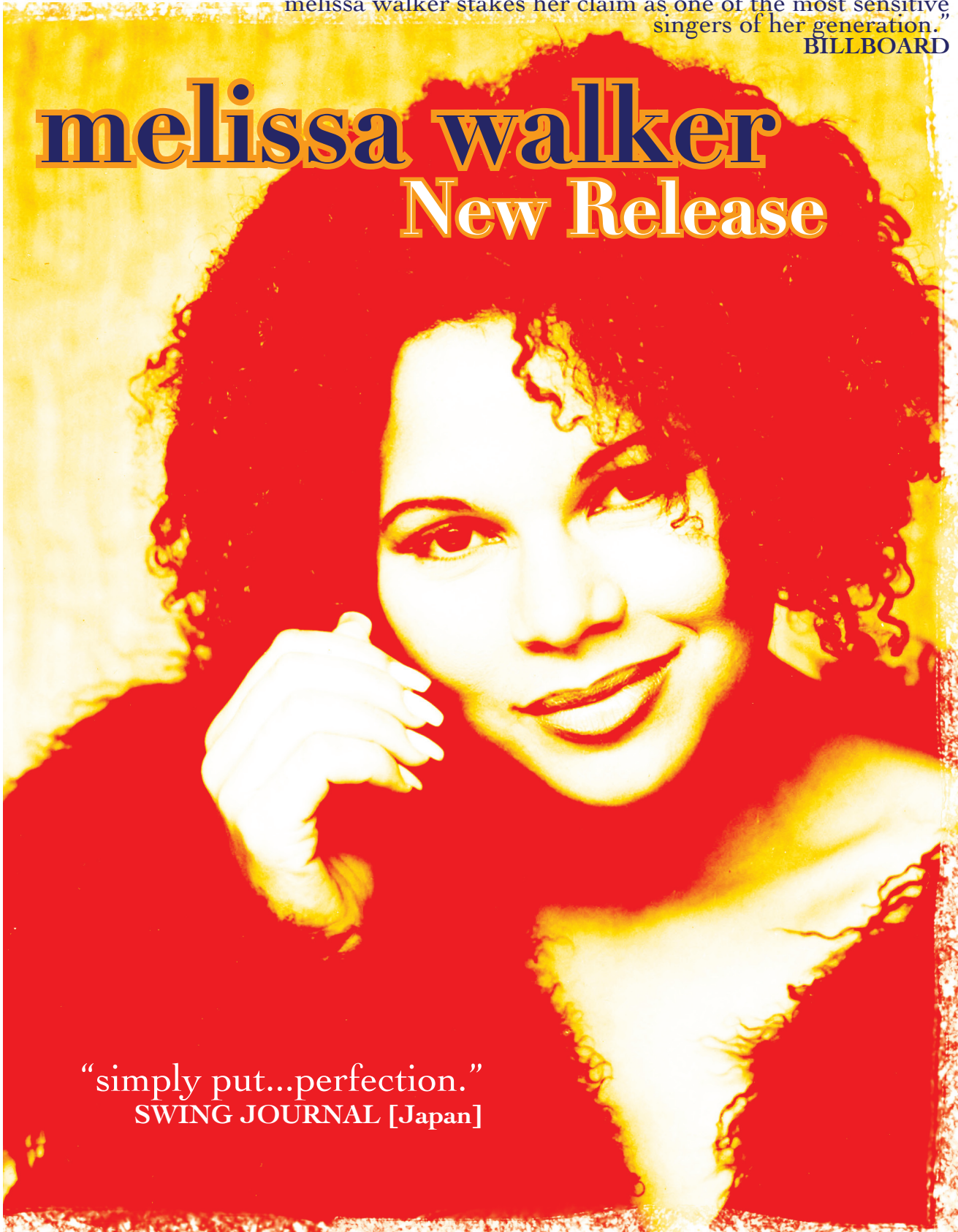


"melissa walker stakes her claim as one of the most sensitive
singers of her generation."
BILLBOARD

melissa walker

New Release



"simply put...perfection."
SWING JOURNAL [Japan]

