Tania Maria – Live At The Blue Note (2002)

01 Funky Tamborim (Tania Maria/Correa Reis) 8:11 02 Quase (Charles Mangione/Jorge Goncalves) 6:43 03 Granada (Augustin Lara) 7:25 play 04 Bom Bom Bom Tchi Tchi Tchi (Tania Maria/Correa Reis) 9:31 05 Valeu (Tania Maria/Correa Reis) 9:20 06 E' Carnaval (Tania Maria/Correa Reis/Van Gibbs) 6:51 07 Florzinha (Sidney Bechet/Tania Maria/Correa Reis) 7:07 08 Minha Mae and Sangria (Tania Maria/Correa Reis) 6:08
Musicians: Tania Maria (Piano, Synthesizer and Vocals) Luiz Augusto (Drums) Carlos Werneck (Bass Guitar) Mestre Carneiro (Percussion)

Most albums by Brazilian female vocalists follow the styles of the queens of the music, like Astrud Gilberto or Gal Costa, making records that are either smoothly romantic or rhythmically kinetic. On 2002's Live at the Blue Note, Tânia Maria delivers an impressive set that owes little to either style. Maria's band, the Viva Brazil Quartet, owes at least as much to hard boppers like the early-'60s Miles Davis group as it does to Antonio Carlos Jobim, and Maria's idiosyncratic, highly percussive keyboard style is much more Cecil Taylor than Walter Wanderley. The recording is rather oddly mixed, with Maria's piano and synthesizer in the forefront, her equally distinctive vocals much farther back, and Carlos Werneck's guitar and bass sometimes barely audible, but the performances are uniformly first-rate. Maria sings in both English and Portuguese, sometimes switching mid-song, but at her most transcendent, Maria breaks into wordless flights of sound, as on the exhilarating "Granada" and the whistled choruses of the ballad "Valeu." At these moments, the occasionally herky-jerky rhythms and fractured melodies coalesce into something magical. Live at the Blue Note may be a bit advanced for those who are just looking for some romantic bossa nova music, but it's an excellent starting point for discovering Tania Maria. ---Stewart Mason, AMG

Singing in Portuguese & English, and hop-scotching her way around wordless vocals, Tania Maria takes a ton of built-in, high-voltage energy with her everywhere she goes. From Northern Brazil, she's lived in Europe and the U.S., while gaining popularity for her unique style. Samba and romantic dance blend naturally with her perky piano and syncopated vocal offerings. She's performed all over the world for some 30 years now. This recent performance of Tania Maria and the Viva Brazil Quartet comes after over twenty albums.

It's a live recording, and Tania Maria's voice projection doesn't get its due. Her voice appears to be farther off: at a distance. Nevertheless, this performance finds her in top form, using her voice as an instrument - another member of the band. The wordless vocals she contributes on "Granada" make her a convincing agent. Whistling on "Valeu," the singer takes it to a different level. Tania Maria makes the music come alive. When she sings in unison with her keyboard, we get a bright, resonant sound. Her energy translates into fascinating rhythms and joyful sambas, even when pushed a little farther from the microphone than desired. ---Jim Santella, allaboutjazz.com

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