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Joanna Pascale Through My Eyes Stiletto

By [Christopher Loudon](#)

Three years ago, Philadelphia's Joanna Pascale made a laudable debut with *When Lights Are Low*, a collection of standards that suggested a maturity well beyond her 24 years. Now, the alumnus of Temple University (where she serves on the music faculty) is back with another top-drawer assortment of classics (including one wonderful rarity, the smoky, 1940s film-noir number "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes," not to be confused with the sprightly Bobby Vee pop tune of the same title). Close listening reveals strong hints of Lena Horne and Nancy Wilson. Stylistically, though, Pascale more closely suggests Peggy Lee. Like Lee, she reveals an innate sensuality, equaling Lee's ability to elevate ballads to maximum torchiness and also to swing with soft, playful sexiness.

Accompanied by four exemplary players—pianist Andrew Adair, saxophonist Tim Warfield, bassist Madison Rast and drummer Dan Monaghan—who, individually and collectively, embrace Pascale without ever smothering her, she travels with elegant ease from the fragility of "Blue Gardenia" to the too-late awareness of "You Turned the Tables on Me." Best, though, is a brisk "When I Grow Too Old to Dream" that bubbles with romantic confidence, and a sizzling, Afro-Cuban treatment of "I Hadn't Anyone Till You" that drips with heated desire.

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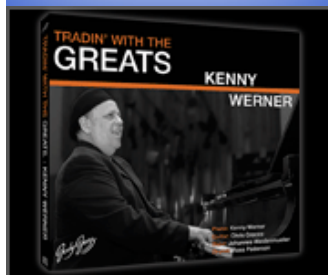
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