

## Selected complete press articles and dispatches:

### **Brazilian variations**

"The idea is that this Brazilian CD should be "simple and beautiful". "Beautiful" it is. Céline Rudolph's natural voice which is as light as a feather (both with and without text), the dreamlike themes (five of her own), and the different settings: superb. But "simple"? Can you tap along to the often complicated rhythms? She pulls it off! Even the multiplicity of languages (real and invented) is beautifully sophisticated. This is a programme of very different teaching material from the Dresden music professor." Audio, Peter Steder 2/2007 Audio-Klangtipp

### **Cool stone and hot insole**

Céline Rudolph, a professor of jazz singing in Dresden and a polyglot musical globetrotter, dances barefoot over the cool stone stage in the **Passionskirche**. It was here that she was present at a concert given by Baden Powell many years ago. Now, surrounded by an excellent quartet from São Paulo, she stands and pays an affectionate homage to the great Brazilian guitarist. **Céline Rudolph's** expressive voice is characterised by bittersweet Lusitanian melancholy. Her singing is richly modulated, but has an extracorporeal lightness which means that she does not belong to any particular genre. For her new album "Brazaventure" (Enja), which she is presenting this evening, the singer has been able to gain the producer Rodolfo Stroeter (Gilberto Gil, Milton Nascimento), who provides a calming influence with his double bass, while guitarist Diego Figueiredo is able to magic more effects from his acoustic instrument than would be possible with an electrical one. Even pieces by Coltrane or French rapper MC Solaar are effortlessly integrated into the intercontinental repertoire and, as Rudolph's voice wins the day in a fiery duo/dual with the bellows of the accordion, a spark is lit from the cold stone. *Roman Rhode*, Berliner Tagesspiegel of 19.2.2007

"The Berlin jazz singer and university professor Céline Rudolph has now released at least a dozen CDs. However, the singer is still not well-known in many places. She focuses her attention on Brazil in her current album. The music is inspired by Brazil. With the exception of the outstanding German flautist Tilmann Dehnhardt and the equally virtuoso vibraphonist Rupert Stamm, she is accompanied by Brazilian musicians in originals by Baden Powell as well as for example John Coltrane. However, the vocalist's own compositions tend to predominate. A German folk-song ("If I were a little bird") gives the album its underlying themes: vivacity, lightness and beauty. With the Brazilian double bass player and producer Rodolfo Stroeter, who also chose the musicians, Céline Rudolph has managed to gain one of the leading figures in popular Brazilian music. Overall, a wonderfully light, playful album has come out of São Paulo. This is not fast food for occasional

listeners and it is not a flirtation with world music." HR2, CD of the week, Hubert Böhm

### **Saudade from the middle of Berlin - Céline Rudolph**

***Brazaventure*** – this makes one think of excitement and musical adventures and wild roaming through the undergrowth of Afro-Brazilian rhythms. That is a bit what it is like, but it is not what it is really like: a more accurate description would be to say that it is a gentle journey into the interior world of things, a reminiscent gliding through a melancholically dreamy cultural landscape.



**By Henry Altmann**

The reason for this is that, even though she grew up in Berlin as the daughter of a French mother, she was also raised on her German father's large collection of records of African and Brazilian music and jazz. Even as a child, she sang the gentle sounds of the Portuguese language and, at the age of 15, she learnt to play bossa nova on the guitar. In this way, she became acquainted with some Brazilian music as something "which was always there and not something which I learnt myself".

It is no wonder that Rudolph's new CD feels as light as a feather, a poetic fairytale in dotted, hatched, pastel hues. In order to prepare herself better

for recording, she travelled through Brazil a few weeks prior to recording. "I wanted to immerse myself in the language and culture and not just travel there and turn up in the studio. I travelled through the country by car myself and discovered some really beautiful spots. It actually took me a long time to arrive in São Paulo from Rio."

It was when she heard Gilberto Gil's album '**Oslodum**' that Céline Rudolph had the idea of contacting Rodolfo Stroeter, the well-known Brazilian producer and double bass player. The mix of traditional and modern elements from more than several continents was in keeping with her own stylistic and cultural openness. After starting studies in rhetoric (!) and philosophy, the woman who was born in 1969 changed to jazz singing at the Hochschule der Künste. A study stay in West Africa in 1995 opened up a new world of spirituality and concentration, which found expression in multilayer crossover projects, of which the most recent, "Lisbon-Maputo-Berlin", premiered in Lisbon this year.

