for just one cover: her steamy rendition of Tom Waits' "Tango Til They're Sore" is one of the highlights of her live show.

When you throw a bit of world-savvy wisdom in with the fiery, unquenchable spirit of a modern punk-rock goddess, you'd better stand back – because the result is combustible.

