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Tessa Souter: *Obsession* (Motema)

BY ZAN STEWART

Tessa Souter is a beguiling, atmospheric singer with a bell-clear alto voice who finds intriguing ways to instill jazz sensibilities into pop, Brazilian and other material. She gets considerable help from a fine crew that includes guitarist Jason Ennis, bassist Gary Wang, and drummer Conor Meehan. A robust Brazilian bounce underpins "Empty Faces," a tale of love lost. "Nara's Song," built on Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower," salutes a beloved child. "Afro Blue/Footprints" deftly blends two jazz classics, with Wang's bass bold and beaming. Other standouts include a provocative "Eleanor Rigby"; a fresh look at Cream's "White Room"; and the vigorous, Brazilian-based title track.

Souter appears Monday, 8 and 10:30 p.m., at the Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., New York; (212) 475-8592; bluenotejazz.com; tessasouter.com.

-- Zan Stewart