

***LONG BIO***

At once unassumingly virtuosic and uncontrivedly emotional, *New York Times* critics pick and two-time *Sunday Times* magazine Top Ten Jazz CD of the Year pick (2013 and 2018), New York-based jazz vocalist Tessa Souter is “a beguiling artist who infuses everything she interprets with voluptuous intelligence and keen emotional insight.” (KQED ARTS). Born in London of English and Afro-Caribbean parents, the critically-acclaimed singer’s gorgeous voice and penchant for exploring music mostly untouched by other vocalists has set her apart as “one of the few exceptional standouts in the crowded field of female jazz singers,” (*Los Angeles Times*).

Mentored by jazz legends Mark Murphy, who called her “a true musician and extraordinary talent, remarkable and very moving,” and NEA Jazz Master Sheila Jordan, who puts her “at the top of my list of great talent,”  Souter has cast an increasingly wide musical net, from contributing original lyrics to instrumental jazz standards, and re-imagining classic British rock, to her Third Stream project, *Beyond the Blue*—a London *Sunday Times* Jazz Album of the Year, with legendary jazz pianist Steve Kuhn and featuring Souter’s original lyrics to classical gems by Albinoni, Chopin, Beethoven et al. As well as making five albums as a leader, she also appears on legendary bassist Charnett Moffett‘s *Spirit of Sound* (Motéma)album and on the French singer Pascalito’s upcoming*The Picture of Rafael Ohayon.*

She has recorded five critically acclaimed CDs including her debut, the Flamenco-tinged *Listen Love* (Nara, 2004), *Nights of Key Largo* (Venus, 2008), recipient of the prestigious *Swing Journal* Gold Disc Award, *Obsession* (Motema, 2009), and *Beyond the Blue* (Motema-Venus, 2012), and *Picture in Black and White* (NOA, 2018), both of which made the UK *Sunday Times*’ Jazz Record of the Year list. *Picture in Black and White* is an emotionally resonant invitation through music to reflect on the African diaspora experience of slavery, loss, love, redemption and the pellucid and lasting repercussions of that period in history. *AllAboutJazz* called it “a remarkable journey to the interior of the human heart.” It was Album of the Week in the London *Evening Standard* and the *Sunday Times* when it was released, and was the Number One Jazz Vocal Album of the Year for WVCR-FM’s Jay Hunter, and Number One Jazz Vocal album for Ken Dryden and W. Royal Stokes in the *Downbeat* Critics Poll.

Since giving up her former career as an international features journalist for magazines and newspapers to devote herself to music, Souter has performed and/or recorded with a veritable who’s who of jazz, including Lynne Arriale, Alan Broadbent, Dezron Douglas, Billy Drummond, Joel Frahm, David Gilmore, Tom Guarna, Howard Johnson, Larry Koonse, Steve Kuhn, Dana Leong, Joe Locke, Romero Lubambo, Francois Moutin, Yasushi Nakamura, Clarence Penn, Mansur Scott, Marvin Sewell, Yotam Silberstein, Lew Soloff, and Kenny Werner. She has performed at venues all over the world, including SF Jazz, the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, Dizzy’s Club Coca Cola, Mezzrow, the Blue Note, Jazz Standard, Pizza Express, Ronnie Scott’s, the London and Edinburgh Jazz Festivals, Star Eyes (Nagoya), Body and Soul (Tokyo), and the Blue Notes in New York, Beijing and Shanghai. Pre-pandemic, her 17-year monthly residency at New York’s iconic 55 Bar was frequently standing room only. She has appeared seven times at the Rochester International Jazz Festival.

***QUOTES***

*“With her sixth visit to the XRIJF, Tessa Souter may set a new record and anyone who has heard her knows why.”****Ron Netsky,******Rochester City Paper***

*“World class. Must see.”****Don Heckman,******Los Angeles Times***

*“Best of all, she delivers it all with a wit and a wink worthy of the toniest joints in town.”****Time Out New York***

*“Souter may have been genetically predisposed to the blend of cultures reflected in her music, which contains Middle Eastern, Brazilian and flamenco elements in an airy jazz framework.”****Shaun Brady,******Philadelphia City Paper***

“A gifted lyricist as well as vocalist . . . Her lyrics are memorable and exhilaratingly mature.”***Neil Tesser, Chicago Examiner***

*“Astute and expressive.”* ***Nate Chinen,******New York Times Critics Pick***

*“Musical sophistication and the rare quality of authenticity."* ***Don Heckman,******Los Angeles Times***

*“A remarkable journey to the interior of the human heart.”****Victor L. Schermer,******AllAboutJazz***

*“The words seem to come from her soul.”* ***Donald Elfman,******New York Jazz Record***

*“Her instrument is one that makes lyrics come alive.”* ***Richard Kamins,******Step Tempest***