And now for Brazil – very song-orientated, simple, but with depth, that is what the album is supposed to sound like. In fact, it has become both a shimmering and simple mix of pieces by Brazilian musicians, two jazz standards ("My one and only love" and John Coltrane's "Naima"), own compositions and an adaptation of the German folk-song "If I were a bird" – not so much a rediscovery of fire so much as a rediscovery of the internal world. The singer found it "very enjoyable" to work with Brazilian musicians such as the accordionist Toninho Ferragutti, the guitarist Paulo Bellinati and Stroeter himself. In addition, she discovered that the "track-by-track process" by which soundtracks are recorded one after the other and not at the same time – unpopular in the jazz world – really conceals its poetic possibilities. "I have learnt so much as a result of this. And I have rediscovered something which I actually used to do as a child on an old Fostex four-track recorder which I was sent for my thirteenth birthday, that is to say placing different tracks over the top of each other. It is a very creative process, working like that."

As most musicians have "several different voices", that is to say they work on several projects and engage in several activities at the same time – in Céline Rudolph's case, she is a professor of singing at Dresdner Musikhochschule as well as being involved with many bands – such an experience is not without its consequences for the overall creation. "This has at any rate had an influence – it has in a certain way made me much lighter and joyful in my singing. Obviously, I have also been through other musical phases which have been much heavier. The Brazilian phase has made everything much lighter."

How is it possible to retain this lightness on a heavy tour?" I am someone who likes to surprise myself and others on tour. I do not like it when things simply repeat themselves. That is the beauty of going on tour. On a CD, there is no second take. I find it quite exciting that music continues to develop when on tour. Since we are as a band a completely creative group of

people, this spirit of creating something on the spur of the moment came across in the rehearsals. And it is lovely to see how new musicians bring a new vision into my pieces, to see how music changes ... to see how life changes, to see how life is a process. I am no longer the same person I was five years ago. It follows that music must also change."

Jazzthetik, 03/2007

## **From Brazil straight to Eendenich**

Céline Rudolph and her band in harmony

Bonn. Harmony. As a full professor at the Dresdner Musikhochschule, she earns her living by managing the Department of Jazz/Rock/Pop Singing: Céline Rudolph, who was born in Berlin in 1969 and who grew up in Berlin, is a singing phenomenon, a sovereign of the music world.

She has so far brought out twelve CDs and is currently on tour with her latest project, "Brazaventure" (by Enja), a homage to an early love: She thanks the record collection of her parents for her first, intensive encounter with Brazilian music. From this has emerged exciting evidence of a lively musicality.

In the Eendenich "Harmonie", it was possible to see Céline Rudolph perform with a quartet which had recently flown in from Brazil: Toninho Ferragutti, accordion, Diego Figueiredo, acoustic guitar, Rodolfo Stroeter, double bass, and Ricardo Mosca, percussion.

Rudolph uses her colourful and always unfaltering voice as an instrument, quite justifiably. What is important is not so much what she sings, but how she sings it: speech is a phonetic medium, rhythmically accentuated "**vocalise**" is not rare, and there is sometimes simply vocal percussion. There are moods which are evoked by this.

Apart from her own compositions, compositions by among others Baden Powell ("Deixa"), John Coltrane ("Naima") and a certain Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart ("Come, dear May") serve as material. The mood in the sold-out "Harmony" was, at the end of the day, **overwhelming**.

Generalanzeiger Bonn 13.2.07

**Céline Rudolph**

**Fire, rhythm, passion**

The Berlin voice wonder Céline Rudolph can be properly declared to be a global ambassador between space and time, since, on consumption of her solo debut "Brazaventure", it is immediately possible to imagine that one is below Sugarloaf Mountain in the pulsating South American metropolis of Rio de Janeiro. **Overblown?** On 10.2., the lover of world music can be captivated by the charm of this music artist at Wuppertal Stock Exchange!

The receptive consumer in today's world no longer swears by just one genre: house, pop and electro belong to the panorama of the open-minded night owl of today just as much as jazz, bossa nova and Brazilian music. **However, the genre of world music which embraces everything can sometimes change into a runaway hit.** Exotic faces which tell stories of love and yearning and ask for meaning in a eurocentric world beam out from all of the hoardings. Every now and then, the standard of that musical category suffers from this. However, the Berlin vocal artist Céline Rudolph does not need to have any such doubts, since her music is original, timeless, stateless and free and also has a clear message. "World music is often used as a synonym for traditional music from outside Europe. Someone has described my music as 'world jazz'. My musical outlook stems from jazz, some pop elements are added to this on my new CD, and the material originates from various cultural areas which have different languages. But it especially comes from my inner world: Here I listen to the music first and then write it down or process it in spontaneous improvisations", is how the young professor defines the aspirations of her songs. She is a master of mood creation; her natural charisma is magical. Groove, Brazilian, ethno as well as filigree tonal poetry and exciting improvisations: a playing with poetical moments which are captured, portrayed and set free on her solo debut "Brazaventure".

