Lyric is paramount for Philadelphia-based vocalist Joanna Pascale, who insists that she simply cannot perform a song unless she can connect personally with its lyrics. But once she’s found that connection, which she fortunately has with hundreds of songs from the Great American Songbook and beyond, there’s no one who can better convey the emotion of those words more directly and intimately than Pascale. That gift is in ample evidence on Pascale’s latest release, *Wildflower*, on which she’s joined by an all-star ensemble including pianists Orrin Evans and Cyrus Chestnut, harmonica master Gregoire Maret, bassists Christian McBride, Vicente Archer, and Luques Curtis, drummers Donald Edwards and Obed Calvaire, guitarists Kurt Rosenwinkel and Tim Motzer, and neo-soul singer Bilal. The recording of *Wildflower* coincided with the end of Pascale’s decade-long engagement at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel, which allowed her to hone her voice, style, and vast repertoire. A singer of sophisticated taste, profound expressiveness, and raw emotion, Pascale is also a gifted educator who is a member of the vocal faculty at both Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. She is featured on trumpeter Jeremy Pelt’s *Soul*, saxophonist Tim Warfield’s *Jazzy Christmas*; Orrin Evans’ *Liberation Blues*, recorded live at New York City’s Smoke Jazz Club; Philly sax legend Larry McKenna’s *From All Sides*; Temple University Jazz Band’s Thad Jones tribute album *To Thad With Love*; and *That Music Always Round Me*, a setting of Walt Whitman’s poetry by Garry Dial and Dick Oatts. Pascale attended Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts and Temple University, where she is now a member of the faculty and has been featured on two of the university’s CD releases. She made her recording debut with 2004’s *When Lights Are Low*, followed by the 2008 CD *Through My Eyes* and a 2010 duo recording with pianist Anthony Wonsey that focused on Songbook standards. With the 2015 release of *Wildflower*, she revealed her most personal and diverse collection to date, aptly named for allowing her talents to finally come into full bloom, a wildflower’s beauty emerging into the sunlight.