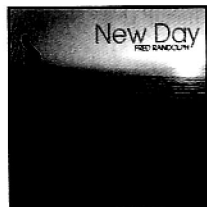


Bossa Nova Delicado presents some of the best modern Latin jazz I've recently heard. Pianist Cris-tóvão Bastos is a composer that's sure to surprise your ear with inventive and captivating melodies that are at times serene and heavy and at others light and quirky. Bastos contributes several originals to the disc, as well as playing some funky and in-the-pocket Latin jazz piano. His band members are as simpatico as any musician or listener could ask for. *Bossa Nova Delicado* is simply a CD you can't miss.

The disc opens with a Bastos original entitled "Os três chorões." The tune begins with a rubato piano introduction, before making the jump to an up-tempo Brazilian feel. Bastos delivers the melody, doubled by saxophonist Zé Canuto. Both men take engaging solos. The next original is "Subindo a Rocinha," my personal favorite. There is an atmospheric percussion intro, complete with vocal "yelps" and other eclectic and eccentric sounds. The fast, jumpy melody is again rendered by Bastos and Canuto. Bororó lays down a funky bass vamp throughout the solo section. Another well-crafted tune is "Estrada Real" which features a melody that pits bass against sax, in a call and response form. "Folia da chapada" is a light, pop-flavored tune, while still rooted in the Brazilian Latin style.

The final Bastos composition is "Mandacaru," an impressive piece comprised of a single theme taken through several movements. There is a dramatic, climactic build in intensity throughout the tune. This is certainly an appropriate album closer. Bassist Bororó contributes "Elo," a bossa-ballad with an airy feel and a similar pop-inflection as Bastos' "Folia da chapada." The band's treatment of Dave Brubeck's "Bossa Nova U.S.A." is quite unusual, with a soft touch and a droopy ballad feel. "Delicado" again features a bass vamp which anchors the tune.

Bossa Nova Delicado is full of Latin that swings! The band plays wonderfully together; the material Bastos has contributed is entertaining, listenable and memorable. The compositions are full of catchy melodies and harmonies that provide a broad, colorful canvas on which the band can create. If I've gone on too long about Bastos' compositions, it's only because they struck me as so original and enjoyable. Yet I don't wish to mislead; this guy can play as well. His solos and accompaniments never disappoint and neither does *Bossa Nova Delicado*.



FRED RANDOLPH

NEW DAY — Creative Spirit Records CSR002. Web: www.fredrandolph.com. *Being Set Free; Eclipse; The Wish; New Day; Melodia Sem Fim (Endless Melody); The Longing; 90 Dollar Drive; Ice Nine; Soul Stuff; Way Back When; Balancing Acts; Sitting Bull's Dilemma*

less electric bass, electric bass; Tim Bulkley; drums; Art Hirahara; acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes; Rob Roth, tenor sax, soprano sax; Erik Jekabson, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jeff Massanari, acoustic guitar, electric guitar; Michael Goerlitz, percussion; David Frazier, percussion; Patricia Angulo, percussion; Sandy Cressman, vocals; Noel Jewkes, flute; Jon Otis, drums; Dan Zemelman, Hammond Organ; Charlie Wilson, trombone

By Curtis Davenport

Many jazz players will start out playing another instrument before they settle on the instrument that they become known for. Art Blakey started out as a pianist, Branford Marsalis' original instrument was the clarinet and the list goes on. Bassist Fred Randolph has yet to achieve the notoriety in the jazz world that the two aforementioned gentlemen have - something that he deserves. But I daresay that he has probably taken one of the more unusual paths to his instrument of choice. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Fred Randolph's first instrument was the ukulele. I'm glad that Fred made the switch. Jazz is tough enough to market to the public these days, but jazz ukulele, is probably an even tougher sell. If the jazz buying is paying any attention, Fred Randolph's *New Day* should be an easy sell and get a good deal of attention.

