

JAZZ WEEKLY

Luciana Souza@The Broad Stage

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by George W. Harris • March 19, 2016 •



Vocalist Luciana Souza demonstrated at The Broad Stage that Brazilian music can be presented in many hues. Up to now, most of her recordings have been of the softer pastels in watercolors with quiet chords delivered by the Romero Lubambo or Larry Koonse. In presenting music from her latest album *Speaking In Tongues*, she has changed her palate to thick oil based strokes with bright and strong strokes, teaming up with electric guitarist Lionel Loueke's trio with Massimo Biolcato/b and Kendrick Scott/dr with the addition of chromatic harmonica player Gregoire Maret. The Ms Souza lead the team through a lesser delved aspect of Brazilian music, leaning more towards the African than the European flavors.



Benin-born Loueke's vocal percussion and Sahel-flavored guitar picking gave extra muscle behind Ms. Souza's orange blossomed honey of a voice during wordless vocals on pieces like the rumbling "At The Fair." Her English vocals on Leonard Cohen's "Nightingale" included dramatic shadows created by Maret's harmonica and Scott's drums. Opening with Scott's earthy drum work, the sparkling "Straw Hat" mixed Souza's sparkling voice with Loueke's bluesy and boogie-ing guitar, challenging Maret's harmonica to a wild jousting match which created simultaneous images of Southern juke joints and Carnivals in Rio.



But, as with all things Brazilian, it's the slower and sadder pieces that create loyalty. The wonderfully desultory "Roses Don't Speak" melded Souza's haunting voice with Maret's harp that gloriously sighed like an emphysemic courtesan, while a Biolcato's lurking bass assuaged into a sepia'd "Corcovado." Her longing, reflective and reminiscent "He Was Too Good To Me" closed the enchanting evening with her convincingly delivering her regrets, of which she'd had a few, but too few to mention, while just before, she encouraged the audience through the bouncy and optimistic "Filhos De Gandhi" that we still need peaceful prophets in these perilous times.



Being the beginning of Holy Week, a better message was never timed! Souza continues to grow as an artist, and being able to observe these leaps and bounds is an encouragement, both for us fans and for the future of the style of music that saved jazz.