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Luisa Maita: The New Voice Of Brazil

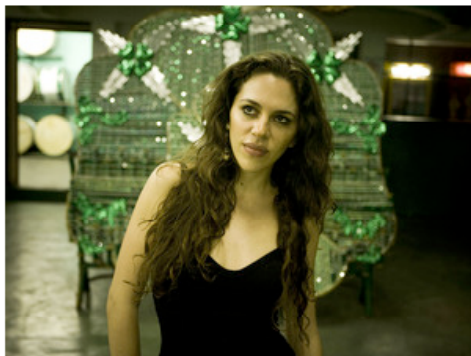
by BANNING EYRE



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Enlarge Joao Wainer
Luisa Maita just released her debut album, *Lero-Lero*.

August 2, 2010

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Luisa Maita is a new voice of Brazil, heard everywhere from advertising jingles to pop songs to the promotional film that helped win that country the 2016 Olympics. Now the world gets a chance to hear what all the fuss is about in her debut album, *Lero-Lero*.

Maita and her two sisters were all named after songs by bossa nova pioneer Antonio Carlos Jobim. That's how big music was in her family. Maita came of age in a diverse, working-class, immigrant neighborhood of Sao Paolo, and her sound is full of far-flung flavors. What makes it great, though, and quintessentially Brazilian, is

her irresistibly sensuous, liquid velvet voice.

HEAR THE MUSIC

- 🔊 "Lero Lero"
[4 min 43 sec]
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- 🔊 "Descenbulada"
[3 min 1 sec]
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- 🔊 "Fulaninha"
[3 min 35 sec]
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The song "Ai Vem Ele" talks about the anxiety of young love. It's set to a slowed down rhythm taken from capoeira — the Afro-Brazilian martial art that is as much about music and dance as self-defense. Maita composed most of the songs on *Lero-Lero*, but she arranged them with two producers, one to give the songs depth and Brazilian roots, and one to, as she put it, "look into the future."

"Fulaninha" is a subtle swirl of samba and dance-hall rhythms with lacings of electronica and raspy rural fiddling. Maita's vocal hook seals the deal. It feels familiar, even classic, right from the first listen. Her subject matter can shift surprisingly from languid celebration of pleasures, to edgy tales

of urban ghetto life — a young drug dealer who seduces a married woman, or a young woman who loses herself in the sensuality of *baile funk*, a thundering street dance, in a crowded Rio de Janeiro slum.

Brazilian culture is all about artful blending — continuums rather than dualities. Maita can set a love song to a martial arts rhythm; evoke harsh realities of ghetto life with gentleness and dry-eyed humanity; and most of all, use her fluid versatile voice and a rich musical heritage — from samba to jazz and pop — to make it all feel like one coherent whole. *Lero-Lero* is a discovery, but if Maita keeps making records this good, she could well be on her way to international stardom.

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