In the career of Céline Rudolph, Brazil was already playing a directive role. She was made aware of music when she was still in the cradle: Her father introduced her to African-American and Brazilian music at an early age, while her mother, a Frenchwoman, inspired the young Céline to compose songs when she was only 12 years old. The Berlin woman discovered the Portuguese language to be a stylistic element in her parent's record collection. It would appear that the artist was tuned into diversity from childhood onwards. The result can today be seen in the name "Brazaventure" and characterises all of Rudolph's experiences and at the same time symbolises a breakthrough to new shores. "'Brazaventure' is the start of my musical adventure in Brazil. And it is still not complete! In October 2006, I presented the CD with my band in São Paulo. The audience was very enthusiastic! In 2007, we want to go touring in Brazil and we are obviously thinking of new recordings which include my latest songs and compositions. 'Brazaventure' asks the question: What will happen if I record my compositions in Brazil together with Brazilian musicians? I will develop that lightness which I have always foreseen in my music. With this new band, I can exteriorise and express my inner world", says the Berlin woman with the gentle and delicate "bluntness" who recorded her current album with Brazilian producer Rodolfo Stroeter (who among other things produced Gilberto Gil's "Os lodum") and top-class musicians such as Marcos Suzano, Toninho Ferragutti, Paulo Bellinati, Mônica Salmaso and Sérgio Santos.

In 2003, the young woman from Berlin was awarded a professorship in Dresden and is there the Head of the Department of Jazz/Rock/Pop Singing

at the "Carl Maria von Weber" Hochschule für Musik. A pop star who lectures at a well-known music college. "The students want to know what paths lead to the stage both musically and practically. 'How does it work if you have a label, how do I produce a demo, how do I get concerts?' However, I stress that there are different ways of reaching the goal [...] What is, however, most important is to guide the students in their own musical process, to help them to bring to light that which is hidden in them", the 38-year-old mother says a little proudly about her everyday teaching life. One gets the impression that she already has a great career as a professor at a music college in Dresden. What motivates her to keep going to the studio, to make music and to sing at concerts and festivals? "If you are a musician, you have to play. Music is my vocation and my career. The professorship at the music college is the fruit of my musical labours, not the other way round", explains Céline Rudolph. The artist is constantly travelling between Berlin, Dresden and a full calendar. A graceless and disciplined workaholic with a clear mission? "I love life! I make a very conscious effort to organise my life around everything which awakens my interest, which makes me happy and with which I feel inwardly connected. When I am not away on musical engagements, I like to cook for family and friends, I hang out in cafés or I revive myself with Dr Veda (joke: obviously, I am talking about the Ayurvedic teaching regarding a healthy life). I also manage a very successful family enterprise", says the winner of the "JazzArt – Music of the 21st Century" award in a placatory tone.

Adorno once referred to "jazz as a coitus machine". If Professor Rudolph was able to meet him today, what would her response to him be? "Mr Adorno, you can **come**, but let yourself be driven by my sounds and grooves!", jokes the vocal artist. She does not conduct dialogues in all areas between U and E music. "There will always be misunderstandings if one values only the goal and not the path; that is to say, one does not consider the process of making music as a work of art, but only as a completed work, as in classical music. Artistic communication is still valued as an art form today, 50 years later, by people from all walks of life and of all ages. Perhaps there was simply too much sex in jazz for Adorno", says the gifted voice wonder, winking.

Like no other singer in this country, Céline Rudolph manages to enrich the bossa nova of her role models with rhythms from pop, jazz and tropicalismo. This means that the concert on 10.2 at Wuppertal Stock Exchange will not only play with the moment, but will also be a fiesta of music styles which overlaps the generations.

Sven Linnert, HEINZ 02/07 Wuppertal

### **Wandering as though in a dream**

With light-of-foot matter-of-factness, she enters the stage barefoot, dancing and at the same time surfing on the waves of the Latin rhythms. Rarely has a European singer been so deeply immersed in the musical world of Brazilian culture as Céline Rudolph. Years have passed since her successful

appearance at the first Leipzig Jazz Youth Festival. Céline has since grown a great deal in terms of experience, feelings and sovereignty. She travelled to the country of her desire and found like-minded people with whom she was able to realise a long cherished dream – a project entitled "Brazaventure". Together with the group around the double bass player Rudolfo Stroeter, who has produced many albums with the stars of Brazilian popular music, she is returning to a place in her early years, the Moritzbastei. With natural persuasiveness, she manages to draw the audience into that discreet, but magical mood of fluency which is accompanied by gentle sounds and addictive grooves. Céline travels in a dreamlike state through a landscape in which jazz and samba are married with bossa nova. What is more: She demonstrates with bravura how a universal language can emerge from the infusion of African rhythms, American standards and European songs into Brazilian music. As a joint band, the percussive quality of this music in which all are involved and whose dynamism is promoted by Ricardo Mosca on the drums is clear.

