

# “In The Middle of It All”

Melissa Walker returns to center stage with an extraordinary new release on Sunnyside Records

## NEWS RELEASE

June 15, 2009

Vocalist MELISSA WALKER returns to center stage with a stunning, highly anticipated new release, *IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL*. Listeners will revel in this recording, which has all the hallmarks of her previous critically acclaimed Enja Records recordings, and delight in her forging a new blues-tinged soulful mix. Searing performances by harmonica virtuoso Gregoire Maret and an all-star band complete this remarkable artistic achievement. One of her generation’s great singers, Walker is blessed with a distinctive sound. She is a genuine artist, known as a masterful interpreter of lyrics and possessing a gorgeous tone, three-octave range and commanding sense of rhythm.

This Juno Award nominee and brainy beauty has garnered a devoted audience captivated by her fresh interpretations and well-chosen material. Adept at drawing from her roots to blend classics and original compositions in reverence for America’s jazz tradition and folk influences, Walker transforms each song into something uniquely her own. For her new release, Walker offers up an intoxicating mix of songs which includes a magical version of “The Way He Makes Me Feel” from the movie *Yentl*, an unforgettable version of “Mr. Bojangles” which pairs Maret and Walker in a swinging repartee, a moving depiction of Peter Gabriel’s classic “Don’t Give Up” and a solemn tribute to Nina Simone and Shirley Horn in a two-part tour de force of “The Other Woman” and “Forget Him,” Walker continues her signature by highlighting today’s composers including her old friend, pianist Norman Simmons for the classic bolero “If You Could Love Me” featuring Christian McBride’s stunning arco work, “Our Love Remains” by Pam and Bobby Watson, and returning to one of her favorite composers, Andrew “Tex” Allen for “I’ll Sing a Song.” She provides powerful writing of her own with “I’m with You Now,” a haunting tribute to the victims of September 11<sup>th</sup>, based on Japanese icon and saxophonist Sadao Watanabe’s original composition which was a tribute to the ’95 great Kobe earthquake. Walker rounds out her recording with two superb performances of artfully arranged jazz standards, “Where or When” and “Invitation.”



Walker’s selections perfectly place her in the middle of it all by combining her powerful yet intimate style, enlivened with driving arrangements by the incomparable CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE and world-influenced beats of longtime band-mate and co-producer CLARENCE PENN. Backed by guitarists ADAM ROGERS and KEITH GANZ, and AARON GOLDBERG on Fender Rhodes and piano, plus today’s top rhythm section of McBride and Penn, *IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL* is a potent mix of a road well traveled and an unfolding journey unwilling to stand still.

Welcome back, Melissa Walker!

Executive Producer **Melissa Walker**  
Producer **Clarence Penn**  
Engineer **David Kowalski**  
Recorded at Bennett Studios

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**Melissa Walker** – vocals  
**Gregoire Maret** – harmonica  
**Aaron Goldberg** – piano & fender rhodes  
**Keith Ganz** – guitar  
**Adam Rogers** – guitar  
**Christian McBride** – electric & acoustic bass  
**Clarence Penn** – drums & percussion