

# Karrin Allyson

## Imagina: Songs of Brasil

Released on Concord Jazz  
September 1<sup>st</sup> 2008

As a singer, Karrin Allyson's diction is flawless, her phrasing conversational, her tempo swinging, her improvisation teeming with scat and vocalese. Over the course of her 10-album career with Concord, she has expanded her breadth of repertoire to include Tin Pan Alley, Gershwin, Porter, John Coltrane, blues, new standards, and samba. Yet while Karrin Allyson has included Brazilian music on her albums and in her live shows throughout her career, her new recording, *Imagina: Songs of Brasil* is the first time she has devoted an entire album to the music of Brazil – a timely release since this is the year that bossa nova, the music that Brazil gave the world, celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Produced by Karrin and Nick Phillips, *Imagina* is a beautiful collection of 14 tracks that features songs sung fully in Portuguese, as well as Brazilian songs with English translations. "I like the storytelling quality of singing in Portuguese," says Allyson, "But I also wanted to make this album user-friendly to people who don't know the language, to try to remain true to the Brazilian feel and sound even when singing in English." In the liner notes to *Imagina*, Allyson concludes: "Whatever your native language, I hope that these [songs] speak directly to your heart, as they have to mine."

As to what attracts her to Brazilian music, Allyson says, "Initially it was the groove which I found to be infectious. But then I became more aware of the variety of Brazilian songs that have an evocative, intoxicating combination of amazing melodies and rich harmonies. I also became fascinated by the stories these songs tell. There's so much to discover in Brazilian music."

Allyson's "Brazilian mentor" for the project is her friend Lúcia Guimarães, who writes in the CD liner notes, "Brazilian music is often about romance, subtlety and mischief. Karrin's curiosity and originality allow her to fly over the clichés that have been attached to this music through the years, as it made its way North. Karrin's amazing ear allows her to sing in Portuguese like a *carioca* (Rio native)."

Half the songs on the CD were penned by Antonio Carlos Jobim, including two sumptuous renditions of his bossa novas, *Desafinado (Slightly Out of Tune)*, originally written as a jab at singers who sang off-key, and *O Morro Não Tem Vez (Favela)*. Other Jobim tunes include the upbeat *A Felicidade (Happiness)* and *É Com Esse Que Eu Vou*, originally recorded by one of Brazil's foremost singers, Elis Regina. Says Allyson, "This is a song inviting everyone—no matter what social level—to come and dance. Our version is bawdier, funkier and more sassy than Elis' original."

In addition to her rhythm team of bassist **David Finck** and drummer **Todd Strait**, *Imagina* features her longtime guitarist **Rod Freeman** and guest appearances by vibraphone/marimba player **Steve Nelson** and keyboard and accordion player **Gil Goldstein**

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