

Tynsetningen - super local online newspaper from Tynset, Norway
Culture and Leisure Section

Gretchen Elise shows off from Grønfjell Mountain



JAZZ AND SOUL: Gretchen Elise Walker from Philadelphia jumped from Grønfjellet [Green Mountain] in her new video. The artist speaks fluent Norwegian - and she learned this at a cottage in Aumlia.

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LIV MAREN MØHRE VOLD
LIVMAREN@TYNSETINGEN.NO
TLF.: 482 14 617

Publisert: 08 desember, 2020 14:00
Oppdatert: 08 desember, 2020 08:54

Singer-songwriter Gretchen Elise Walker from Philadelphia in the USA released her single “Wawa” in November. In the video she jumps all over the world - from Nashville and Puerto Rico, Congo and Grønfjellet in Tynset.

“I wanted to film people of all ages world wide jumping for joy,” says Gretchen Elise, who has a Norwegian father, and speaks 5 languages.

The song was written by Walker to raise funds for a local organization, and it inspires listeners to “wake up and jump.” The video, filmed by Hezekiah (3Crates), follows Walker along Philadelphia streets, with passersby and band members jumping, including producer and bassist Doug Grigsby, who has written songs for Michael Jackson, among others.

“I asked fans all over the world to send me jumps, and they are woven into the video,” says Walker. The goal is that the song will unleash a worldwide dance party.

Wake up and jump!

“The regional retailer Wawa donated a basket of coffee products and I wanted people to buy tickets for this raffle item. I wrote the song with the caribbean inspired soca rhythm and the refrain ‘Wake up and jump!’ as a type of jingle, and the crowd started jumping every time we sang the hook,” Walker shares.



Gretchen Elise "WAWA"

She has studied music since childhood, including piano, choir and bell choir.

“But I’ve also been very occupied with movement and dance,” says Walker to Tynsetningen. She lived in Norway the year she went to fourth grade, while her father was teaching at University of Oslo. Her first Norwegian lessons were actually in Tynset.

“It was with my siblings at the cottage in Aumlia. We would say “Thank you for the meal” when we began school. Within three months we were all fluent in Norwegian,” shares the artist.

Jazz and soul

Her music is a mix of jazz and soul with roots in Philadelphia and some other international influences.

“Bjørk, for example. I have also written jazz arrangements of Norwegian folk tunes.”

She has sung professionally and worked in arts education with youth since she was 25. The jump trend eventually became a sizable project.

“I wanted to try to get Wawa to buy the song from me, and simultaneously begin with the recording of my third album. I solicited jumps via my social media pages, to edit into the video, and I also filmed some myself with my iPhone. I got or filmed jumps from people from the Tynset area, Oslo, Philadelphia, Nashville, Puerto Rico, Germany, Congo, and a horse with jockey from Germany,” explains Walker, who says she has been lucky to have spent a considerable amount of time in Norway.

Aumdalen [Aum Valley] is her favorite

“I lived in Berlin five years, around the time the wall fell, and spent many weeks in Norway with my grandmother, cousins, and my aunt who at the time lived year-round in the little rustic cottage in the Aum Valley. So Tynset, the Aum Valley, and Aumlia became my favorite place in the whole world,” says the musician. Today it’s her cousin, the grandson of the original owner, who continues the tradition of taking care of the cottage.

“In 2019 I traveled to Norway with my family - my husband and 9 and 11 year old children. Since we live in the urban center of Philadelphia, it was very important for me that they learn a

little about the Norwegian outdoor life --- carrying water from a spring, chopping wood, using an outhouse. A hike up Grønfjellet was obligatory, and everyone had to jump from a big rock for my video,” laughs Walker.

“Naturally that was the jump with the most dramatic view in the whole video! Now of course my kids want to move to Norway. We’ll see what happens with that,” says Walker.

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TIPS OSS

☎ [990 99 725](tel:99099725)

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☎ [916 92 748](tel:91692748)

Ansvarlig redaktør

✉ [Liv Maren Mæhre Vold](mailto:Liv.Maren.Maehre.Vold)

Besøksadresse

📖 [Parkveien 5B, 2500 Tynset](#)



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