New Day is Randolph's second disc as a leader; the first was 2003's *Learning Curve*. I haven't heard the first disc yet, but after hearing this one, I'll be getting around to *Learning Curve*, sooner rather than later. When I'm unfamiliar with an artist, I also like to take a look at who the sidemen and women are. Most times I can get a good idea of what is to come, based on who is playing alongside the leader. In jazz, more often than not, the old adage rings true that a person is known by the company he or she keeps. In the case of *New Day*, I was very pleased to see the name of pianist Art Hirahara listed prominently. Hirahara is an underrated player. I've enjoyed his work greatly before and he is at the top of his game throughout the disc. So are the other players - who are for the most part new to me, except for the monster San Francisco reedman, Noel Jewkes, who drops by for a cameo on flute. He takes the Brazilian number "Melodia Sem Fim," to the next level. The core group is Randolph, who plays acoustic bass on all cuts except two; Hirahara on piano and Rhodes, drummer Tim Bulkley, a solid timekeeper, who has worked with Stanley Jordan and Ray Drummond, among others; saxman Rob Roth, a robust Joe Henderson influenced tenor, that just blew me away and Erik Jekabson on trumpet and flugelhorn, a young man with a cool, creamy tone on both of his horns and a very bright musical future.

After a nice opening cut "Being Set Free", the disc really catches fire with the second track, "Eclipse" a driving piece of hard bop that would have been right at home on the Jazz Messengers set list. It was written by the leader, as were all of the selections and from what I see here, Randolph is just as good as a composer as he is a player. After the theme is stated, Roth comes on, wearing Henderson's dirty Blue Note socks. Jekabson is next, with a brief Hubbard-like statement and then comes Hirahara for a few bars (when is someone

a tinge of *picante* on percussion and I have to admit, that from that point on, I was hooked! "The Wish", which follows "Eclipse," is a mellow show piece for Jekabson's flugelhorn, Hirahara's piano and the leader's fretless electric bass, on which he also displays formidable technique. The pacc picks up again with the incendiary title cut, a track that looks towards the music of Miles Davis' last great quintet for its musical base. Although he only solos briefly, the track belongs to drummer Tim Bulkley and the Northern California native shows off power and technique that is equal to any young jazz drummer working today. The group shows off their ability with a ballad on "The Longing", a gorgeous, aching tune that is a Ben Webster-ish feature for the gifted Mr. Roth, who shows that he can do so much more than just blow hard. Another standout is the humorous "90 Dollar Drive", another track with a Blakey-esque head and a great back story that Randolph shares in the liner notes. It features more really fine solo work from the horns and Hirahara, who had some really interesting give and take with Bulkley, which caught my attention on repeated listening.

If you like your jazz energetic, accessible and extremely well played; you will love *New Day* by Fred Randolph and his exciting young group. There are many out there who turn their noses up at any young player who has the nerve to have a conservatory background. I say that although I agree with that crowd at times, I also say that there is a lot of good, even great music coming out of these cats. If you miss them, you'll miss some of the best of both worlds. *New Day* is a feel good winner, from perhaps the best bass playing ukulele master in jazz today.



KATY ROBERTS QUINTET

LIVE AT TWINS AND MORE — www.katyroberts.com. Recorded live at Twins Jazz, Washington DC in 2004, and Bop City studio, Paris, 2004-5. *7th Ave, Blossom, Punjab, Aisha, Love Dance, Photonality, Selfportrait in 3 colors, Jean-Marie, 26-2*

PERSONNEL: Katy Robert, piano; Rasul Siddik, trumpet and flugelhorn; Salim Washington, tenor saxophone and flute; Radu Olahu ben Judah, bass (2,4,6,7,8); Joe Link, drums (2,4,6,7,8); Wayne Dockery, bass (1,3,5); John Betsch, drums (1,3,5); Sa Davis, congas (5); Dominique Lemerle, bass (9); Brian Willson, drums (9).

By Ariel D. Teitel

Katy Roberts trained in Boston, Mass. at Berklee College of Music in the late 1970s, and, in 1985, obtained a Masters of Music at New England Conservatory. In the '80s, she performed solo and led her own