

The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint, MI 48503

PRESS RELEASE

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The Whiting Proudly Presents Jazz Gem Sophie Milman!

Flint, MI – The Whiting is proud to present singing sensation Sophie Milman on **Friday, February 20 at 8pm at UM-Flint Theatre**. A major new talent has burst onto the jazz scene! Sophie Milman, the 24-year-old multilingual Russian-born singing sensation, has won critical acclaim for her musicianship and sultry, soulful voice, selling out jazz clubs across the U.S. and beyond. Her latest release *Make Someone Happy* tops the *iTunes* and *Billboard* jazz charts as she continues to win the hearts of audience members throughout the world with her amazing voice and unique style. This performance will be ASL interpreted.

Ticket prices are \$26 with \$12 student rush tickets available the day of the show with proper I.D. To order tickets to this amazing performance simply visit TheWhitng.com, call (810) 237-7333 or (800) 8-CENTER, or visit the Ticket Center located at 1241 E. Kearsley St. just off I-475 between the University of Michigan Flint and Mott Community College. For a complete schedule and full details on the entire 2008-09 season line-up, visit TheWhiting.com or phone the Ticket Center and request a free brochure.

Russian-born singer Sophie Milman has toured the world, won a Juno, sold more than 100,000 records - and she's only 25! Since her self-titled debut was released in 2004, it has sold almost

100,000 copies worldwide, hit the Billboard Top 5 in Canada and the Top 15 in the United States, and topped the iTunes jazz charts in five different territories. Her most recent release *Make Someone Happy* won a JUNO for best vocal jazz album 2008 and since then she has maintained a rigorous touring schedule across the globe – headlining sold-out shows in Canada, the U.S., Japan, and throughout Europe – and continued to balance her burgeoning music career with her commerce studies at the University of Toronto.

Make Someone Happy is an expression of Sophie transformed. With each track, it tells a tale of her past, her present, and a future filled with pride, fear, excitement and passion:

“While the first album dealt with my youth spent migrating through different countries and cultures, and the passion for jazz that helped see me through it, *Make Someone Happy* is about my life transformed over the last three years. This album reflects intense feelings and a time spent trying to make everyone happy – family, friends, loved ones, and my fans.”

Sophie’s story continues to inspire. After emigrating from Russia to Israel with her family at the tender age of 7, then moving again at 16 to seek a new life in Canada, the transition from bookish teenager to glamorous jazz ingénue was perhaps unlikely. It was the offer of a recording contract after just three or four professional singing engagements that touched off a series of events that soon found this beautiful, multilingual talent gracing the cover of *Voir*, *Klublife*, *Wholenote*, and *The Globe & Mail*. She was featured in publications across the globe as well including *Hello!*, *Q*, *Jazz Times*, *Elle Magazine*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and appearing on *Entertainment Tonight*, *CBC*, *CTV*, the *BBC*, *BET Jazz*, *NPR*, and several *NBC* and *Fox* affiliates across the U.S.

Sophie has appeared on stage with international musical superstars like Aaron Neville and the Neville Brothers, Chick Corea, and Jesse Cook. A triumphant return home to Toronto in October 2006 yielded an acclaimed iTunes EP, *Live at the Winter Garden Theatre*, which debuted at #1 upon its release in Canada and dominated the jazz charts in several territories for weeks at a time. It also brought Sophie some of her most effusive critical praise to date:

"Not the next Ella or Sarah but the first Sophie Milman...she is one of a kind."

~ **Don Heckman, LA Times**

“When we spoke, what was evident was that this young woman had a great head on her shoulders and had already gained wisdom far beyond her years. What was also evident was that Sophie Milman was in this for the long haul- whatever it takes.”

|~ **Jamie Cosnowsky, Jazz Improv, NY**

Touring the world has definitely deepened and strengthened the collaboration between Sophie and her band, led by multi-instrumentalist, composer and arranger Cameron Wallis, and featuring Paul Shrofel on piano, John Fraboni on drums, and newest member Kieran Overs on bass. The opportunity to build a relationship with her bandmates and collaborators – another of the many “firsts” of the past few years – provided a fertile environment for the creation of *Make Someone Happy*. From the development of a concept to the actual recording of the album, Sophie and her band cultivated an atmosphere of comfort and creativity where Sophie could express who and where she truly is today in her career, her life, and her music.

Juno Award-winning producer Steven MacKinnon (Marc Jordan, Molly Johnson, Serena Ryder) also contributed to the mature and sophisticated sound of *Make Someone Happy*. After hearing Molly Johnson’s latest album on the radio, Sophie was so impressed that she sought out its producer in the hopes that he would be interested in working on her next effort. To her delight, the response was positive and the result, in her words, inspiring:

“Some of the songs on the album had been part of our live show for over a year and we needed a producer who could wrap his head around the material objectively. After the first meeting with Steve, I knew I wanted to work with him. He echoed my feeling of wanting to take listeners to a different place from the first album.”

MacKinnon, along with Juno Award winning engineer John ‘Beetle’ Bailey, helped to harness a studio experience that brought the best out in Sophie and her band. In all, they recorded 15 songs, two of which will feature as bonuses in select territories, and each is an individual reflection of Sophie’s soul.

The title track, a well-known Jule Styne composition, was brand new to Sophie when she first heard Carmen McRae's heartrending 1963 recording:

"I heard it and just broke down in tears. The lyrics really reflected the emotional space that I was in, trying to process all the things that my life had become."

Make Someone Happy also features updated versions of some confirmed classics from the world of pop and rock. The 1980 Stevie Wonder composition, "Rocket Love", presented an opportunity for Sophie to pay tribute to the man she calls her "favourite artist of all time." Another track, "Undun", brought the legendary Randy Bachman of The Guess Who to the studio, sitting in with Sophie and the band on their version of his 1969 smash. That was a moment that Sophie will never forget:

"The Guess Who had some of the most interesting songs of their era, a totally unique style. We went out on a limb and emailed Randy Bachman to play on 'Undun.' Miraculously, he said yes and it was one of my coolest musical experiences yet."

Included also are a playful update of "Matchmaker, Matchmaker" from *Fiddler on the Roof*, which features harmonica wizard Gregoire Maret, and the haunting original, "Something in the Air Between Us", written by Steven MacKinnon and Marc Jordan. But it is perhaps the familiar "(It's Not Easy) Bein' Green", recorded by the likes of Ray Charles and Shirley Horn (but first made famous by Kermit the Frog), that most speaks the world as Sophie knows it and the person that her life has made her. All the moves, the migrations, the struggles, and the triumphs are summed up in the last line of the song:

I'm green, and it will do fine. It's beautiful. And it's what I want to be.

Sophie Milman, circa 2007: so much accomplished, and so much more to come. In other words, exactly what she wants to be.

This performance is generously sponsored by McLaren Regional Medical Center, ABC12, WFNT, CARS 108, Ruth Mott Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Flint and Katherine B. Minor Charitable Trust.

The Whiting is a member organization of the Flint Cultural Center Corporation and is dedicated to bringing the performing arts to the community. The Whiting is a nonprofit organization and an Equal Opportunity Employer providing programs and services without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex or handicap.

****High Res Images are available upon request.**

**To secure tickets or request images, please contact Wendi Fournier at
(810) 237-8689 or wfournier@thewhiting.com****

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