

Fernanda Cunha
Brasil Canadá

 Independent 199023064 (2009)
 Time: 33'13"

Musical Affinity

 Reviewed by **Egídio Leitão**
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A regular performer in Canada since 2005, Fernanda Cunha chose to explore the musical affinities between her homeland and that country in her fourth album appropriately entitled *Brasil Canadá*. Having performed in the Vancouver International Jazz Festival as well as in Toronto, Calgary and other Canadian cities, Fernanda is no stranger to Canada, a country "which welcomes all kinds of culture, people, and differences," she says.

Produced by Fernanda Cunha and Mike Lent (who also plays bass in all tracks), the album brings Canadian songwriters such as Joni Mitchell and Shelton Brooks side by side with Brazilian stars **Sueli Costa**, Abel Silva and **Noel Rosa**. Arrangements were created by Fernanda's pianist Ricardo Rito with two special arrangements penned by Fernanda's aunt **Sueli Costa**, who also plays the piano in "Último Desejo." The other special guest is Brazilian guitarist Zé Carlos, with whom Fernanda recorded the 2007 album *Zingaro*. In addition to Mike Lent and Ricardo Rito, the third member of Fernanda's base trio in this release is drummer Sandro Dominelli. The music, the musicians and even the recording studios in Edmonton and Rio de Janeiro reflect the affinity between both countries.

TRACKS:

1. Dreamland (Joni Mitchell)
2. O Primeiro Jornal (Sueli Costa - Abel Silva)
3. Candy (Mack David - Joan Whitney - Alex C. Kramer)
4. Pescador (Marcio Hallack)
5. Pacing the Cage (Bruce Cockburn)
6. Quanto Tempo Faz (Mike Lent - Fernanda Cunha)
7. Último Desejo (Noel Rosa)
8. Some of These Days (Shelton Brooks)
9. Amanheceu (Ricardo Rito - Luiz Sergio Henriques - Fernanda Cunha)



Joni Mitchell's "Dreamland" opens the album, and thanks to Zé Carlos master guitar accompaniment, we hear a nice samba influence in that composition. "It's a long, long way from Canada," the song says, but in Fernanda's voice and her band's performance, we hear the album's proposition of joining two far away countries through their music. "Propped up on a samba beat," Joni Mitchell's song serenades us into this dreamland of *Brasil Canadá*. The next two tracks sound as if they were made side by side as book ends. "O Primeiro Jornal," one of Sueli Costa/Abel Silva's classic, blends in perfect unison with Mack David/Joan Whitney/Alex C. Kramer's well known "Candy." In both tracks, the trio arrangement is simple and allows each musician a



chance to showcase their nice solos. Furthermore, as a special treat, Zé Carlos comes back with a brief ending guitar solo in "Candy," though one can easily hear his steady accompaniment throughout the entire track.

I love the nice, slow ballad "Pescador," by Marcio Hallack. The chord changes are captivating and at times sound like a song that could have been written by **Sueli Costa**. I can clearly see why Fernanda chose to include this track. The next track sends us back up north to Canada with Bruce Cockburn's "Pacing the Cage." The haunting melody is supported by beautiful lyrics, sometimes strong as in "sunset is an angel weeping holding out a bloody sword," and at other times showing the promise that "sometimes the darkness is your friend." As the song goes, we also find ourselves "pacing the cage." Another ballad, "Some of These Days," by Shelton Brooks, brings in a sultry arrangement for the entire trio and Fernanda's performance in an unforgettable style. It is a tough number, especially since it follows the duet of piano and voice in Noel Rosa's "Último Desejo." Not much can be said about "Último Desejo" except that Fernanda's heartfelt rendition along with **Sueli Costa's** inimitable piano performance is a dream come true.

Another nice surprise in this album is Fernanda's talents as a songwriter. She co-wrote two tracks for the album. The first is "Quanto Tempo Faz," with Mike Lent. A hopeful song of times gone by, the lyrics long for another time to go on together until dawn without looking back. The other track, the closing number in *Brasil Canadá*, is the beautiful, fast and soft samba "Amanheceu." Ricardo's piano solo wraps up a nice selection of music.

Brasil Canadá is pleasing in its simplicity and delivery. Fernanda Cunha continues to explore her musical universe with daring courage. She does not hesitate to push her boundaries, and by doing so, she continues to grow as a top Brazilian performer.

To learn more about the artist, please visit **Fernanda Cunha** on the web. You can also see her videos and interviews in English and Portuguese in her **YouTube channel**.