Céline Rudolph sings classics such as "Deixa" by Baden Powell, jazz titles such as "My one and only love", and lastly also a German folk-song which she has reimported from Brazil "Latinised". However, she particularly likes to sing her own songs in Portuguese, French, English and the imaginary language of "vocalise". Accompanied by her guitarist Diego Figueiredo, she calls to mind the breezy vocal instrumental scat duos of Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass. With the subtly humorous interpretation of a rap number by MC Solaar, she exudes the élan of current youth culture. All of this is harmonised, for example the accordion of Toninho Ferragutti with French songs and the Brazilian bossa. Céline Rudolph knows how to weave stories with an individual flavour from speech-music melodies – passionate, rousing, authentic stories. Credible since they introduce that virulent aspect of saudade which is so difficult to describe and which is omnipresent in Brazil, but which is also to be found in other cultures, that melancholy which brings some friction into the beautiful music of Rio, a little bittersweet poetry in a glass full of joie de vivre.

Bert Noglik

© Leipziger Volkszeitung of Sunday 18 February 2007



### **Céline Rudolph, Brazaventure**

Enja/Soulfood

Céline Rudolph? Wasn't there something not all that long ago? That is right. The singer was a member of the group in some of the songs on the album "Samba Tzigane" of Dusko Gojkovich. Convincingly no doubt, since, with "Brazaventure", she presents her first album as a lead singer. And, on it, there is not one second when this professor of jazz singing does not profess her love of Brazilian music. But without her own hallmark and without any lack of sincerity. Possibly responsible for this: Gilberto Gil, the producer of Rodolfo Stroeter and also the producer of Caetano Veloso, Nana Vasconcelos and Milton Nascimento. He was impressed by Céline Rudolph's swinging rhythms and sensed her fine feel for improvisation and jazz. The songs of the sky recorded in São Paulo are similarly relaxed. Could be poems. Could also transport you and make you free. Spurred on by irresistible rhythms as well as strong percussive moments and a voice which holds everything together and makes everything listenable. Céline Rudolph again displays a strength: Getting to know herself and her voice. Finding a balance between holding

back and forging ahead with vigour. The fact that she knows how to introduce a balance between humour, play, lightness, melancholy and passion gives the album the stamp of a "value added voice experience". A whole experience which clearly shows: Good music will last for ever.  
Sven Ferchow , Jazzzeitung

Céline Rudolph

**Ménage à trois.** She really does not appear to be what one would imagine to be a professor: she has been singing with Bobby McFerrin and Lauren Newton, drummed with a Djembe - master from Guinea, experiences the nightlife of Lisbon and is working with Brazil's heroes in the studio. With Céline Rudolph, all global activities stand in the playful service of the voice. She revealed to Stefan Franzen the secret ties she is weaving with her unique voice among Brazil, Africa and German traditional folksongs.

"My father once told me that I had sung to the records of João Gilberto as a small child. Later on, at the time I already played the guitar, I picked out the songs of Jobim. Brazilian music is deeply rooted in me, so deeply that I really can't tell when it all started", Celine Rudolph says with her soft, light timbre. A timbre that immediately indicates that bossa and samba slumber in it as though soul-mates. Rudolph grew up in Berlin in the seventies as the daughter of a French mother and a German, Brazilophil father and paid attention to her inner voice already at an early age. She says that she composed before she had even started to sing and started to write down the music in her mind around the age of twelve. At first, there are texts accompanying the music. But soon she emancipates herself from words, composing instrumentals which she enriches with improvised vowels. "I had to look for a language, colors, to which I attach sounds. There was a time at which I would have preferred to be a trumpet myself in order to be able to express what I felt. But today I have found in my nature as a singer a wide variety of ways to express myself, not only by my voice, but also by gestures, dance, and physicality. I am no static chamber singer, but draw on dynamic power, motion, and the feeling of the ground under my feet." This rootedness is not without good reason. Already at a very early stage, the jazz student of the Berlin *Hochschule der Künste* (University of Fine Arts) toured the African continent with her first band "out of print", and stayed for some time with Famoudou Konaté, the Guinean master percussionist. Meetings with Gary Peacock, Marc Ducret, and other jazz greats take place in parallel. Thus it is a life beyond the limits of genre which is consistently reflected in the development of her vocal art which she sharpens with many voice performers from Bobby McFerrin to Lauren Newton. "Where Ella Fitzgerald would scat 'doowop' or similar sounds, these are just onomatopoeic syllables with me which nourish themselves, according to the mood I'm in, from an African, Asian, or the Portuguese language", she explains. "I can newly arrange a piece evening by evening; that depends entirely on where I am for the time being externally but in particular internally. Whereby Brazilian colorations have recently clearly become predominant". They are so strong that the Professor for Jazz Singing from Berlin who has been teaching at the Dresden *Musikhochschule* (Conservatory) since 2003 has now jumped into the tropical adventure with an entire album. Accordingly, the name of the work is "Brazaventure" (enja/Soulfood) which was created under the direction of Rodolfo Stroeter, a producer, in São Paulo. This man, who also gave form to the master pieces of Gilberto Gil or Joyce, collected the best performers of the country for a band which, with its maturity and spontaneity, turned into reality the sound-visions of the Franco-German. Among them is star percussionist Marcos Suzano, guitarist Paulo Bellinati who is oriented toward the classical and the accordion virtuoso Toninho Ferragutti. "Brazaventure" has a strongly ritual touch, and lays

