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JOANNA PASCALE "Through My Eyes" Stiletto

Friday, May 23, 2008

JOANNA PASCALE "Through My Eyes" Stiletto

JOANNA PASCALE isn't the sort of jazz vocalist who draws attention to herself at the expense of a lyric. As "Through My Eyes" illustrates, she also doesn't settle for songs whose words don't deserve the attention.



Vocalist Joanna Pascale. (By Steve Stoltzfus)

Based in Philadelphia, Pascale specializes in quietly alluring interpretations of vintage pop and jazz tunes that sometimes bring to mind one of her vocal role models: Shirley Horn. Unhurried, unfussy and frequently blues-tinted, Pascale's style also suggests the influence of horn players, especially when she prolongs a phrase for telling effect. But her real gift is storytelling, not improvisation, and she puts that talent to splendid use, beginning with a delightfully lazy and fresh take on "Wouldn't It Be Lovely."

Some of the album's standout tracks are lesser-known ballads, such as "Blue Gardenia" and "When I Grow Too Old to Dream." The former benefits from the soulful pairing of pianist Andrew Adair and saxophonist Tim Warfield, while the latter evolves into a bright, strutting album coda. Even so, none of the quartet arrangements that prominently feature Pascale and Warfield is more enjoyable than a hushed and ruminative interpretation of Johnny Mercer's "P.S. I Love You."

-- Mike Joyce

Appearing Friday and Saturday at Twins Jazz (202-234-0072, http://www.twinsjazz.com). Shows start at 9 and 11.

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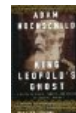
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