

This Music!

### **Four Sweets Story**

In a nutshell: This latest project develops different genres in Afro-Brazilian rhythms to find where swing meets bossa, where reggae meets country, where soul and samba are the same.

### **The Longer Tale**

When percussionist Kirk Brundage and I first met, both newly relocated to LA in 2003, we bonded over Brazilian music and culture, white gringos that we are. A classically trained and accomplished musician, he had become an expert in Afro-Brazilian percussion from Bahia (popularly known as samba-reggae, or Axe) and I had taken Brazilian family, culture, and music into my home and heart for many years.

We had the same idea at the same moment: to arrange different kinds of music in samba-reggae: soul, blues, pop, folk, and country as well as standards—including traditional Jobim Brazilian jazz classics. Through grace and good fortune we were able to bring on board the awe-inspiring talents of pianist Liz Kinnon, bassist Hussain Jiffry, guitarist Roberto Montero, and drummer Enzo Todesco.

I once heard Carlos Lyra say in an interview that Bossa Nova started because these young middle-class men from Rio de Janeiro played guitar but couldn't really play samba. I wanted to bring together the Baiano beats with the Carioca—and with what was happening here in American popular music at the time of the explosion of Brazilian onto the American scene: 60s to 70s. And jazz standards of course, because that's where I'm coming from, and jazz is basic to American music. But this project is more than jazz, crosses genres, is about where jazz meets country! I was interested in how these rhythms can blend, how they can fit each other, where they intersect. To me these blends are playful, exhilarating, celebratory.

These four “suites” explore these concepts, as well as bring together, blend and adapt, the samba of Rio with several Afro-Brazilian rhythms from Bahia. We have reinterpreted the Billie Holiday standard My Man as a woman's international manifesto of passion; If These Walls Could Speak as a paean to family love; the Jobim classic Chega de Saudade with a fresh accurate English transposition; and Jobim's masterpiece A Felicidade as a lyrical saga of nature and culture.

They are intended to reveal and to celebrate Oneness.

We hope this innovative exploration with its world-class international band will please and delight you. It is movin' music!

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For more background about the project and the songs, go to the "epk" page and click on "about the songs."

### **Softly story:**

Softly was recorded before leaving Santa Cruz, at Tim Prince's studio, with Tim Volpicella, Stan Poplin, Art Alm, Steve Robertson, and Scott Nordgren—what maestros!

About the songs on the ***softly*** CD...

These explore what we share as humans, as cultures—not only how people, their stories and their worlds are unique, but also what crosses those boundaries, what stories are universal—our trials and triumphs, our dance of survival and of fulfilling life's promises. And for all these stories, these webs we weave, the common thread is love, with its peaks and plunges, its different forms—passionate, intense, tender, compassionate—that make life worth living.

What better vehicle for this love than music, for through music our perspectives change, we are shifted out of whatever rut we're in and we're moved, even unsettled, through music's emotional and visceral pull. Kay likes to think of singing as a force of nature. Story, melody, and the uniqueness of each song merge into life experience through the vocal instrument.

Her CD *softly* recreates for us moments of love's intensity that are crucial turning points—excited anticipation of love, or dread of loss to come—when pleasure and pain intermingle. At those watershed moments, the fulfillment of what we most desire carries with it the seeds of losing it.

In *You Go To My Head*, love's fresh intensity is irresistible, with the thrill and playfulness of the Game, so that immersing in it—with all it promises, however illusory—is worth the risk of losing. But love takes many forms.

In *Waltz For Debby*, Kay evokes the experience we share as parents, when after years of nurturing, teaching, and loving our children we must watch them leave us. Such changes leave us feeling hollow, but we *are* learning that our love never really leaves us—it just changes and evolves into a different form.

Kay Martin reminds us how music can reawaken these intensities of pleasure and pain and wash us clean, just like in passing through the trial-by-fire of love and loss we are burned clean, and are at once complete—and ripe for the tender potential of new growth.