the foundation in some pieces on a jazzified Batucada. "I feel a great attraction to Afro-Brazilian cults", Céline Rudolph admits. "I also believe that this power which does not originate from inside me, but which has a spiritual origin, strengthens my music, without me being able to say I am religious in the sense of the Candomblé. However, I feel similar powers which make me perceive the flow of music and of motion and which allow me to drift. This is what we, above all, implemented by the repetitive power of percussion and consciously not by a jazz percussion instrument. I would also like to visit Bahia to go deeper into this area." However, in addition to powerful beats, many lyrical moods left their mark on the album which reminds one of the sensitive composition technique of Milton Nascimento, and, above all, of the harmonically differentiated art of the song-writers of the Minas Gerais. Because 37-year old Céline Rudolph thinks as highly of Milton and his successors as she does of the Bossa group around João Gilberto, Nara Leão, and Baden Powell. But "Brazaventure" is spread even further: In addition to the originally Brazilian colors, the singer has added Batucada to Coltrane's "Naima" as well and furnished it with new musical hints to highlight its ritual character. And she manages to bring about a similarly striking bridge by means of an MC-Solaar piece: French verbal eroticism meets a sensual hip swing - and all this in a rap which mocks the current skinny model scene.

In February, Rudolph and Rodolfo are going to stage the program in Germany; in between the very busy professor is going to jet around the globe for an Afro-oriented project. On behalf of the Goethe-Institute, she is working at it for "Lisbon - Maputo - Berlin" to bring the current influence of the former colonies on Portugal actively to stage in a trilateral meeting: "For about three quarters of a year I have been experiencing the nightlife of Lisbon to hire suitable musicians from Portuguese-speaking African countries who now live there in exile. We will give concerts in 2007 first in Portugal, then in Germany, and in South-African countries. Thus currently the Brazilian, the African, the Afro-elements of Brazil, and the European mix in my activities, the events follow each other rapidly", she smiles and almost seems to be a bit afraid about the triangle developing a life of its own. And where does she, as a musician from Germany, still draw her balanced stance from? The answer to this can be found in the last track of "Brazaventure": Without a text, the melody of "*Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär*" unfolds itself at first from the Forró hit "Asa Branca" of Luis Gonzaga. "This combination of the song from my childhood with Brazilian rhythm simply came to me just like the bird in the verses. On the basis of this piece, I went out to search for other songs from my past which I can reintegrate into my life. And suddenly there were 'Komm lieber Mai' and 'Kein schöner Land' which I, by the way, have taken up for the 'Lisbon - Maputo - Berlin' program and which I transport into an entirely new world." With this return to the German language and the German song repertoire, Rudolph follows a currently widespread tendency. To attend to this music from a mature distance, to transfer it to jazz, on an equal footing with new interpretations of an American standard or a pop-song, has, in her opinion, also to do with credibility, with authenticity, a distancing from the long time of condemnation of one's own roots. She currently works on a complete CD with German folksongs which she, as a prominent composer, will probably compose and arrange by herself with a jazz quartet and string players. The colors for it she already hears deep inside herself. The goal is to tickle "romantic and erotic sub-texts out of the old verses". Rudolph whimsically: "Im schönsten Wiesengrunde" does not have to be necessarily understood as folksy or childlike. I think that there is so much more to such texts ...."

Jazzthing 2007

## German singer appreciates Brazilian music



[Large photo with the caption: Céline Rudolph: Brazilian music made in Berlin](#)

### The Berlin singer Céline Rudolph on promotion tour for “Brazaventure”, her latest album inspired by Brazilian pop music

She is already labelled one of the best voices Germany has produced in recent years. Céline Rudolph, 38, started her record career in 1994 with her first band “out of print”. She grew up with Brazilian music, a passion that not only awakened her interest in learning Portuguese – “to sing bossa nova and play the guitar” – but also made her record an album in Brazil in collaboration with some of the best Brazilian instrumentalists. *Brazaventure* was released at the end of January by the Munich label Enja Records and is already available in Europe and Japan.