goldberg penn ganz maret rogers mcbride

With her rich, multi-octave vocal textures and impeccable phrasing, Melissa Walker has gained international acclaim at concerts across several continents, working with such hallowed talents as Hank Jones, Kenny Barron, Wynton Marsalis, Sadao Watanabe, and Buster Williams; young jazz geniuses as Stefon Harris, Christian McBride, Geri Allen and Makoto Ozone; and the late greats like Ray Brown. Walker has created a deeply nuanced body of work and new material arguably unrivaled in its reverence for America's Jazz Tradition and garnered her a well-deserved Juno Award nomination and US Indie Award honorable mention for Best Jazz Album of the year. On stage she has turned more than a few heads, won over audiences, and excited critics to rave about her as famed Pittsburgh jazz critic Bob Protzman did within the pages of The Post Gazette; *"In richness, range and flexibility, Melissa Walker has one of the best voices in Jazz."*

Booking/Management / Gille Amaral Dog and Pony Industries

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“Melissa Walker’s best interpretations aren’t merely alluring, they’re all-enveloping... shutting out the rest of the world suddenly becomes easy.”

THE WASHINGTON POST [USA]

“If you are not hip to Melissa Walker, there has been an obvious void in your listening pleasure. Because this is one songbird who does to a lyric what Michelangelo did to a piece of stone.”

THE SUN HERALD [USA]

“In richness, range and flexibility, Melissa Walker has one of the best voices in jazz.”

THE POST GAZETTE [USA]

“Melissa Walker takes her gorgeously burnished contralto through a well-chosen collection of obscure standards and originals.”

TIME OUT [Britain]

“She has the kind of voice that can move and drift away like cigarette smoke in a sun-drenched room...When she pours the whole tradition of the blues into the articulation of a single word the emotional depth of Abbey Lincoln comes to mind, her duets with bass and drums remind of the legendary Carmen McRae”

ABEND ZEITUNG [Germany]

“[Walker] swings soulfully with a solid sense of syncopation and improvisation...the greatest expression of the jazz singer’s art”

CDNOW [USA]

melissa walker

“Melissa Walker’s capturing aura would make you hear a pin drop in an overcrowded, steaming jazz club. Unpretentious in her performance, she presents temptation in small doses.”

FRANKFURTER
ALIGEMEINE ZEITUNG
[Germany]

“She has that instrument perfectly under control, on fast titles the sequence of tones sometimes nearly somersaults but the voice doesn’t shake one single moment.”

AMADEO [Germany]

“Like Shirley Horn or even Carmen McRae, she concentrates on forming the text from the inside forming it into moving melodies.”

RONDO Magazine
[Germany Austria Switzerland]

Honeynotes
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With her gorgeous tone, three-octave range and impeccable phrasing, **melissa walker** has won kudos in concerts across several continents. Critics agree this brainy beauty has the goods to be included amongst today's most compelling vocalists. With an international reputation to deliver on stage with her captivating aura, soulful interpretations and well-chosen material, Walker has sold out houses from New York to London and received rave reviews from Brazil to the Berlin. For her much anticipated release entitled *IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL* (2009), Walker gathers a potent mix that combines her powerful yet intimate style, with the arranging pallet of Christian McBride's funkiness and world-influenced beats of longtime bandmate and musical director, Clarence Penn. Joining her for the recording are searing performances by harmonica player Gregoire Maret and the contemplative phrasing of guitarist Keith Ganz and Adam Rogers. Not unlike Abbey Lincoln, Walker is adept at pulling repertoire and original compositions from diverse genres and blending them in a melting pot which includes her reverence for America's jazz tradition and blues tinged influences, before transforming each song into something uniquely her own.

Walker's recordings have won critical acclaim and her last CD on Enja Records was hailed "Simply Perfection" by Japan's most famous jazz magazine "Swing Journal". A recording for which she garnered a Canadian Juno Award nomination for Best Vocal Album of the Year only to lose to her fellow country woman, Diana Krall. Walker's exquisite voice, jazz influenced delivery and intimate sense of song have long garnered her one of the best voices in jazz and a working relationship with many of today's foremost musicians including: Gary Bartz, Stefon Harris, Kenny Barron, Hank Jones, Phil Woods, Buster Williams, Russell Malone, Makoto Ozone, Geri Allen, Steve Turre, Benny Green and Christian McBride to whom she was married in 2005. Walker is currently working on a classic jazz recording teaming her with long time friend and consummate vocal accompanist and composer, Norman Simmons, backed by McBride and Lewis Nash for a small ensemble recording reminiscent of the ones Simmons arranged for Carmen McRae.

