

## About the songs

### **The project**

I wanted to tell you the stories behind this music (obviously they don't require explanation to listen to, but if you're interested, here's the real scoop!!). (For the germination of the project, click on "Story" under "About" or in the epk.)

At the end of this entry is more info on the musicians.. ☺

The concept for this music from the get-go was great Brazilian jazz, folk/soul (country!) and standards—in samba reggae rhythms “Axe”-style—to develop fresh original, collaborative interpretations with this astonishing international band.

The way we worked was—I had an idea of a particular Brazilian rhythm I thought would fit a given song, from among the many Kirk Brundage had/has taught me (or tried!) over my years of loving and studying Bahian Brazilian rhythms—Afro-Brazilian / Samba Reggae music from Bahia—with his guidance. Then Kirk and I got together with Liz to work on it, and soon after, Hussain Jiffry, the stellar bassist. And Liz & I would work on the arrangements. And in our 3rd or 4th group sessions, super drummer Enzo Todesco as well as virtuoso guitarist Roberto Montero joined us & we all worked on the song. (See about Enzo below.) Also on my first four tunes for this recording, I did a session separately with Kirk and Enzo to work out the feels.

None of this would have been possible without Trelawny Rose (now lead vocal coach on The Voice!) producing the vocals, and especially our fantastic engineer, Paul Tavenner. And others of course—you know who you are. Thank you all!

## The Songs

### My Man

We freshened this classic Billie Holiday tune with rockin Afro-Brazilian rhythms—reggae and New Orleans street beats—smoking horn section, & the classic French lyrics as well as an original French rap. The “song insight” I included for this tune on the actual disc is: “Just don’t call it love.” That means this is about attraction, and my intention was to show attraction maturing, and in different forms, but universal—and especially to capture in this song the kind of romantic attraction a woman has for a man.

I need to say that this song, like all the songs on this CD, will forever be dedicated to Enzo Todesco, drummer for this project and a deeply positive influence in my life. Blissful journeys to you, beautiful man--you are truly missed across this planet.

The archetype rap in French at the end of My Man needs more explanation: Medical/intuitive/mystic Carolyn Myss says we all have twelve archetypes, like Jung’s—generalized patterns like story characters that we enact in our individuated incarnation in order to learn the lessons (or not) that we’re supposed to learn: we learn through acting them out in our life stories.

The archetypes are neutral—they have a golden side and a dark side. We all share four: the child, the victim, the saboteur, and the prostitute. The rest depend on your individuality.

What are yours?

But initially I just set out to write a French rap, and I had one line, “C’est le saboteur... qui me fait peur...” (because the saboteur sabotages through fear)

And I had some other ideas, then suddenly I realized I could use all my archetypes and make similar couplets. But I would need help—my longtime friend Marina! (who went to Paris with me long ago and never moved back). Creative work together is something we have done and will do :)

So I explained the archetypes and how mine are working in my life right now and wallah!— we skyped and came up with more cool couplets that just fit and we worked on them. And the 12 French couplets all just fit in the ending we had recorded :)

You’ll see it’s a bit tongue-in-cheek—but archetypes are pretty fun and very cool... and helpful, you bet. Any effort at consciousness is helpful don’t you think?

Here's the French:

C'est le saboteur  
Qui me fait peur

Mais pas la pionnière, qui  
Toujours me nourrit

Puis la prostituée  
Se ballade dans la journée

L'amant, lui, me fâche  
Il est toujours si lâche !

La rebelle en moi s'éclate  
Alors nous prenons date

J'suis donc une artiste  
Ca éclaire mes pistes

Oh-là-là, la mère !  
Me fait payer bien cher !