It all started with Céline’s father, the owner of an impressive collection of records and great admirer of good music, be it jazz, Afro, or Brazilian pop music. “He still reminds me of when I was five years old and was singing to João Gilberto’s record *Rosa Morena*”, Céline tells us.

Over the years, her love for Brazilian pop music kept growing constantly. There were records such as *Os Afro-Sambas* by Baden Powell and Vinícius de Moraes, *Amoroso*, the classic of João Gilberto, produced by the German arranger and composer Claus Ogermann, and more recently *O Sol de Oslo*, the special project of Gilberto Gil which was recorded in Norway, in which, among others, Marlui Miranda and Rodolfo Stroeter collaborated.

### From Berlin to São Paulo

Céline, being fascinated by Gil’s record, decided to establish contact with the producer and creator of the album of the artist from Bahia, the bass player Rodolfo Stroeter, and she was determined to record an album of her own with him which was to be “only plain and beautiful” and which was to have a strong percussion. The German singer sent some of her recordings to Rodolfo, The man from Brazil liked them and the two started to carry out the project.

Rodolfo began to select the musicians for the project. They decided on Marcos Suzano, the Brazilian tambourine whiz, Jovi Jovinião, a second percussionist for the strengthening of the rhythmic elements, and Toninho Ferragutti – who can also be heard on *O Sol de Oslo* – the guitarist Paulo Bellinati, and the vibraphonist Rupert Stamm.

As special guests, the singer Mônica Salmaso, the guitarist Sérgio Santos and the wind instrument players Teco Cardoso and Tilmann Dehnhardt were invited. A short time later they recorded *Brazaventure* in a studio in São Paulo. “With this album, Rodolfo Stroeter, the producer, succeeded in blending tradition and modern sound, a meeting of the continents”, the singer and composer praised them highly.



Céline, the composer

*Caption: [Large photo with the caption: Cover of CD 'Brazaventure'](#)*

Céline Rudolph is better known as an interpreter, she started composing her own songs very early. It was her father who awakened her love of Brazilian pop music and Afro-American music. Nonetheless, her first compositions, chansons which she wrote at the age of twelve, were inspired by her French mother.

Her talent for composition was furthered in that Céline passed the qualifying examination at the *Hochschule der Künste* in Berlin where she studied jazz singing and had teachers such as David Friedman, Jerry Granelli, and Catherine Gayer.

For *Brazaventure*, Céline wrote five of the eleven songs and impresses the listener by singing in four languages: Portuguese, German, French and English. "French was the first language I heard as a child, then German, which I speak best. English came through jazz tradition, and I came into contact with Portuguese through Brazilian music and the poems of Fernando Pessoa", Céline told the German press.

She sings *Deixa* by Baden Powell (one of her favourite Brazilian composers), a co-production with the guitarist Vinicius de Moraes. In *Naima*, the ballad by the North-American jazz legend John Coltrane, Céline lets elements of the Candomblé flow in and thus produces a *crossover* with the esthetics of the Brazilian music group Olodum.

### **Internationally present**

*Brazaventure* received good reviews in the German press. Beate Sampson from the radio station *Bayern 4* said that Céline does not only impress by her multi-facetted singing and her ability to improvise "but also by the compositions with which she had already made herself a name". And the *Jazz Podium* magazine is also enthusiastic about her talent: "Impressive music by a new generation". In February, Céline Rudolph tours Germany. The closing concert of this 9-city-tour will be held by her in Copenhagen, Denmark. On stage, she will be accompanied by a Brazilian top musician quartet: Toninho Ferragutti, Rodolfo Stroeter, the guitarist Diego Figueiredo, and Ricardo Mosca on the drums. In April she will again visit Brazil where she was in October of last year to give a preview at the *Brazaventure* show in the Sesc Pompéia in São Paulo. And following the end of the promotion tour for the next album, Céline is already planning her next project entitled *Lisboa-Maputo-Berlin*.  
Felipe Tadeu, Deutsche Welle

## **Céline Rudolph and Project "Lisboa-Maputo-Berlin"**

### **Portuguese Passions**



 Céline Rudolph

German musicians don't often get a chance to build bridges between Portugal and Lusophone Africa. But Berlin jazz singer Céline Rudolph (b. 1969), since 2003 professor of singing at Dresden Music School, has been invited by the Goethe Institute to run a project called "Lisboa-Maputo-Berlin" in the Portuguese capital focusing on African immigrants in Lisbon.

Céline Rudolph debuted with her first band, Out Of Print, in 1990 and first came into close contact with African music in 1995 during a student trip to West Africa.

