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Calling You (zangano)



In searching for the finest practitioners of that rather amorphous form known as world music, it's only natural to lean one's ear toward Africa and beyond. Occasionally, though, the search need extend no further than our own backyard. Superlative case in point: South Carolina-born, Washington, D.C.-based Imani, an espresso-voiced song-weaver of rich, earthy texture and stunning vibrancy. Working with fellow Capital craftsmen Pepe González (Imani's bassist and producer, but also the beacon who lights her creative path), pianist Jon Ozment and drummer Greg Holloway, she travels from strength to strength, proving as skilled at weightlessly flowing with the gentle current of "Lazy

Afternoon" as at laying bare the sensual heart of Neil Young's "Down By the River," loosening Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors" from its pop roots to expose what a gorgeous ballad it truly is, capturing both the lonely chill and fevered yearning of Joni Mitchell's "Blue Motel Room," wordlessly scaling the towering grandeur of González's "Canto" (while simultaneously paying homage to John Coltrane) then wallowing in the dusky contemplation of his "The Color of Serenity," and embracing the sunlit joy of the traditional Hindi chant "Bada Chitta Chora." Perhaps hers is not "world" music in the spirit of, say, Césaria Evora or Miriam Makeba, but it is a border-blurring world of music second to none.