

“melissa walker stakes her claim as one of the most sensitive singers of her generation.”

BILLBOARD

melissa walker

“simply put...perfection.”
SWING JOURNAL [Japan]

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, Gary Bartz and Buster Williams; young jazz geniuses as Stefon Harris, Christian McBride and Makoto Ozone; and such late greats like the seminal 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 nomination 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 Cheryl Hughey ph 314.660.1755 cherylhughey@charter.net | **Gille Amaral** c 603.866.2722 f 617.254.5491 gille-dogandpony@comcast.net
Honeynotes 623 Eagle Rock Ave. Ste 118 West Orange, NJ 07052 www.melissawalker.com

“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]

With her rich, multi-octave vocal textures and impeccable phrasing, **melissa walker** has won kudos in concerts across several continents, working with such hallowed talents as Hank Jones, Kenny Barron, Wynton Marsalis, Sadao Watanabe, and Phil Woods; young jazz geniuses like Stefon Harris, Christian McBride, Geri Allen, Steve Turre and Makoto Ozone; and late greats like Ray Brown. Her three CD releases since 1997 as leader—and well-deserved Canadian Juno award nomination and US Indie honorable mention for Best Jazz Vocal Album of the Year—have created a nuanced corpus of jazz standards and new material arguably unrivaled in its reverence for America’s jazz tradition. *“Walker swings soulfully with a solid sense of syncopation and improvisation...the greatest expression of the jazz singer’s art.”* —CDNow

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 Winkelmann 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.”*

During these performances and recordings, **melissa walker** worked with such notable artists as, Gary Bartz, Russell Mallone, Benny Green, Steve Wilson, Ron Blake, Steve Turre, Paul Bollenback and Lenny White.

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 sings on an upcoming Christmas release for National Public Radio and **Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz**.

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. 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.*"

Honeynotes

623 Eagle Rock Ave. Ste 118
West Orange, NJ 07052
www.melissawalker.com

What's New:

Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz | Fall 2006 airing
Quartet Fall Tour 2006 w/ Makoto Ozone, Christian McBride & Clarence Penn
Featured performances w/ the Vana Trio w/ Werner "Vana" Gierig, Gene Jacksson & Sean Conly | 2006 - 2007
NPR Christmas Compilation | 2006
Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz Christmas Special | December 2006 airing

Recordings:

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:

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)
Clifford Brown Jazz Festival (USA)
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)

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

melissa walker discography plus