

JOAN BELGRAVE

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Joan Belgrave is ready to soar in 2017. The Grammy-considered singer, songwriter, and producer is currently recording her fifth solo album, featuring contributions from Regina Carter, Kirk Lightsey and Ali Jackson, and preparing her July 17 appearance at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola. Based in New York and Detroit, Joan is the consummate vocalist, equally adept with big band, blues, standards, gospel and contemporary R&B alike, while holding fans and critics rapt at prestigious venues like the Detroit Opera House, NJPAC, the Metropolitan Room, Catalina's, and the Jazz Standard. "Belgrave's voice is so soothing and sexy, she could give a pit bull goose bumps" the *Detroit Metro Times* raved while *jazzREVIEW* has called her "a class act and a beautiful talent." The artist herself explains it best: "I love singing with every fiber of my body. I have to sing because that's who I am."

The trajectory Joan has followed from singing gospel in the Baptist church as a young girl and entertaining family friends in Ann Arbor, Michigan to becoming a critically acclaimed performer who's delighted sold-out crowds across the globe traces a fascinating course. Joan's mother, who also sang, introduced her to classical baritone vocalist, Dr. Willis Patterson. "He took me under his wing and trained my voice," she says. Moving to Hollywood, Joan pursued a professional singing career but soon shelved her musical aspirations in order to raise her three children. She reached a critical juncture when her father passed away. "I went back to Michigan and my mom asked me to sing at the funeral," she says. "I hadn't sung publicly for 15 years. When I went back home to California, it was almost like a waterfall had opened up. I couldn't stop singing if I wanted to."

By the late-'90s, Joan had fully immersed herself in music following the dissolution of her first marriage. She began writing songs and recorded *Emotions Blue* (1998), her tribute to Billie Holiday. "I really related to her because I was hurting at the time," she says. Joan's chameleonic musicality fueled her follow-up *Variations* (2005). "It was a variety of *me*," she explains about the album's concept. "I had blues, gospel, jazz, and R&B on there. I don't want to limit myself to jazz because I am not *just* a jazz singer. I'm a *singer*."

Relocating to Detroit, Joan met her musical soul mate, legendary the late Jazz Legend trumpeter Marcus Belgrave. He bought three copies of *Emotions Blue* and *Variations* after hearing her sing during a jam session at Bert's Marketplace. "I didn't know who Marcus was when I met him," she confides. At the time, Joan was producing a concert series and hired Marcus to "open" the show with a Ray Charles ensemble. Their professional partnership gradually grew into a romantic relationship. The couple wed in 2007 and released their first of two collaborations with Preservation Hall's, New Orleans saxophonist Charlie Gabriel, *You Don't Know Me: A Tribute to New Orleans, Ray Charles, and the Great Ladies of Song* (2007). "Marcus was the last living member of Ray Charles' original band," Joan explains. "We had a Louis Armstrong show and a New Orleans show. Marcus wanted to do something for Ray." The trio followed up with *Marcus, Charlie, and Joan ... Once Again* (2009) where Joan's voice duly complemented the superb musicality of the album's two jazz virtuosos.

Joan resumed her solo career with *Excitable* (2009), which Detroit-based Blue Rivers Records re-released in 2014 along with a video for Joan's smooth and soulful re-recording of her self-penned "Hey Love" (2013). She released *Merry Christmas Baby* (2014), recorded "Please Send Me Someone to Love" for **Blue Note Records** president Don Was, and even ventured into techno with producer Carl Craig on Tribe's "**Where Am I**" (2009) A European smash hit. In between headlining the Detroit International Jazz Festival, Toronto Jazz Festival, Ontario Jazz Festival, Ascona Jazz Festival in Switzerland, and the annual **Don Was Detroit All Star Revue** concert, in addition to being a lead vocalist with the Motown Legends Gospel Choir. Whether onstage or in the studio, Joan Belgrave reaches listeners through a voice that holds a world of musical wonders. Her thrilling versatility and passion for music shines through every note she sings. "No matter what's going on, the music is my savior," she says. "It always has been." music takes Ms. Belgrave to new heights. Join her for the flight!