Meme la professeure  
Peut-etre c'est un leurre

Surtout c'est l'enfant  
Qui me guide maintenant

La victime partout  
Les prend tous jusqu'au bout

Le délivreur est la  
C'est mieux quand il s'en va

En fin la déesse  
Est la source de ma sagesse

And here's a translation:

It's the saboteur who causes me fear  
But not the pioneer, who always nourishes me  
Then the prostitute... she strolls about in the daytime  
The lover— he makes me mad—he's always so lax

The rebel in me strikes—and then we make a date  
Therefore I'm an artist—and that lights my paths  
Oh-la-la the mother—costs me dearly  
Ditto the professeur—maybe he's a lure  
Mainly it's the child who guides me now  
The victim is everywhere—she takes everyone to the limit  
The rescuer is there—it's better when he leaves  
Finally the goddess is the source of my wisdom  
But it sounds better in French!!

### If These Walls Could Speak

I first heard If These Walls from Barbara Gerry and Mark Chetkovich while singing with their band Playtime in Santa Cruz. One of the many wonderful songs Barb found to do! I fell deeply in love with it. By Jimmy Webb, and the version we loved and modeled after was Shawn Colvin's.

To me it's about forgiveness, I call it late-breaking forgiveness. It's about family, and children, and zest for life, and love and loss. This was a country tune—I have Jimmy Webb's version—very simple, spare, wistful.

Ours is jazz mainly in the harmonics/ arrangement by exquisite jazz pianist Liz Kinnon—and in the complexity & sophistication of how these guys play this—its orchestration.

You could also say Roberto plays a jazz solo but that's exactly where genre breaks down, which is one thing I'm trying to do—genre busting. Roberto's solo is killer and/but in that respect it's also like good 'ol rock—and it is!

If These Walls started as Brazilian merengue (not at all the same as the Carribean/ Mexican) but that feel evolved with the song—and the metre of the song changes so it's very composed- and jazz-like. And then in the 2nd part the rhythm changes to rock, except that Roberto also plays reggae guitar, which makes it more a rock-reggae blend —and it's faster than either Jimmy Webb's or Shawn Colvin's version. Or Nanci Griffiths, for that matter—which is lovely, and so different!

## Chega de Saudade

Here's the story about my English translated lyrics for this classic Jobim tune: I sang this at Jazz Camp in 2004 accompanied by Ricardo Peixoto, (wow!), which by the way is where I first met Trelawny Rose who produced the vocals on this music, and Jackie Ryan—like Trelawny a killer singer and who has become a wonderful friend AND put me in touch with Liz the piano player!!

So, I sang this song and a couple of Brazilian artists, notably Jovino Santos Neto, came up to me to tell me they liked it a lot, they liked how I sang the *Brazilian*, but Jovino in particular said that Brazilians in general don't care for the Jon Hendricks lyrics to this tune (which I had also sung), the standard English lyrics.

I have translated French before, and so I set out to write a literal translation that would also fit the tune and be poetic. Voila! This is for you, my Brasileiros!

Fyi, this was Kirk's & my archetype for this project, in rhythms moving from Bahia (samba reggae) to Rio (samba).

## A Felicidade

We are all very pleased with how this came out, I think, with the “modal” sections Liz devised, and the live ending, and Kirk's exotic percussion and Roberto's eerie guitar line.

But I wanted to tell you about the “improvs” I did. We recorded them basically in one take, and then Paul Tavenner, the engineer and amazing advisor all the way through, would never let me touch them again. 😊

Translation of A Felicidade:

Sadness has no end; happiness does

Happiness is like a dewdrop that tremors on a flower petal, it shines tranquilly, then falls like a tear of love

Happiness for the poor seems the great illusion of Carnival; people work the whole year through for one dream moment, to make a costume of a pirate, or a gardener—and the whole thing is finished by Friday

Sadness has no end; happiness does

Happiness is like a feather that the wind carries upon the air; it travels lightly, but has a brief life—it needs for there to be wind without end

My happiness is dreaming in my lover's eyes; and like this night, passing and passing, watching for the dawn—speak softly please, so that he'll wake up as happy as the day, offering kisses of love

The rhythms in this one—again—morphed, but are essentially samba afro, fricote, and samba.

## About Le Saboteur

One of those good ideas that actually worked out, we have been able to release it as an original single!

