

# BRAITHWAITE & KATZ

Communications

## NEWS RELEASE

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### VOCALIST SARAH DELEO RETURNS WITH *I'M IN HEAVEN TONIGHT*, ANOTHER DELECTABLE MIX OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY SONGS

\* Featuring DeLeo with Gary Wang, Jay Collins, Fabio Morgera, David Cook, Chris Bergson, Mark Bordenet and Brian Charette \*

"DeLeo's ballad singing is truly inspired... [*The Nearness of You*] is a wonderful album that features a delightful voice, imaginative arrangements, and a group of musicians who perform with total musical cohesion." — William Grim, **All About Jazz**

"A truly gorgeous vocal album...The girl can flat out sing!"  
— Eric Cohen, **Music Director, WAER (Syracuse, New York)**

New York-based vocalist **Sarah DeLeo** follows up on the critical success of her debut CD *The Nearness of You* with *I'm In Heaven Tonight*, another inspired collection of songs that reveals her powerful presence as a musical storyteller.

A number of the tunes on this disc come from the American Songbook, and DeLeo's exquisitely heartfelt renditions prove that the feelings expressed in these classics are truly timeless. Whether she's singing about the euphoria of newfound love in *I Feel Pretty* or the bittersweetness of a love that might not last in *I'm In Heaven Tonight*, we feel each word deeply, as if these stories were our own. DeLeo's bandmates, all stalwarts of the New York jazz scene, are in constant dialog with her, perfectly complementing her sumptuous, satiny voice and giving her room to articulate each phrase with crystal clear diction and timing. The CD will be released on January 27, 2009 on the Sweet Sassy Music label.

In addition to DeLeo's thoughtful readings of standards on this disc, there are a number of ingenious arrangements of songs from other genres that are thoroughly illuminating. Saxophonist/flutist/arranger **Jay Collins** transforms *Rockin' Robin* (a 1958 Bobby Day hit which was covered by The Hollies and Michael Jackson) into a decidedly 60's era Blue Note-sounding tune by playfully adding Lee Morgan's vamp from "The Sidewinder." Suddenly, this classic rock-and-roll song really sounds like a jazz tune. Collins also reinvents Patricia Barber's dark, introspective blues *Let It Rain* by turning it into a Ray Charles-inspired vehicle full of attitudinal swing and gut bucket horns; DeLeo is full of swagger here. A stunning surprise is DeLeo's take on *In the Cold, Cold Night*, a song released by the indie rock duo The White Stripes in 2003. While this tune was likely overlooked by many, DeLeo brilliantly mined it for its bluesy essence and retrofitted into a swinging number that could have easily been written decades earlier.

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DeLeo's set list is expertly chosen, as is her band. All of them swing hard when necessary, and their sensitivity in the ballads is extraordinary. On the atmospheric *No Moon at All*, organist **Brian Charette** and guitarist **Chris Bergson** create a spacey tonal backdrop while percussionist/drummer **Mark Bordenet** provides a gentle Latin groove that conveys utter seductiveness. On the title track, pianist **David Cook** employs a gorgeous tone and is an incredibly sensitive partner, while Grammy-nominated trumpeter **Fabio Morgera's** heartbreaking mute playing evokes the great Miles Davis. **Jay Collins** caresses his tenor lines on *You're Getting to be a Habit With Me*. Bassist **Gary Wang** expertly holds down the fort throughout, but steps out in a wonderfully melodic solo on *Sometimes I'm Happy*.

Reviewers have noted DeLeo's uncanny ability to evoke not just the sound, but also the very atmosphere of the 1950s and 60s. When asked if she feels a special affinity for music from this era, DeLeo explained: "I always like to minimize the retro aspect of what I do, because for me art is about the commonalities of the human experience over time, and not about when a song was written. This album actually started as a bunch of disparate song ideas, and then when I looked at them as a group, I realized that they were all either written in the 50s or 60s or inspired by arrangement ideas popular at that time! That said, I think that the 50s and 60s were important periods for American culture, basically the art of the Empire at its apex. I was an American Studies major, if that's not already obvious... I suppose that given my artistic inclinations, drawing from the mid-twentieth century is pretty natural."

Though DeLeo began singing at age nine and developed a love of jazz soon afterwards, it was not until she finished her degree at Barnard that she began singing at jam sessions and in piano bars throughout Manhattan. There she had the tried and true education that you can't get in the conservatory; that of trial-by-fire ad hoc performances with seasoned professionals. Along the way many of these colleagues provided guidance to DeLeo, most notably the singer/songwriter Lina Koutrakos: "Studying with Lina was amazing. She created an environment in which I felt comfortable to improvise musically and to develop my skills as a lyric interpreter." She has also studied with Jay Clayton, Dena DeRose, Giacomo Gates, and Kirk Nurock. In addition to jazz influences such as Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan, DeLeo also found inspiration from a wide range of artists and genres, from Elvis to Stevie Wonder, and from Linda Ronstadt to Donna Summer. Clearly this broad scope has found its way into DeLeo's colorful musical palette, as the diverse program on this disc shows. She also understands what it means to be an entertainer in the best sense of the word. As Jim Santella of All About Jazz wrote regarding her debut CD, "*Sarah DeLeo's fresh voice interprets this program of standards with a knowing heart. It has an innocence that rings positive. She gives you the feeling that we're at liberty to lighten up, relax a while, and let the music take care of our worries.*"

[www.sarahdeleo.com](http://www.sarahdeleo.com)

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