

# JazzTimes

## KARRIN ALLYSON: IMAGINA

*Fourteen Gems: Among the best nods to Brazil ever crafted by an American singer*

By Christopher Loudon

May 1, 2008

Welcome as it is, an entire album of Brazilian songs from vocalist Karrin Allyson can hardly be considered a surprise. Allyson has been mining the Brazilian songbook since her ambitious, if perhaps too tentative, blending of Chopin's "Prelude Op. 28 No. 4" with Jobim's "Insensatez" on her debut disc, 1993's *I Didn't Know About You*. At least one Brazilian tune found its way onto each of her next five albums, culminating with 1999's multi-shaded melding of French and Brazilian classics on *From Paris to Rio*. Perhaps Allyson felt sated after Rio, for there's been nary a soupçon of Brazilian influence on her postmillennial recordings. So *Imagina* can better be regarded as a return to an early love.

Juxtaposing that decade-and-a-half-old version of "Insensatez" with the 14 gems gathered here (none of which she's previously recorded), it's wonderful to hear not only how much more interesting and assured Allyson has grown (and how intoxicating her slightly hoarse and breathless voice, suggesting the barest remnants of a lingering cold, has become), but how much deeper and richer her appreciation for Brazilian music's deceptively delicate subtlety now is. Illuminating just two of a dozen examples, consider, for instance, the gentle anticipation that infuses her "Desafinado" and the intriguing hint of melancholy she weaves through "Estrada Branca (This Happy Madness)." To suggest that this is Allyson's finest album to date would be a disservice to such solid accomplishments as her 2001 Coltrane tribute and 2006's bold, brave *Footprints*; but ranking it among the best nods to Brazil ever crafted by an American singer seems fully justified.



View Original Article Here:

[http://jazztimes.com/reviews/cd\\_reviews/detail.cfm?article\\_id=19104&section=Vox&issue=200805](http://jazztimes.com/reviews/cd_reviews/detail.cfm?article_id=19104&section=Vox&issue=200805)