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Smadar Levi

It is with great pleasure that I write this recommendation for singer Smadar Levi. I have known Smadar for over a year and throughout that I time have been very impressed with her both as an artist and a person. As an artist, her vocal abilities, compositional breadth, and creative vision engender what the great novelist James Joyce called a state of aesthetic arrest. While as a person, her moral sensibilities, passion for culture, and zest for life are simply contagious.

Smadars debut album is a gem to behold. Songs such as Ghali Ya Bouy, Song of the Gypsies and Mama, with their soaring vocals and infectious rhythms transport the listener to the Mediterranean shores from which they originate. As a live act, Smadar is even better than on record. Just recently, I attended a concert she did for the organization Seeds of Peace. In this show, Smadar and her multiethnic band were simply fantastic. Her rendition of the song Shalom ve-od Yom, under the musical direction of Yaron Eilam, was breathtaking. The concert ended with every single member of the packed house standing and cheering for more.

As someone who has spent his professional career exploring the cultural crossing points of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian civilizations, Smadars work and creative vision is dear to my heart. Here is beautiful woman who is dedicated to singing songs in Arabic, Hebrew, and Ladino; Here is a hardworking artist who seeks to recapture and modernize the great cultural tradition of convivencia; Here is a generous spirit who strives to unite and heal people through music.

There is something else you should know about Smadar. As a recent article put it, Smadar is a Daughter of Sderot. Her Moroccan and Tunisian heritage gives her an authenticity that cant be taught. The music that she sings, the familiarity and confidence that her voice radiates, and the passion that she exudes, is something that is in her blood. This cultural inheritance along with her great work ethic makes for a potent force,

Smadar potential has not yet reached its fulfillment, and I am expecting great things of her. I know that she is hard at work preparing for her second album, and I am excited to hear what she will come up with next.

It is for these reasons why I wholeheartedly and without reservation write this letter of recommendation.

Sincerely,
Dr. Avi Eilam Amzallag