*What's the project about?*

Just as Paris is a focal point for the whole Francophone world, Lisbon is a cultural hub for countries like Angola, Mozambique, the Cape Verde Islands, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé e Príncipe. When I was first confronted with the idea of bringing together African immigrants from the Portuguese-speaking world in Lisbon, that was something completely new to me. In Germany we have few points of contact with African culture, but these connections are very much alive in Lisbon. The central idea was to get a new music project going with musicians from all those countries – along with a Portuguese musician – and myself.

*What was the challenge for you, a German artist, in a project like this?*


I used to listen to Brazilian music when I was a child without understanding the language. It was as natural for me to sing that stuff as German children's songs. My mother's French, anyway, and just because I was born in Germany there's no reason for me to confine myself to the German language. At 15 I started learning Portuguese. That fit right in with Brazilian music. I also began taking an interest in Portuguese poetry. Particularly Fernando Pessoa, a few of whose poems I set to music.

*People generally associate Portuguese music with fado. But you probably have a wholly different approach?*

My singing is more heavily influenced by Brazilian culture. But since the start of this project I've been to Lisbon three times already and that culture's started rubbing off on me too. It wasn't long before that came to affect my singing. Recently, as I was guest-singing on a recording with trumpeter Dusko Goykovich, a Fado colouring crept in quite unnoticed. It was something I wasn't mentally steering and couldn't hold back either. It often happens that you absorb vibrations like that and translate them into your own idiom quite unconsciously.



*So what sorts of common features and dependencies do you find in the Portuguese-speaking world?*

 [Céline Rudolph](#)

To my mind, there's a wide gap, musically speaking, between Brazil and Portugal. But Cape Verde music contains an intersection of the two cultures. African Lusophone music, on the other hand, is much more Brazil-oriented. Portugal's pretty much out of the picture there.

*But you don't have any Brazilian musicians with you, do you?*

No, it was deliberately decided to stick to the Africa-Portugal-Berlin triangle.

*So how did you go about picking the musicians?*

At first, the Goethe Institute undertook the search via official channels. That's how I found out where musicians that might interest me were playing. Then I hooked up with a whole bunch of musicians on location. For starters, you see, I had to find out how the scene hangs together in the first place. Angola and Cape Verde, for example, have a much bigger presence than Mozambique. I had to conduct some real field work to get the low-down on who's playing what with whom and how the various cultures interconnect. I noted, for example, that the overarching African community is a great deal stronger than national ties. It was important to me in such an open-ended project for all the musicians to be equally flexible and prepared to create something new without any blueprints.

*Is it easier for you as a German to connect up all these cultures than it would be for a Portuguese person?*

That may be true. This project has sparked so much interest in the Lisbon scene because suddenly high-profile jazz musicians are playing together with all these other musicians. A certain rift still exists between these domains in Portugal. In the major league, the Portuguese prefer to keep to themselves. In this regard the project is a novelty for Lisbon.

*What was new about the project for you?*

I had already had some experience in Africa. What was new for me, however, was how these musicians played compositions I'd written before the project took shape. Apparently they can relate to the way I write. Above all, they add an archaic lightness that I can't notate.

*How is the project "From Station to Station" shaping up?*

The project is based on the idea of migration. Migration always means change. My idea was to sample sounds from the towns we played in and integrate them into the music. Various textures, sounds and grooves from Berlin and Lisbon, to begin with, are woven into the music. As we move on, we're going to sample sounds in cities like Maputo and Johannesburg, too, and work them into the music.

Wolf Kampmann

is a freelance journalist for various media, author/editor of the Reclam Jazz Lexikon, and author/co-editor of the Rowohlt Rock Lexikon.

### **Interview with Céline Rudolph (Marion Hölczi)**

"Body and soul"

**You have recorded your album "Brazaventure" in São Paulo with the renowned producer Rodolfo Stroeter and well-known musicians such as Marcos Suzano, Toninho Ferragutti, Paulo Bellinati, Monica Salmaso and Sérgio Santos. Sounds unusual.**

The initial spark came from Gilberto Gil's album "Os lodum". This was how my attention was drawn to the producer Rodolfo Stroeter. On this album, he combines tradition with modernity and several continents with each other. In the course of his career, he has worked with great artists such as Joyce, Caetano Veloso, Nana Vasconcelos, Milton Nascimento and many others. All of them musicians whom I have long respected. He is also familiar with jazz. With his band "Pau Brasil", he combines Brazilian rhythms with an improvisatory outlook which comes from jazz. I contacted him and sent him my recordings. Rodolfo liked my sound and my energy. We eventually met at his house in São Paulo and talked for a long time about music. "Simple and beautiful" – that is what music should sound like. Our idea was to create a song-orientated form with poetic melodies which are supported by strong percussion. My compositions were to be transported from the rather open jazz concept into a new world of intoxicating Brazilian grooves. Rodolfo invited musicians from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo horizons into the studio – precisely those wonderful musicians who can now be heard on "Brazaventure".