In performance in Manhattan at the Jazz Standard, Birdland, Joe's Pub or Iridium; abroad, at such notable jazz rooms as the Blue Note in Japan, Pizza Express in London or Marianne's in Bern, Switzerland; or at major international festivals including the Montreux, Berlin, Nice, or North Sea Jazz Festivals, Walker has turned heads and excited influential critics to rave about this gifted singer's "*instrument perfectly under control...A voice with remarkable feeling for moods.*" — Amadeo (Germany) With her impeccable choice of material and ability to winningly mingle classic jazz vocal standards with current material as well as her own original compositions, "*Walker vaults into the upper echelons of singers.*" —The Scanner

Melissa's anchored and wide-open musicianship mirrors her dual cultural heritage. Born the youngest of three sisters in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, where her father played professional football. Both parents — American born and raised — eventually went on to earn doctorate degrees and as an interracial couple, set the stage for their children to explore the world without boundaries. Melissa herself graduating from a coveted ivy league — Brown University — intended to enroll in law school, but the legal life was not to be. Local performances led to out-of-town dates, then to her 1993 self-produced recording, *LITTLE WISHES*, and subsequent relocation to New York City, where she studied with pianist and master vocal-accompanist Norman Simmons. Matthias Winckelmann of Germany's Enja Records heard her sing in New York and Walker became Enja's first female jazz vocalist signed by his impressive label since Abbey Lincoln many years earlier.

Her career on the ascent, Melissa recorded *MAY I FEEL*, her first Enja CD, in 1998, receiving a coveted US Indie Award nod for Vocal Jazz. Her subsequent CD, *MOMENT OF TRUTH*, released in 1999, vaulted her to the forefront of her generation of jazz stylists.

Media coverage followed: appearances on ABC, BET, Oxygen Network, Reuters and Fox TV; stories and reviews in Down Beat, US, Ebony, Jazz Times, Swing Journal, Billboard, Vogue, Munich Daily and London's Evening Standard and a host of European journals and newspapers—all proclaiming her ability to command an a song as well as an audience. "You could hear a pin drop", said Germany's Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, "in her performance in an overcrowded, steaming jazz club." The Danish journal Stiftstidende remarked that hers was the sound of "honey-jazz," a theme reiterated by Jazz Review when it called Melissa's voice "the equivalent of warm honey." But, perhaps, Audio-Germany magazine said it best: "What a sound!"

As her reputation grew, Melissa recorded her third Enja CD with longtime band mate and producer Clarence Penn, I SAW THE SKY, released in 2001. The release was a Canadian Juno Award finalist. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's well-known jazz critic, Bob Protzman, compared her to Sarah Vaughan. Jazz Review called her "a cross between Carmen McRae and Betty Carter."

melissa walker joined the late Ray Brown's 75th Birthday Celebration Tour, collaborated with Japan's superstar Sadao Watanabe, and opened for legendary Ray Charles, and performed with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Wynton Marsalis at the Duke Ellington Centennial Celebration. Melissa has continued to shine in recent performances and on an upcoming Piano Jazz feature with the great Marian McPartland. Appearing as a special guest with the Christian McBride Band at NYC's Jazz Standard during the coveted New Year's week found All About Jazz critic Russ Musto writing of Walker's "marvelous articulation and expansive range."

Melissa is a special guest on the 2005 release, BLUES IN THE NEW YORK NIGHT, a tribute and celebration of New York City led by renowned audio impresario, Charles Morrow and master bassist, Buster Williams featuring Geri Allen, Paul Bollenback, Stefon Harris and Lenny White. Walker was also featured on a recent Christmas release with Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz for National Public Radio.

