



Twist—Building Bridges Across Jazz
A Review by Cameron Vanderscoff
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In *Like a Bridge*, the latest release of Lua Hadar and her band Twist, the ensemble makes a bold musical statement—they shoot to transcend the lingual fault lines that can culturally partition jazz, all on a single disc. There are predecessors; for example, Edith Piaf in her take on Autumn Leaves, where she switches from English to French part way through. Lua Hadar and Twist, however, go further; Hadar sings in an astonishing seven languages, starting in English and running through French, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, Italian and Malagasy. The instrumentation is similarly inspired, reflecting the diversity of languages—the set of core, traditional jazz instruments is augmented on various tracks by koto, accordion, cello and a range of percussives (including udu, cajon and dumbek).

Listening to the full CD is to experience a globetrotting journey, one that breaks the usual constraints inherent in a jazz record (or most any other genre). To take just a few examples—‘Bridge over Troubled Water’ is recast as a song celebrating peace, a statement of purpose for the rest of the record. Elsewhere, the vocal lines and accordion on ‘La Mer’ excavate and amplify the original French feel of the song. The French language in particular gets its best showcase in the cover of the lesser-known ‘San Francisco,’ with Hadar’s voice flying over Jason Martineau’s dynamic, suspenseful arrangement, centered on the exciting, funky bass of Dan Feiszli. Elsewhere, Imagina, with its compelling, thrumming cello intro by Emil Miland, shines with its Portuguese-language invitation to the listener to imagine, to dream—an emphasis on the ‘romance’ in romance language.

Beyond the vocal and linguistic versatility of Hadar, the band stretches out in particular on Billy Strayhorn’s gorgeous ‘Isfahan.’ Larry de la Cruz wrings out the melody on alto sax, and Jason Martineau and Dan Feiszli take turns with patient, evocative solos on piano and bass, respectively.

Like A Bridge is available at <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/luahadarwithtwist>, iTunes and Amazon, among other online vendors. It can also be purchased at The Groove Yard in Oakland. Lua Hadar and Twist approach jazz as a linking genre, and point out that through melody, through instrumentation, through exploration, through language, it can become something closer to a global music—it can become not just a genre, but a bridge.