**Where does your great interest in Brazil come from?**

I was surrounded by Brazilian music in my childhood. My father had a huge record collection which mainly consisted of jazz and African and Brazilian music. Even today, he tells me that I used to sing along to "Rosa Morena" by João Gilberto at home. I was five years old at the time. I still did not understand the Portuguese language. However, I loved the sounds and the gentle melodies and voices. As a young person, I started to learn Portuguese and to play bossa nova on the guitar. So Brazilian music has always seemed familiar to me. Something which did not have a beginning as it was always there. I only got to know the country of Brazil much later. I travelled through the country by car for a few weeks before I went into the studio. In October 2006, we presented "Brazaventure" live in São Paulo. We enjoyed a huge success in the beautiful Sesc Pompéia Theatre. The audience welcomed me with open arms and I was able to give back something of what Brazil meant to me in my musical life. That was a dream come true ...

**You sing in several languages, including French, English and Portuguese. What does this "multilingualism" mean to you?**

For me, every language has its own cultural information and identity which play a role in the text. Many things can be said better or more easily in one language than in another. And I have my own relationship with each language: French is the language of my mother, so it was the language which I heard first. Then came German, which is the language in which I feel most at home today and which can also be heard on "Brazaventure" in the revised folk-song. English is associated with the jazz tradition and Portuguese is associated with Brazilian music, although it is also associated with the poet Fernando Pessoa. And, of course, every kind of music demands a different speech sound, a different speech melody. So I often create a language which is actually only committed to its sound, but which comes to have a meaning as a result of its gesture. I am asked time and time again what language I have sung in – imaginary languages which sound African, Asian, Brazilian or Slavonic. Obviously, I have mainly used Brazilian sounds on "Brazaventure".

**On the album there are, among others, pieces by Baden Powell, John Coltrane and MC Solaar, a beautiful range.**

I find it natural to play music which appears at first glance to come from different worlds. The thing which holds it all together is my voice and, of course, our strong percussion section.

**You often work with artists from different continents. What differences do you see? What is the attraction?**

It is as though I am visiting different places in my musical homeland. As though my music making has enabled me to find the country which speaks my imaginary language, a language whose roots lie in the quadrant of Europe, Africa, and North and South America.

**You also work as a professor of jazz singing in Dresden. How are free artistry and a college career compatible?**

It is and will continue to be for a while a balancing act to which is added a third enterprise: my family.

**In 1995, you spent a study stay in West Africa with the percussionist Famoudou Konaté. What impressions and experiences did you come away with?**

With Famoudou, I have experienced intensive, trance-like states in which I was no longer making music, but had become the music. As a part of the rhythmic structure, I became completely swept up by the groove. The body becomes a swinging motion, the swinging motion is eternity and happiness. No questions, no answers. You look into the face of other people and you look into a mirror – pure joie de vivre. The ritual aspect of African music also left an impression on me: the singer as a storyteller, as a healer, as a priest. I embody all of this in a live performance, go through all kinds of states in which I let everything flow. My music has changed a great deal since my trip to Africa. I brought back new rhythmic ideas, discovered marimba and worked with a lot of wood and dark colours – which can be heard on the album "Segredo" in my "Dark wood project".

**You have recently appeared several times in the band of star trumpeter Dusko Goykovich. How was the collaboration?**

It was great fun to appear with him and his band in Belgrade on his 75th birthday – the audience went wild! I sang compositions by Villa-Lobos, Baden Powell and Monk. "A descoberta da lentidão" ("The discovery of slowness"), which I wrote for his current album, fills Dusko's wonderful sound with soul.

**What do live appearances mean for you? What is striking is your strong live performance, the conversion of music into body language.**

I am in my element in a live performance. I love the adrenaline, the here and now, the surprise and the power which the stage grants me. Every studio recording is, however, of a temporary nature and can be repeated and altered. On stage, I can feel the space, I can feel the audience as part of the performance. The audience strengthens my energy. Here I give myself to the music and become transparent, I become entirely body, entirely soul.

**What are your favourite albums? Who are your musical role models?**

I can inhale Richie Beirach's "Sunday Songs" with reworkings of Chopin in a single breath. I can immerse myself time and time again in Abdullah Ibrahim's "Echoes of Africa". Baden Powell's "Afrosambas" are embedded in me for eternity as is João Gilberto's "Amoroso". Miles Davis' version of "Someday my prince will come" and Udo Lindenberg's ballads give me goose bumps. I find the new French "Le Pop" absolutely thrilling and, of course, I like Richard Bona.