When not in performance, Walker dedicates her time to Jazz House Kids, the acclaimed not-for-profit organization she founded, which provides jazz enrichment programs for young people; offering kids the opportunity to think creatively and approach tasks in new and different ways through the medium of jazz. Each year thousands of young people, their teachers and families are introduced to the world of jazz and many of today's greatest artists. In addition, Melissa is a sought-after voice-over and imaging voice talent working with entertainment and commercial clients. She is a featured imaging voice for Sirius Satellite's **Pure Jazz** program. She has hosted BET's **Journey with Jazz** for the grand opening of the Jazz at Lincoln Center's new space on Columbus Circle in New York, and was the voice of Ms. Lightning in the Nickelodeon pilot **Zwoosh**.

Asked what stirs her to achieve what The Washington Post called her "all-enveloping" mastery of a song, Melissa has said, "I think of songs as stories. They represent and convey our universal expectations about love, joy, longing, loss, regret, roads taken and not taken. Songs capture the essence of our spirits and help define our spiritual life; they are celebrations of what we've done and who we are. They are my offerings to the audience who hold dear: the art of the song."

IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL / **melissa walker**

GREGOIRE MARET harmonica

Gregoire Maret, hails from Geneva Switzerland and has shared the concert stage with well known artists including Pat Metheny, Reggie Workman, Charles Tolliver, Charles Fambrough, Pata Valdez, Max Roach, Tito Puente, Duke Ellington Orchestra, Pete la Roca, and Ray Brown to name but a few. These days, though he resides in New York, he can either be seen on the road, or performing and recording with renowned artists such as Cassandra Wilson, Charlie Hunter Group, Steve Coleman, Me'Shell Ndegeocello to name a few. Remarkably, Gregoire's list of recordings is quite extensive, an anomaly for an artist this early in his career. His recording past includes such masters as David Sanborn, Steve Coleman, Jimmy Scott, Jacky Terrasson, John Hicks, Idris Muhammad and the Pat Metheny Group.

ADAM ROGERS guitar

Born and raised in New York City, Rogers has fast become the guitarist of choice for an array of the greatest names in jazz, rock and world music. Touring and recording with artists such as Michael Brecker, Cassandra Wilson, Norah Jones, Walter Becker (of Steely Dan), Regina Carter, John Zorn, Liz Right and The Metropolitan Opera. Since the beginning of his professional career he has played on over one hundred and fifty commercially released recordings and for the past eleven years has co-lead the innovative and critically acclaimed group Lost Tribe.

KEITH GANZ guitar

Keith Ganz is a guitarist/composer/arranger living just outside of New York City. With his distinctive sound and style Ganz has performed at jazz clubs and festivals all over the United States and Europe. Since arriving in New York in 1998 from his native North Carolina, Ganz has worked with such jazz notables as Fred Hersch, Andy Bey, Chris Potter, Russell Malone, Luciana Souza, Kate McGarry, Bruce Barth, Donny McCaslin, Gary Versace, Victor Lewis, Greg Hutchinson, Billy Drummond and Jay Anderson. On Walker's new recording Ganz can be found playing electric, steel string and acoustic guitar.

AARON GOLDBERG piano

For the Boston-born, New York-based Aaron Goldberg, his ever-evolving musicality began with piano lessons at the age of seven. A magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University, Goldberg clearly has many gifts and has consistently excelled as a pianist. His talents have garnered him two prestigious awards including the Clifford Brown/ Stan Getz Fellowship Award and the National Foundation for Advancement in Arts Recognition and Talent Search. Since then he has gone on to perform with a vast array of leaders from Betty Carter, Al Foster, Freddie Hubbard, Stefon Harris, Wynton Marsalis Quartet to Madeleine Peyroux. His recording credits are equally impressive and range from Brad Mehldau, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Michael Brecker to Guillermo Klein, as well as, his highly acclaimed releases. On Walker's recording, Goldberg spices things up with Rhodes on select tracks.

