

BERMUDA'S SOULFUL SONGSTRESS:

Gita

By Diane E. Alter



Maybe you've heard of Gita. If not, you will soon.

This singular singer, whose infectious sound is an infusion of several genres with jazz at its core, is well known throughout the mid-Atlantic paradise island of Bermuda, and she is making waves on other shores. One of Gita's greatest appeals is her unique style and sultry tone. Her voice is so angelic you almost expect to see a halo over her head.

It is difficult to accurately describe the depth of feelings and emotions that resonate from the silky, soulful and soothing voice of Gita Blakeney Saltus. But it's an experience that knows no bounds, and it is one that lingers long after her songs have ended. This diminutive and stunning singer radiates a delightfully communicable aura. Yet her warm smile and appealing looks are only the gift wrapping. Gita's voice is the thing that dreams are made of. Listening to her sing, you can escape just by virtue of proximity as it is so easy to get lost in Gita's voice which is both calming and electrifying. Dripping with just the right amount of originality, polish and gleam, Gita's talents have not gone unrecognized. This accomplished singer has a rich and celebrated history, including performing for the iconic Quincy Jones and Isaac Hayes. She has also graced stages all over Bermuda with legendary stars such as Gladys Knight, Jonathan Butler, Lee Ritenour, Herbie Mann, Cassandra Wilson, Chris Botti and Angie Stone. Gita also performed "We Are the World" with Kenny Rogers, Patti Austin, James Ingram and Siedah Garrett, a moment she calls, along her Quincy Jones performance, a highlight of her career. Crediting fabled contemporary and jazz singers Sarah Vaughn, Nancy Wilson, Shirley Horn, Gladys Knight, Sade and Barbara Streisand as influences, Gita sings about life and love. She sings directly from the heart and emotions ricochet from every tune. "I would like to have the authenticity of my spirit captured through my music. I want to touch the world," Gita gushes. Gita began her illustrious career after an impressive audition for Greg Thompson, producer of the Bermuda Review. That led to a five nights a week engagement. Bermuda locals and visitors were smitten. "I've always loved expressing my emotions and passions through song. It is both cathartic and stimulating. I was somewhat of a late bloomer, but music and the arts have always been in my heart," Gita said. Thinking about her next music project, Gita says she would love to produce an "old school" R&B CD with her duet partner Robert

Edwards. "Robert and I worked together for over 15 years and we and our fans believe this project is well overdue." Gita is also working on music projects with some of her favorite musicians including Tony Bari, Stan Gilbert, and Roni Lopes. In addition, Gita is contemplating some opportunities to perform overseas. "Having lived in Paris for two years, I would love a European stint," Gita adds.

A stint with Quincy Jones' protégés Greg Pillinganes and Rickey Minor is also on Gita's wish list of people to work with. Clint Eastwood also makes the roster. "I have great admiration for Clint Eastwood and his music. He might not be best known for this aspect of his career, but he has an amazing interpretation of jazz music and it would be awesome to work with him," Gita says with a hint of excitement. In addition to her passion for music, Gita also has another desire. She is Regional Vice President of Caron Bermuda, a non-profit provider of off-island residential drug and alcohol addiction treatment that also provides on-island continuing care. Gita is committed to being of service to her community. "Bermuda is my beloved home and I cherish the island and all her people. In my position at Caron Bermuda, I am always cognizant of the pain that many are experiencing and have made it my mission to be an agent of change and to provide hope and healing to those struggling with the affliction of addiction. Bermuda is poised for greatness, and we must continue to have faith in Bermuda and humanity," Gita says with conviction. Gita heals and provides hope through her songs as well. It is her kind soul, her pure passion and her unwavering spirit that permeates in every sultry song in a voice best described as sweet as honey. Until you get the opportunity to hear Gita in person, you can relish in the next best thing. The singer has released two critically acclaimed CDs, "Angel Eyes" and "My Favourite Things." You cannot talk about music on Bermuda and not talk on and on about Gita. Yet, her attraction can be summed in a few simple words: majestic and mesmerizing. Find out more about Gita at www.gitathesong.com