

JazzTimes

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Dianne Reeves

Love

JESSY J
Tequila Moon (Peak)



Jessy J. She's hot, she's young and she's a Latina. A marketing manna from heaven presented to the buttoned-down severity of smooth-jazz, J's natural attributes spray to all fields in a genre whose public view is overwhelmingly white, middle-aged and dowdy, veracity be damned. Like fellow smooth saxophonists Mindi Abair and Candy Dulfer, Jessy J's figure gets prominent play on her debut CD and on her Web site. That's savvy. Male listeners want to be her boyfriend, and female listeners want her bod. Listen, sex will be selling female—and male—CDs long after

we're gone, so the point of this preamble isn't to diminish J's musical talents, which are huge. It's to hopefully convince you that behind all that sexual allure is a formidable player who is capable of more than side gigs with Michael Bolton and Gloria Trevi.

J's Latin influences are felt keenly as her tenor wraps around the melodies of J/Brown originals "Fiesta Velada," "Tequila Moon" and "Sin Ti/Without You." Her sound is sexy-sultry, recalling John Klemmer and Euge Groove, and she offers pleasing melodies and riffs off those melodies. She plays soprano on Phoebe Snow's "Poetry Man" and nails Leon Russell's oft-covered "Song For You," her jazz instincts coming alive in an acoustic setting. Like Abair, J takes advantage of another instrument, her vocals, sounding for all the world like a new Bebel Gilberto on "Mas Que Nada," her Portuguese flawless. And on "Besame Mucho," she caresses the lyrics in Spanish while Brown picks on guitar and strings sway in the background. This new talent has staying power.

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