

Vanessa McGowan / Biography / 2023

Vanessa McGowan is a New Zealand-born bass player, vocalist, teacher and writer in Nashville Tennessee.

Born and raised in Auckland, Vanessa's career as a bass player has taken her all over the world, including stints living in Las Vegas, London, and Nashville Tennessee.

Based in Nashville since 2014, she has played for Grammy-winners Sugarland and Jennifer Nettles, currently tours and is musical director for multi-Grammy-nominated Americana artist, Brandy Clark, and has her own multi-award-winning Americana Duo, Tattletale Saints.

Vanessa grew up in Auckland New Zealand, completing a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Bass at Auckland University and touring with jazz greats saxophonist Michael Brecker, vocalist Diane Schurr, and drummer Steve Smith before moving to Las Vegas Nevada to study for a Masters of Music in Jazz Bass on scholarship with bass tutor Tom Warrington.

While there she performed with saxophonist Chris Potter, drummer Joe La Barbera, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, and vocalists Marlena Shaw and Ruth Brown. After graduating, Vanessa moved to the UK, and lived in London for 4 years working as a freelance upright and electric bassist and music tutor.

Long having considered herself "just a bass player", while in London she began singing at the request of guitarist, vocalist, and acclaimed songwriter, Cy Winstanley. Together they formed the band that would become Tattletale Saints, who went on to be the winner of the New Zealand Music Award for 2014 for their debut album *How Red Is the Blood*, produced by Grammy award winner Tim O'Brien, and again in 2021 for their third studio album, *Dancing Under The Dogwoods*.

Having grown up in amateur musical theatre pit orchestras, Vanessa was delighted to spend three months in 2013 with the touring Broadway production of *Wicked*, playing upright, electric, and fretless bass.

Also a life-long teacher, Vanessa now teaches musicians about building a healthy life in music, drawing on the 20 years of experience she has as an independent musician to empower female musicians with creative skills for life.

She performs and records with a wide variety of other Nashville based artists and bands and is proud to endorse Fender Guitars, Aguilar Amps, Fishman DI's, and D'addario strings.