

JOHAN CHRISTER SCHÜTZ: BLISSA NOVA

Sometimes you don't know whether to laugh or to cry. The feeling of being finished with this record is almost impossible to explain. But I'll have a try.

"Blissa Nova" ends a two-year long chapter of my life, with everything that two years of life can entail: laughter and tears, success and disappointment, immobility and sudden movement.

The title is a simple play with the words "bliss" and "bossa nova". Originally I'd planned to create a theme album on the subject of "happiness" but this idea soon felt too restrictive. Not because I didn't feel happy enough, but simply because it's difficult to write 10 lyrics on the same subject without repeating oneself. I also made the important discovery that if it wasn't for our sorrows, we would never be glad!

During 2004 I produced the music for a short-film which a friend in Czech Republic was directing. The film was called "The Miracle" and to me it was about how important it is to live every moment fully. As soon as I had finished the film music I wrote "Plunge Into The Miracle". It didn't fit in the short-film, but marked the beginning of writing the songs for this recording.

INFLUENCES AND SOUND

I produced "Blissa Nova" while I was writing the songs. In that way the album has grown and changed with time, songs have been added and taken away, just like people in life around us.

Obviously I have my biggest influences in the Brazilian bossa nova and samba, but I also listen a lot to Brazilian popular music, MPB. I've always had an enormous love for strong melodies and musical energy, which was grounded in my up-bringing, sneak-listening to my brother's and sister's vinyl records of the Beatles, David Bowie, Kraftwerk, Imperiet and even my parents' oldest Elvis records.

This is not a pure bossa nova record. If you've already started listening, you'll know what I mean. Several of the songs have a club feeling and there's a lot of "carnival". The typical, quiet bossa nova is absent with the exception of a couple of ballads. Instead the mood is joyful and relaxed, full of energetic, sometimes manic percussion and inspired jazz solos. I'm backed by some of the best Swedish jazz musicians, and in the eleventh hour the Brazilian singer Aline de Lima appeared in Stockholm to join me in a duet.

I also picked five of my favourite Swedish and Brazilian songs and translated them into English for the sake of unity - "Underbart är kort" (by Povel Ramel), "Den lilla bäcken" (by Allan Edwall), "Eu vim da Bahia" (by Gilberto Gil - Polar Music Prize winner in 2005 and the Brazilian minister of culture), "Tristeza" (by Luíz Bonfá/Maria Toledo) and "Pra que chorar" (by Baden Powell/Vinicius de Moraes).

POST-PRODUCTION

The album cover is a chapter of its own. I had a cover in my head, but as soon as I saw Alexandre Grigoletti's photos I revised my idea. Completely! Alexandre has an incredible capacity to seize moments with his camera and I immediately asked him if I could use some of his photos on the cover. I'm incredibly thankful, as I originally had planned to spend three months of the past winter in Brasil myself, but decided to stay in snowy Stockholm instead to finish this album. The right persons came into my life to tell me that the time had come.

Two of the songs were mixed by Tommy Ekman who, apart from being part of the band Freestyle in the early 80's, is behind several top-selling productions.

Finally, "Blissa Nova" was graciously mastered by Ricardo Garcia at Magic Master Studio in Rio de Janeiro. Ricardo has previously mastered some of my favourite Brazilian records with artists such as João Gilberto, Maria Rita, Caetano Veloso and the Jobim/Morelenbaum "Quarteto" album, and I was very happy to be able to leave this "baby" of mine in his care.

It's with brimming eyes that I hand this album over to you, and it's not relevant if it's from joy or sadness. Sometimes you simply can't tell which is which.

*Johan Christer Schütz
Stockholm, July 2007*

MUSICIANS

Aline de Lima (vocal) - Brazilian singer living in Paris, released her debut CD in 2006 on the French label Naïve.

Peter Asplund (trumpet) - free-lance jazz artist; plays with Bo Kaspers Orkester and Stockholm Jazz Orchestra; has recorded with Viktoria Tolstoy, Sylvia Wrethammar, Lisa Ekdahl, Ainbusk Singers, Kent, Weeping Willows, Wannadies, etc.

Karin Hammar (trombone) - free-lance jazz artist; leads Karin Hammar Good Vibe Project, and also plays in Sliding Hammers together with her sister Mimmi; has recorded and performed with Stockholm Jazz Orchestra, Nils Landgren, Viktoria Tolstoy, Svante Thuresson, Marie Fredriksson (of Roxette) and Maria Schneider.

Sebastian Notini (percussion & drums) - plays with Lisa Nilsson and Simone Moreno; has toured with and/or recorded with Marcos Suzano, Ramiro Musotto, Lina Nyberg, Eagle-Eye Cherry, Robyn, Joey Tempest, Marie Fredriksson, Sofia Karlsson, and many more.

Bosse Lindman (fretless electric bass) - played with the legendary Cuban pianist Bebo Valdés in the 70's, then moved to Germany and made a living as a jazz musician. He's now back in Östergötland.

Henke Sundqvist (rhodes & piano) - plays in the bossanova-pop band Cloudberry Jam from Linköping which has sold gold in Japan; also has the project Twaine.

Most of the other musicians are from Linköping and Mjölby, and they also played on J.C. Schütz' first album, see below. The samba chorus in the final song, the Allan Edwall translation, was spontaneously made up from good friends.

REAR VIEW

Johan Christer Schütz was born in 1976 and grew up in the Swedish countryside of Mjölby, Östergötland. Aged seven he decided to dedicate his life to music after finding a guitar in a trash container. Now living in Stockholm, and has previously also lived for a period in London.

In 2004 his first CD "Passion" was released, which for several months was among the top selling Scandinavian albums on HMV Japan; the biggest multimedia chain of Japan and the world.

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