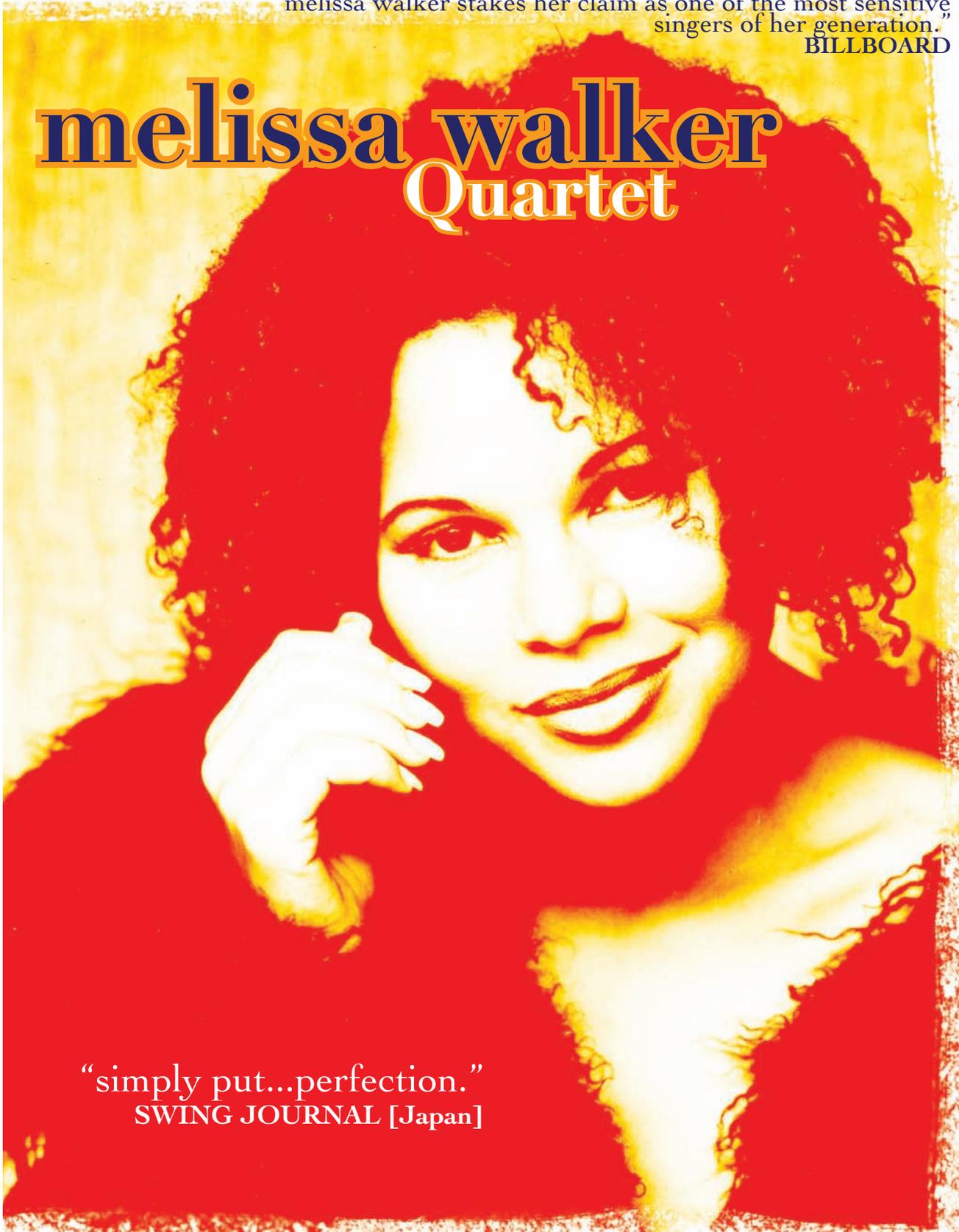


"melissa walker stakes her claim as one of the most sensitive
singers of her generation."
BILLBOARD

melissa walker Quartet



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

werner "vana" gierig sean conly clarence penn

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

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. Her 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 jazz like delivery, and intimate sense of song have long garnered her one of the best voices in jazz and a working relationship with jazz's foremost musicians including Kenny Barron, Gary Bartz, Hank Jones, Phil Woods, Buster Williams, Stefon Harris, Russell Malone, Makoto Ozone, Geri Allen, Steve Turre, Benny Green and Christian McBride to whom she was married in 2005.

