

## Till Brönner

### „RIO“

Till Brönner, trumpeter, singer, and one-of-a-kind European jazz personality, celebrates the joys and pains of life through the soulful music of Brazil in his most personal project yet, recorded on location in Rio de Janeiro with international guest stars Annie Lennox, Aimee Mann, Kurt Elling, Milton Nascimento, Sérgio Mendes, and many others.

Brönner has sold more records than any other jazz artist in his country's history and has conquered audiences in many European territories as well as major Asian markets. The reasons are obvious: his honeyed tone and cool, lyrical playing are as seductive to the ear as Brönner is to the eye. His versatile but always recognizable style is rooted in jazz, but he has also roamed effortlessly into pop, soul, and recently even Christmas music.

This year, as the worldwide music phenomenon of bossa nova celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, Brönner decided to dip into the pulsating sensuality of Brazilian music on his eleventh solo CD, 'Rio'. The album revisits classic songs and rediscovers neglected gems by some of Brazil's master songwriters, including Antônio Carlos Jobim, Chico Buarque, and João Donato.

Brönner's status as a distinguished musical voice of his generation is attested by a stellar array of international guest stars - pop vocalist Annie Lennox, singer-songwriter Aimee Mann, Brazilian music legends Sérgio Mendes and Milton Nascimento as well as up and coming pop/jazz songbird Melody Gardot, jazz crooner Kurt Elling, and young Brazilian singer/composer Vanessa da Mata who in 2007 topped the charts in Brazil and Portugal with the song "Boa sorte/Good Luck" she had penned and recorded with Ben Harper. The musical fundament of the album is supplied by a top-rank Brazilian quintet that includes guitarist Marco Pereira and percussionist Marcos Suzano. North American organist Larry Goldings supplies the instrumental icings on the cake.

"Rio" reunites Till Brönner with the Grammy-winning producer Larry Klein, his collaborator on "Oceana", the album that won an ECHO as Germany's jazz best-seller of 2006. Klein has caused a sensation at this year's Grammys when he sco-





red the prestigious "Album of the Year" award for "River: The Joni Letters", Herbie Hancock's salute to Joni Mitchell, Klein's former wife.

The intoxicating sounds of samba, bossa nova, and the multitude of other styles of music that came out of Brazil are musical expressions that obviously appeal to Brönner. He effortlessly absorbs Brazil's special mixture of happiness and sadness, intellect and spirituality with style and skill, and even manages to sing convincingly in Portuguese.

Like many international jazz musicians, Till Brönner fell in love with the bossa nova early on in his life. He still remembers how he discovered his first Antônio Carlos Jobim album many years ago: "I felt quite the same way as I did when I first listened to bebop. I thought, wow! This is something that's so special ... It's very sexy music." He and his co-musicians bring out that quality on several Jobim standards. The sentimental ballad "Once I Loved" features vocals by Aimee Mann, the Oscar-nominated, Grammy-winning singer-songwriter, whose cool, fragile vocal style works perfectly in this ambience. Sérgio Mendes, who, like Till Brönner does now, successfully united the worlds of pop and jazz with his chart-breaking group Brasil '66, lends his keyboard playing and singing to the delightfully sparkling Jobim song "Ela é carioca" ("She's A Carioca"), made famous by singer-guitarist João Gilberto. Till himself sings and plays the lively Jobim hit "Só danço samba" and does a haunting instrumental version of Jobim's seldom recorded composition "Lí-gia".

Two further album highlights come from the pen of another classic Brazilian songwriter, João Donato. Till sings the bouncing "Café com pão" ("Coffee With Bread") while the catchy "A rã" ("The Frog"), a cult hit with the worldwide DJ and groove scene, is presented with swinging wordless vocals supplied by Till, Luciana Souza, and Larry Klein.

Contemporary Brazilian repertoire is covered with "Mistérios" (Mysteries), written by singer-composers Joyce and Maurício Maestro. The intriguing song unites the British pop chanteuse Annie Lennox and Brazilian singer-songwriter legend Milton Nascimento, two icons from completely unconnected styles of music who have neither met nor sung together before. The success of their first collaboration together with Till Brönner is proof of the conjunctive quality of this album that effortlessly overleaps musical borders. Producer Larry Klein translated the song for this album from the Portuguese, as well as "Tarde", another track featuring vocals by Milton Nascimento, this time together with Luciana Souza, a Grammy-winning São Paulo born vocalist, and "High Night" ("Alta noite"), featuring Melody Gardot, who is currently enjoying success with her major label debut album "Worrisome



Heart" and is regarded a most promising young voice in the areas of pop and jazz. The latter tune, written by ex-Titãs singer Arnaldo Antunes for his 1993 solo debut album and later superbly reinterpreted by his Tribalistas partner Marisa Monte, is possibly the most surprising choice for the repertoire of this album.

The fact that international stars from a diversity of musical genres have answered Brönner's call to appear on this album demonstrates the standing he has acquired in the music world today. On "Rio" his lively and warm trumpet playing and charming vocals invite the listener on a trip through the Brazilian mind and music, while the guest stars contribute colourful dashes that make the album a cocktail deliciously diversified.

"All of this was like a dream come true," Till Brönner recalls the recording sessions. "I listened to this music when I started playing jazz, and for me it's almost impossible to divide the two. Funnily enough, I never made it over there before. To meet the musicians and feel so welcome, and feel that there are no musical barriers, is a fantastic thing for me to experience." On a DVD supplement which will be released as part of a Deluxe Edition of the album, Brönner can be witnessed exploring the sights and sounds of Rio and meeting Brazilian music legends Joyce, João Donato, and Ed Motta.

Born in Viersen, Germany in 1971 and raised in Rome, Till Brönner began studying classical trumpet at a Jesuit boarding school. He changed course at age thirteen when a record by Charlie Parker opened his ears to the exciting possibilities of bop. Years of further study - and his discovery of Chet Baker and Freddie Hubbard, two of the trumpet's most melodic improvisers - helped shape Brönner into a musician whose technique is matched by a touching lyricism. He made his Verve debut with the 1998 CD "Love". Till's subsequent Verve releases include "Chattin' With Chet" (2000), a tribute to his eternal inspiration; the urban-soul flavoured "Blue-Eyed Soul" (2002); and "That Summer" (2004), the CD that sealed Brönner's position as the biggest-selling artist in German jazz history. He also wrote the soundtrack music for two movie documentaries: "Jazz Seen" (2001) and "Höllentour" ("Hell On Wheels"). Along the way, Brönner has recorded and appeared live with top artists like Ray Brown, Dave Brubeck, Tony Bennett, Joe Sample, Michael Brecker, Toots Thielemans, and countless others. On top of that he has produced (and played on) albums for some of his cherished personal favorites. He gave actress/singer Hildegard Knef a pop-jazz makeover on her final album, "17 Millimeter" (1999), and helped the classical bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff to "crossover" on "The Jazz Album" (2006). Especially meaningful to Brönner are "Once To Every Heart" and "Love Is What Stays", two acclaimed albums he produced for another one of his idols, American jazz singer Mark Murphy.