

Tequila Moon--Jessy J

Album: Tequila Moon / Artist: Jessy J / 11 tracks: 46:03 / Peak Records



To say that singer, composer and saxophonist Jessy J is a gifted artist, almost seems like an insignificant statement, in light of her exquisite debut album *Tequila Moon*. She woos you in Spanish, as she coos the words to Consuelo Velazquez's "Besame Mucho," (with an arrangement by Paul Brown and Jessy J), and she seduces you subtly with soft and tender chords from her tenor sax, as she plays the title track, "Tequila Moon." On this CD, Jessy J also demonstrates her versatility as an artist by playing the flute ("Fiesta Velada"), and the soprano saxophone ("Poetry Man," and "Running Away").

The CD *Tequila Moon* released on March 4th possesses a decidedly Spanish flavor, however, this is not an album featuring rapid-fire percussion beats, nor does it have heavy melody lines, it is instead a lighter fusion between Latin rhythms and melodic pop elements, but

all the while retaining a jazz harmonic structure.

Producer Paul Brown and the management of Peak Records surrounded Jessy J with seasoned and talented musicians, such as bassist Roberto Vally (formerly of Spyro Gyra), keyboardist Gregg Karukas, and two time Grammy winner Brown, who in addition to acting as producer plays guitar on six of the tracks. Brown enjoyed hit songs while recording with Norman Brown ("Up And At 'Em"), Euge Groove ("Get 'Em Goin'") and Peter White ("What Does It Take [To Win Your Love]").

"Besame Mucho," written by Velasquez in 1940, while still in her mid teens, has been covered by scores of legendary singers over the years including José Carreras, João Gilberto, Carmen McRae, Edith Piaf and Nat King Cole. In recent years, the song has been covered by Diane Schuur, Diana Krall and Michael Buble. I am told that the words "Besame Mucho," can be translated as, "kiss me a lot," or "kiss me much," and with the lilt of Jessy J's voice mirroring her physical beauty, it would not be surprising if one were to discover that numerous men at her concerts are singing the words to "Besame Mucho," back to her. Perhaps one of the prettiest love songs ever written, "Besame Mucho," is further enhanced by Jessy J's eloquent phrasing, Vally's tender bassline, and Brown's elegant guitar chording.

Listening to the twenty-six year old Jessy J weave magic with her soprano saxophone as she plays the lyrical "Running Away," which she co-wrote with Brown, and then opting for a tenor voiced horn on Leon Russell's "Song For You," one must ask the question, if she is already this good, how great can she

become? Like Mindi Abair, Jessy J is able to serve up evocative phrases, that transcend the jazz and pop genres, and in Jessy J's case, she add some gentle Latin spices.

From the opening track "Tequila Moon," until the last notes of "Song For You," fade gently into the twilight, Jessy J's music will charm you and hold you as a willing captive, under its enchanting spell.

Reviewed by Joe Montague for Riveting Riffs (www.rivetingriffs.com)

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