Recently featured on recordings of Buster Williams and Marion McPartland, this fall, Walker returns to the recording studio for two highly-anticipated CDs. One upcoming project is a bold new step with an eclectic mix that combines Walker's powerful yet intimate stylings with the arranging pallet of Christian McBride's funkiness and world-influenced beats of long time band mate and musical director, Clarence Penn. Walker will follow up with 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 one Simmons arranged for Carmen McRae. Not unlike Abbey Lincoln, Walker is adept at pulling repertoire and original compositions from various genres into her reverence for America's jazz tradition and blues tinged influences before transforming each tune into something uniquely her own.

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 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."

THE MELISSA WALKER QUARTET

WERNER "VANA" GIERIG piano

Vana is one of New York's premier jazz pianists. His award-winning, virtuosic performance style has been recognized worldwide and has been integral to many international tours and recordings by artists such as Regina Carter, Rachele Ferrell, Lena Horne, George Howard, Special EFX, Najee and as musical director to Warren Hill, Will Downing, Angela Bofill and many others. As a sideman and as the leader of his acclaimed Vana Trio with Alvester Garnett on drums and Sean Conly on bass, Vana has brought his eclectic piano work the world over, including repeated appearances at international jazz festivals such as Monterey and Newport in the US and Japan (Madarao), the JVC at Lincoln Center in New York, Rome and Torino, Umbria, Sardinia, Montalcino and the Giaveno Sunset Jazz Festivals in Italy, Lugano and Montreux in Switzerland, Pori in Finland, North Sea in Holland, the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Israel, Brazil's Chivas Jazz Festival, Cuba's Havana Jazz Festival, Kongsberg, Salzburg, Vienna (State Opera House), Berlin, Copenhagen, Nice and Marciac in France, Vitoria, San Javier and Almunecar Jazz Festivals in Spain, Ireland's Cork and Scotland's Glasgow Jazz Festivals, as well as weekly engagements at the Village Vanguard, Sweet Basil and the Blue Note in New York, as well as in Japan (Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka), London's Ronnie Scott's, the Half Note in Athens, the Camelot in Israel, and many many more.

"Imagine recombining the musical DNA of Herbie, Keith, and Chick with a Rio samba band and you've got a notion of piano phenom Werner "Vana" Gierig." **KEYBOARD [USA]**

SEAN CONLY bass

Sean Conly arrived in the Big Apple from Kansas City in 1994, somewhat like his ancestors, with a car full of possessions and a few dollars in his pocket. Since then he has gone on to tour the world and/or record with such artists as Gregory Tardy, Freddie Hubbard, Regina Carter, Ray Barretto, Charles Blenzig, Michael Franks, Tom Harrell, Andrew Hill, Nicholas Payton, Cedar Walton, Stefon Harris, James Moody, Mike Stern, Rick Margitza, Tony Malaby and many others.

"Sean Conly brings to his work on double bass a rhythmic suppleness and a harmonic awareness that complement (and stimulate) the front-line soloists." **MUSICWEB [UK]**

CLARENCE PENN drums

Clarence Penn ranks high among 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 has toured, performed and recorded with a veritable who's who of musical stars, including Betty Carter, Ellis Marsalis, Wynton Marsalis, Michael Brecker, Roberta Flack, Dizzy Gillespie, Dianne Reeves, Cyrus Chestnut, Stephen Scott, Steps Ahead, Mike Stern and Rachel Z. A member of the Makoto Ozone Trio, the Maria Schneider Orchestra and the Dave Douglas Group, he is probably one of the most sought after drummers of his generation on the scene

"Mr. Penn using brushes might hesitate a minute, like a plane hitting an air pocket, suspending time for a second, then rush back in. It was musical wit, improvisational play at its best."

NEW YORK TIMES [USA]

What's New:

New recording w/Christian McBride and Clarence Penn and special guests | 2008

New recording w/ Norman Simmons, Christian McBride and Lewis Nash | 2008

European Tour February 2008

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)

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)

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