### **About the musicians: Who are these guys?**

Liz Kinnon, besides arranging (and directing everything musical!) plays both piano and keyboards/synth. Liz used to work, among all her other gigs, as the last person to check the charts for the Academy Awards—now she teaches at Colburn and privately, and I hope to work with her again more soon! Her husband Dick plays horns with shows at The Pantages (and on a couple of my songs) and they have two brilliant and lovely sons. She's an LA girl, but would be right at home in Santa Cruz. She's also a wonderful composer: check out her CD *Ms. Behavin'* (it's on CD Baby)—it's all-around gorgeous, great, satisfying music. Everyone loves it. I wrote more about Liz in a blog on my website, in May 7, 2011 and especially in a Thanksgiving blog! Nov. 24, 2012.

Kirk Brundage is a classically trained, now world music percussionist who has played many years with Olodum in Carnaval in Bahia (only white guy ever to do). His two new percussion CDs are amazing, I swear (they're on CD Baby)—and if you're a musician, get his books on Afro-Brazilian Percussion (which I edited for him:). He's from upstate New York, we met right after we both moved here (see my website blog of July 20, 2011) and had the same idea at the same time to do this project.

Hussain Jiffry is from Sri Lanka, as is his wonderful wife Marita, and I once met his lovely daughter when she came to Liz's for a rehearsal—a treat! And Hussain—like for these other players—just listen! Hussain is also a wonderful recording producer and engineer, besides regularly going out with Sergio Mendez, Herb Alpert & all.

This is the bad news. It's hard to write about. Enzo is gone :-( He was Swiss, another 1st-call player/drummer. He went out with artists from all over the world. And now he's gone. Enzo! I'm so sorry we didn't do more! that i didn't see you more but you were always SO special to me! You were always SO wonderfully encouraging, right there. I miss you, it's a terrible loss. Anyway, here he is, in full earthly glory for sure!

Roberto Montero is Brasileiro, from the south, and again, just listen. From a musical family, he was born to play. He has also played with Sergio Mendez and a long list of worldwide and LA artists. I wrote about Roberto in a blog on my website also, Jan. 25, 2013.

So that is my (international!) band for this music, and for the single *Le Saboteur*. I'm so honored, grateful, and thrilled to have completed this amazing project! I bow to all you musicians, you are my inspirations and idols.

## About the songs in *Softly: You Go To My Head*

*You Go To My Head* is about one of those dizzy, gut-swirling attractions to someone that's like a 9 or a 10 on a scale of 10—you're so snowed by this person that it washes over you, you just bathe in it with your whole being, but at the same time, you know you're riding for a fall, because he couldn't possibly—and in fact, doesn't—feel the same way about you. But who cares? For this moment, you can't resist it—the feeling is just too all-consumingly delicious.

## *Triste*

The lyrics in *Triste* say that it's sad—and hard—to live alone, especially when you're in love with someone you can imagine would fill that vacuum perfectly. But you can't live on fantasy, and the reality is this solitude, day in and day out, and no one there to share your life with.

## *Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise*

*Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise* is that terrible but irresistible moment when an affair first begins—you know you shouldn't do it, and you don't want to hurt your husband, your partner, that's the last thing you would ever want—but this love, this desire, this high just seeped into you gradually until it completely infiltrates, and now it blazes full force, the die is cast, and events are rushing forward, even though you know they're all going to come crashing down. And the singer knows all this, because she's done it all before, but now here she is, living out that whole catastrophic cycle again.

## *Do Nothing Til You Hear From Me*

*Do Nothing Til You Hear From Me*—the woman in this song wants to have her cake and eat it too, and she just might. She wants her man to stay cool when people are talking trash about her, saying she messes around. Anyway, she tells him, a little on the side doesn't mean anything—he's the one she really loves. Usually this scenario is the other way around, so it's fun for a woman to reassure her man that he's her main squeeze.

## *Waltz For Debby*

*Waltz For Debby* is about a different kind of anguish in love—watching your little girl, that perfect, pure little munchkin of joy, who fills your squeezing heart with the deepest and most unconditional love—watching her grow, and then watching her grow up and leave you. And she does completely leave you. It's essential, it's wonderful, and it's eternally excruciating, like being skewered on your own loving-kindness. But I guess that's what all love is.