

Typhanie Monique – *Call It Magic*

Typhanie Monique popped into my life as an intern at DownBeat magazine. She was a fireball of life, wit and curiosity. And, yep, she still is.

Typh said she wanted to be a singer, a jazz singer, and we shook our heads knowingly, the way jazz critics can. It was a, “Sure, kid, good luck with that,” because, well, it ain’t easy!

Make no mistake: Typhanie Monique had the goods—a deep-rooted, soulful voice, a serious love of the music; the sass, smarts and guile to front a band. But, frankly, there are lots of those types out there already. What wasn’t quite as apparent on the surface was that Typhanie also had (and still has) a pit bull’s determination and a dedication to craft that rarely rolls into Chicago or any other city on this earth. She worked the circuit around town for a long time—the clubs, dumps, dives and weddings. Typh heard the critics say she wasn’t ready yet (this one included), and poured that gasoline onto a fire that fueled her desire to be the best singer she could be. She studied, seriously studied, classically studied. She honed her technique. She worked out her shit.

In short, Typhanie Monique became a singer—an amazing jazz singer. She’s logged the miles, surfed the styles, tried, erred and triumphed, and discovered exactly who she is, and how she wants to sound.

That’s exactly what you’ll hear on *Call It Magic*. Here we have an artist in full and beautiful control of her voice *and* her vision.

This is a deep recording about the full range of emotions surrounding this thing called love. It’s a story told in 10 acts, 10 songs carefully chosen and unfolded by a master vocalist and backed by an incredible ensemble. It’s packed with beauty and surprise, smiles and, yes, a few tears.

“The sentiment of this record is about loving, mature love, understanding the lessons of love,” Typhanie said about the project.

“Magic,” which kicks off this collection, comes from the band Coldplay, arranged and performed as no Coldplay song has ever been heard before. There’s a perfect wash of strings, pianist Ben Lewis percussively tugging at the heart, bassist Joshua Ramos and drummer Dana Hall swinging with power and taste. And Typhanie’s voice flows like a velvety punch to the gut when she wails, “And I just got broken, broken into two/ But I call it magic, when I’m next to you.”

The arrangement on “Just Friends” just grooves, refusing to take the easy road. “This Bitter Earth” is a shiver-and-a-sigh ballad with a killer tenor sax solo by Joel Frahm. “What Is This Thing Called Love/This Thing” swings hard with Tony Monaco on Hammond B-3 and Typh popping some very cool vocalese over the top. Don Henley’s “Heart Of The Matter” becomes a prayer of hope and strength in Monique’s hands. “Where Is Love/Love Is” is a lush power ballad.

On Monaco’s tune “Called Love,” Typhanie and Tony crawl under the cover of the blues for an astounding B-3/vocal duet. “Sister/Miss Celie’s Blues” is an ambitious romp with killer horn section work including strong solos by Ken Peplowski on clarinet and Marques Carroll on trumpet. “Letting My Love Go” presents Monique’s voice in a different light with drummer Greg Artry driving the beat and Monique’s old duet partner, guitarist Neal Alger, sitting in for a guest spot.

And the caper to this beautiful program is Monique’s take on “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore.” It’s a perfect example of her artistry. She reshapes, re-harmonizes and resurrects this chestnut, making it sound classic and modern in a way that only she can.

This is an album that's been years—heck, *decades*—in the making. It's where the road has taken her, and it's a beautiful spot to take in the view. It's music made with great thought, even more care and, yes, a little magic. That's the artistry of Typhanie Monique.

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