

CONCORD **BIOGRAPHY**

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Karrin Allyson Biography
Imagina: Songs of Brasil
Concord Jazz

While Karrin Allyson has included Brazilian music on her albums and in her live shows throughout her career, the release of *Imagina: Songs of Brasil* is the first time she has devoted an entire album to the music of Brazil. Produced by Karrin and Nick Phillips, *Imagina* is a beautiful collection of 14 tracks that features songs sung fully in Portuguese, as well as Brazilian songs with English translations by Susannah McCorkle, Chris Caswell, Gene Lees, Paul Williams and Jon Hendricks. “I like the storytelling quality of singing in Portuguese,” says Allyson, who previously recorded an album of French chansons and Brazilian tunes on her CD *From Paris to Rio*. “But I also wanted to make this album user-friendly to people who don’t know the language, to try to remain true to the Brazilian feel and sound even when singing in English.” In the liner notes to *Imagina*, Allyson concludes: “Whatever your native language, I hope that these [songs] speak directly to your heart, as they have to mine.”

As to what attracts her to Brazilian music, Allyson says, “Initially it was the groove which I found to be infectious. The first things I heard were the bossa nova songs with their great groove. But then I became more aware of the variety of Brazilian songs that have an evocative, intoxicating combination of amazing melodies and rich harmonies. I also became fascinated by the stories these songs tell. There’s so much to discover in Brazilian music.”

Backgrounder on *Imagina: Songs of Brasil*:

- | Allyson’s “Brazilian mentor” for the project is her friend Lúcia Guimarães, who writes in the CD liner notes, “Brazilian music is often about romance, subtlety and mischief. Karrin’s curiosity and originality allow her to fly over the clichés that have been attached to this music through the years, as it made its way North. Karrin’s amazing ear allows her to sing in Portuguese like a *carioca* (Rio native).”
- | Half the songs on the CD were penned by Antonio Carlos Jobim, including several that are relatively unknown to North American audiences.
- | Included in the collection are two sumptuous renditions of Jobim bossa novas: “Desafinado (Slightly Out of Tune),” a Jobim number originally written as a jab at singers who sang off-key, and “O Morro Não Tem Vez (Favela).”
- | The album opens with the upbeat Jobim tune “A Felicidade (Happiness),” originally written for the film *Black Orpheus*, about the fleeting happiness of the poor during Carnival, and closes with another upbeat number, “É Com Esse Que Eu Vou,” originally recorded by one of Brazil’s foremost singers, Elis Regina. Says Allyson, “This is a song inviting everyone—no matter what social level—to come and dance. Our version is bawdier, funkier and more sassy than Elis’ original.”
- | Highlight tracks includes the gently melodic, folksy “Correnteza,” the balladic love song “Estrada Branca (This Happy Madness)” and the gorgeous gem, “Estrada Do Sol.”

- | Allyson performs piano on Jobim's "Double Rainbow" (with lyrics by Lees), "Desafinado" and "Estrada Do Sol."
- | In addition to her rhythm team of bassist David Finck and drummer Todd Strait, *Imagina* features her longtime guitarist Rod Freeman and guest appearances by vibraphone/marimba player Steve Nelson ("He has such a wonderful voice and is such a soulful player," says Allyson) and keyboard and accordion player Gil Goldstein ("He's a fabulous musician who makes the accordion sound so beautiful on these songs," says Allyson, who also enlisted him for *From Paris to Rio*).

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Karrin Allyson Thumbnail Backgrounder

- | Over the course of her 10-album career with Concord, Allyson has expanded her breadth of repertoire to include Tin Pan Alley, Gershwin, Porter, John Coltrane, blues, new standards, French chansons and Brazilian bossa nova and samba.
- | Allyson has appeared in clubs throughout the U.S. (from the Blue Note in New York to Yoshi's in the San Francisco Bay Area), at international festivals (including Melbourne, Australia) and in concert halls worldwide, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.
- | Allyson has garnered two Grammy Award nominations since 1992, the year she broke into the jazz world.
- | As a singer, Allyson's diction is flawless, her phrasing conversational, her tempo swinging, her improvisation teeming with scat and vocalese.
- | Among her most popular and imaginative albums: *In Blue*; *Ballads: Remembering John Coltrane*; *From Paris to Rio*; *Wild for You*
- | Press sampling:
 - "Stunning debut! Irresistible twists of melody and inflection..." (Neil Tesser on *I Didn't Know About You*)
 - "Allyson coolly stakes her claim, [bringing] a timbre that is part ice and part grain...incisive, original, and emotionally convincing" (Gary Giddins)
 - "Allyson embraces the jazz tradition, but does not defer to it...[her ability] to walk that fine line makes her one of the freshest, most exciting singers to have emerged from the vocal jazz explosion of the 1990s" (Matthew Bahl)
- | Based originally in Kansas City, Allyson now resides in New York City and in western Massachusetts.



100 N. CRESCENT DRIVE SUITE #275, BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210 | 310.385.4455 FAX 310.385.4466
 FANTASY RECORDS, TENTH AND PARKER, BERKELEY, CA 94710 | 510.549.2500 FAX 510.486.2015