CHRISTIAN McBRIDE bass

For close to two decades, Christian McBride has been widely recognized as one of the most important and original American musicians to emerge from the jazz and improvised music scene. A Grammy Award-winning virtuoso of the acoustic and electric bass, he is recognized as an accomplished composer, arranger and band leader with a flair for spontaneous creation. His collaborations as a bassist read like a veritable who's who of quintessential artists of our time including Chick Corea, Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny, Queen Latifah, String and James Brown. McBride has been featured on more than 250 recordings over the past 17 years. In addition to playing electric and acoustic bass on Walker's new recording, McBride lent his arranging chops for the session as well.

CLARENCE PENN drums

One of the most in-demand drummers on the jazz scene today. Clarence Penn ranks high among the short list of drummers who are versatile and savvy enough to play any style of music. Having played in a semi-professional capacity since the age of 15, Penn honed his chops under the tutelage of Betty Carter along with bandmates Cyrus Chestnut and Chris Thomas. Since then Penn has toured, performed and recorded with many of the top artists of our time including Wynton Marsalis, Michael Brecker, Roberta Flack, Dizzy Gillespie, Dianne Reeves, Ellis Marsalis, Steps Ahead, Mike Stern and Rachel Z. Penn is a member of the Dave Douglas Group, the Maria Schneider Orchestra and the Makoto Ozone Trio. Penn and Walker have been working together for over 10 years, this is the third release that he has co-produced and arranged for Walker.

What's New:

New Sunnyside recording w/Christian McBride, Gregoire Maret, Aaron Goldberg,
Keith Ganz, Adam Rogers and Clarence Penn | 2009
CD Release party at Birdland Jazz Club | 2009
New York concert appearance at Iridium with the Christian McBride Big Band | 2009
Kennedy Center Concert performance with Melissa Walker Group | 2009

Recordings:

An NPR Jazz Christmas with Marian McPartland and Friends | 2006
Blues In The New York Night produced by Charles Morrow for the Empire State building | 2005
I Saw The Sky Enja Records | 2001 [2002 Juno Award nomination]
Moment Of Truth Enja Records | 1999
Ballads in Blue Enja Records | 1999 Enja Records Compilation
May I Feel Enja Records | 1997 [Indie Award nomination]
Little Wishes Self-produced (1993)

Special Guest Appearances:

World Financial Center w/ Aaron Goldberg, Paul Ballenback, Christian McBride | 2007
Empire State Building multi-media observatory lead by Buster Williams | 2005
Special guest w/ Christian McBride Band New Years at The Jazz Standard | 2004
Sadao Watanabe Tour (Japan) | 2001
Ray Brown 75th Birthday Celebration European Festival Tour (Europe) | 2001
125th Anniversary Celebration Prudential Insurance Company, opened for Ray Charles | 2000
Café Society Concert & TV performances for David Margolick's book release *Strange Fruit:
Billie Holiday, Cafe Society, and an Early Cry for Civil Rights* | 1999
Duke Ellington Centennial Concerts w/ the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra under
the direction of Wynton Marsalis | 1999
Invited by the United States Ambassador to perform at the World Cup Soccer Series
Performances (Brazil) | 1998

Major Festivals & Concert Performances – Partial Listing:

Aarhus International Jazz Festival (Denmark)
Berlin Jazz Festival (Germany)
Blue Note Osaka and Sweet Basil Tokyo (Japan)
Jacksonville Jazz Festival (USA)
Jazz a Vienne (France)
Joes' Pub (NYC)
Jazz Standard (USA)
Kennedy Center (USA)
Mistrua Fina (Brazil)
Montreux Jazz Festival (Switzerland)
Mount Hood Jazz Festival (USA)
Nice Jazz Festival (France)
North Sea Jazz Festival (Netherlands)
New Jersey Performing Arts Center (USA)
Oslo Jazz Festival (Norway)
Pizza Express (Britain)
Rising Star Tour (Europe)
Salzburg Jazz Festival (Austria)
Sedona Jazz

Television/Radio Appearances – Partial Listing:

Journey with Jazz for BET | program host
Zwoosh for Nickelodeon | voice of Ms. Lightning
Cool Women for Women's Entertainment TV | performance
Reuters Television | interview
Oxygen TV | performance
Good Morning America ABC | performance
Fox TV | performance