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Global Beat Fusion: Two Malians and a Brazilian

Brazilian singer Luísa Maita has a long way to go. Given the strength and beauty of her solo debut, Lero-Lero (Cumbancha), I expect it will not take long, however. The 28-year-old São Paulo native comes from music, with her father a singer and mother a concert producer. More than singing, her Syrian Muslim dad rerooted in Brazil and fell in love with the sounds of Antonio Carlos Jobim—he named all three of his daughters after the legend's songs. Maita may have started with bossa nova, but she has grown considerably, recalling recent singers like Ceu and Cibelle with more experimental and beat-oriented tracks, tempered with by a sweet and soulful voice. "Aí Vem Ele" is hands down one of the best tracks in Portuguese I've heard, employing a capoeira rhythm devised by Baden Powell—the melody lingers long after the song ends. After that stunner ends, the unmistakable cuíca leads the listener into the sensuous "Desencabulada," and the highly danceable "Fulaninha." And, of course, the title song, which you can download for free, is what initially drew me into Maita's world. It's a lovely place to inhabit, and I look forward to spending more time here.

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