

Editorial review

All Music Guide

San Francisco's Boca Do Rio gives another twist to the idea of a Brazilian-American third stream (indeed, its name means "mouth of the river" in Portuguese), coming up with a gently grooving yet surprisingly original sound in its debut album. Boca Do Rio's leader and driving creative force Kevin Welch comes by his Brazilian passions honestly, having lived under the equator and completed doctoral work on Brazilian ecology at UC Davis. He also found time to absorb the Brazilian musical ethos, but doesn't let that knowledge inhibit him, coming up with some infectious tracks that avoid clichés and borrow freely from North America without overwhelming the Brazilian roots (check out the solid dancehall groove in "Pra Bahia"). He writes intriguing, tuneful original material, rambling all over the place from his passions for ecology ("Sweet Seed"), economic reform ("Os Outros Malandros") ("The Other Thieves"), enjoying life ("Beija Quem"), and even Greek mythology ("Eurydice Arising" is a gorgeous example of that) to the usual all-purpose topic of love. Welch's bright tenor-pitched singing voice isn't all that distinctive but he uses it confidently, moving easily and capably back and forth between English and Portuguese. Welch's Brazilian and American cohorts -- six regular bandmembers including himself, and five guests hired for the sessions -- give him a wide palette of sounds to play with, and some good jazz licks turn up from them in open spaces. Definitely worth several spins on your local world music radio outlet.

~ Richard S. Ginell, All Music Guide