



DISCOVERY:
Bill Watrous
compares
Ingrid James'
vocal quality to
Karen
Carpenter.

Radio spot spawns a star

Noel Mengel

A SONG can be like a shot of love sent out into the world. You never know who will be listening.

When American band leader Jim Lewis was on the Gold Coast last year, he heard Brisbane singer Ingrid James being played on jazz station 94.1FM.

That led to an opportunity of a lifetime for James, who recorded *Lost My Heart*, an album with Lewis and his San Gabriel 7 band, in California last year.

James, a Queensland Conservatorium of Music jazz graduate, is touring Queensland with Lewis and the band, which features highly regarded trombonist Bill Watrous, who has played with everyone from Ella Fitzgerald to Kai Winding and Woody Herman.

After taking part in workshops for students at the conservatorium, James and her American band launch the CD at *The Courier-Mail Spiegel tent* as part of the Brisbane Festival on Sunday.

"I fell in love with jazz when I had the chance to see Ella Fitzgerald sing in Brisbane," James says. "It took me a while to make the decision to devote myself to jazz. I realised being a jill-of-

all-trades would make it too hard to get inside the nuances of the jazz language."

Watrous, who has worked with many of the great singers of jazz, was impressed when Lewis asked for his opinion of the singer he was considering for his album.

"When I first heard Ingrid the singer I thought of Karen Carpenter, who had an amazing vocal quality and I hear a lot of that in Ingrid," Watrous says.

In the '60s Watrous played in the band at famed New York jazz club the Cocacabana, where he backed singers from Frank Sinatra to Peggy Lee and Fitzgerald.

Despite the bigger prizes for singers in the pop world, James has been impressed by the next generation of Queensland jazz musicians.

"It's amazing how many young people are inspired by jazz, and the reason they love it is they feel they don't have to copy anybody.

"Jazz is a genre that is very open to individual interpretation."

Watrous, James and San Gabriel 7 play *The Courier-Mail Spiegel tent*, South Bank, on Sunday afternoon in a sold-out show; brisbanefestival.com.au