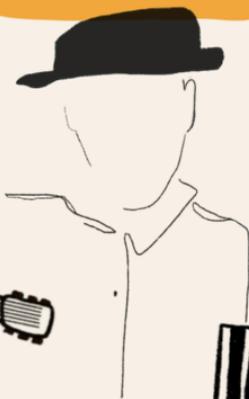




Just Listen Records

RAÍIS

CORSEN, BERRY, ROJER



Curaçao is an island in the south Caribbean off the coast of Venezuela, where centuries of cohabitation between people from European, African and Amerindian descent, albeit not in the nicest of ways, have created a rich mixture of people, language and culture.

Papiamentu is the language spoken on Curaçao - and neighbouring Aruba and Bonaire - and it is an offspring of mostly Portuguese mixed with some Spanish, Dutch, African and Amerindian words. Just like with Portuguese, words in Papiamentu are very rhythmical and percussive in structure and they also blend well into one another, making it an excellent language to sing in. This album is a testimony to that, seeing that it contains some of the most beautiful songs written in our native tongue.

Randal, Kris and myself all grew up on this small Island in the Antilles and although Dutch was the official language when we were growing up, Papiamentu is the language we grew up speaking and still speak socially.

When Randal and I were booked to give

a concert at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam in 2018, we added Kris Berry to our little ensemble in order to do a repertoire of mostly songs in Papiamentu. Having worked in all types of other genres over the years, this going-back-to-the-proverbial-root-of things was a very organic experience for all of us. Hence the title of the album, Raís, which is the Papiamentu word for root.

In the months leading up to the concert I played around with the idea that, while we were at it, it might also be a good idea to record the music and, in doing so, making it available to a larger audience. I had worked with Jonas and Jared Sacks before and thought that our repertoire and set-up would be a perfect match for their label. I pitched the idea to Jonas and he agreed. We ended up spending two lovely summer days in the studio during the week prior to our Concertgebouw engagement.

Because of the way Jared Sacks records in DSD, the recording itself was a very interesting experience. Randal had to contain himself, sitting at a huge con-

cert grand, while Kris and I had to push more for volume, all of us continuously listening very intently to each other as there were no monitors used during the sessions. We ended up with a very intimate recording. Jared had set us up in a very large hall in the MCO building in Hilversum and besides the occasional voice messages over a little speaker in a corner, he was very much absent. It therefore really felt like the three of us in a room making music together.

Konfiansa is one of two pieces composed by Randal on this record which are set to poems by Lucille Berry-Haseth (1937). Ms. Berry-Haseth is related, by marriage, to Kris Berry and is an important Papiamentu writer, poet and scholar. She has published many poetry books and has been a fervent activist for the acceptance of Papiamentu as an official language.

Señorita di Pietermaai is a typical tumba, a music style played in a 6/8 rhythm. This 6/8 rhythm is one of the many things we inherited from the African slaves who were brought to the island. It is nowadays played by larger ensembles during

carnival season. However, in the old days it was played year-round, usually after the proper guests left, by smaller ensembles, much like the way we did here on my arrangement.

Tòg mi sa is a beautiful bolero composed by Rudy Plaate and arranged by Randal Corsen. Rudy Plaate (1937) and Oswin "Chin" Behillia (1938) are two of the most important Curaçao songwriters of the second half of the 20th century. They sing and write about topics from love to social protest, in accordance to their contemporaries from other countries. The bulk of their oeuvre was written in the sixties and seventies, a time of political turmoil and social unrest that also touched Curaçao.

Serenada is a traditional Antillean waltz written by Irving Provence and Pierre Lauffer (1920-1981). Pierre Lauffer is my favourite poet from Curaçao and besides writing beautiful poetry he was also the first activist to fight for the existence of Papiamentu as a true language. I have been playing this song on and off with Kris for a while and I have always liked it. This arrangement was made especially for

this project.

Sunú means naked and comes from the Spanish word desnudo. When Chin Behilia composed this track he did not mean it in the literal sense though. It's about opening up and being vulnerable. It's a very slow Antillean waltz with very poetic lyrics and this version was arranged by Randal.

Dalia is maybe one of the most well known tumbas on the island, yet no one knows who the composer is. What makes this particular recording so great is the fact that it was done on solo piano, making Randal's immaculate sense of time really come out.

On clear days in Curaçao you can't see forever, but you can see Venezuela. Because of our shared history and geographical proximity, the cultures and people of the islands and the mainland are very interwoven. My mother's family is partly from Venezuela and I've been going there regularly since childhood. I'm a huge fan of the Venezuelan composer Simon Díaz (1928-2014) and he composed *El Loco Juan*

Carabina to a poem written by Aquilez Nazoa (1920-1976). I rearranged the harmony to fit our trio setting.

M'a yega laat. Another well known standard from Curaçao, composed by Rudy Plaate and arranged by Randal. On the island it's also known as Pal'i Tamarijn (tamarind tree).

Misterio is another poem by Lucille Berry, set to music by Randal. It's the only track I recorded on an electric guitar to add to the spaciness of lyrics and the rubato rhythm.

La Mariposa is a beautiful instrumental danza composed by Joseph Sickman Corssen. My great grandfather, Jacobo Palm (1887-1982) adapted it later to produce the vocal version. Randal gave it another couche which ended up being the version we recorded here.

Ojos Malignos, an old Cuban son written by Juan F. Pichardo, was popularized in Curaçao because of its use as the theme song of a popular nineties Venezuelan television soap opera called *Kaina*. Be-

cause of the many versions of it already recorded I opted to overhaul it completely and arrange it in a 6/8 rhythm.

E baka Pintá is one of the most popular tumbas of Curaçao because it was also recorded by the famous Cuban singer Celia Cruz. The lyrics are based on the Ananzi (Nanzi to us) stories that slaves brought with them from West Africa. The title literally translates to the „painted cow“. It's been recorded many times already in the traditional way which is why I went to town with it and redid the whole arrangement.

I'm dabbling with classical guitar composition and this piece, **Tonada**, is one of my first. The feeling of the piece was inspired by the beautiful tonadas (Venezuelan lament/work song) made and sung by Simon Diaz.

Jean-Jacques Rojer
Amsterdam, 2019

KRIS BERRY

Kris Berry (1982) is a Dutch-Caribbean artist, singer and songwriter. Her debut album **Marbles**, released in 2012, represents the essence of the music she grew up with on the islands of Curaçao and St. Maarten.

Berry has performed shows in Amsterdam's Paradiso as well as the prestigious North Sea Jazz Festival. A collaboration with friend and producer Perquisite (Pete Philly & Perquisite) produced the album **Lovestruck Puzzles**, released in the fall of 2013, of which the single "Let Go" was crowned 3FM Mega Hit, followed by a nomination for Best Album of the year. In 2014, Kris Berry did a major support tour with Caro Emerald on an arena tour in the United Kingdom. Special releases linked to that tour were among others her single "Perfect Storm" which was immediately crowned **Radio2 Top Song** of that year. Kris Berry received a personal invitation in 2018 from the American Grammy Award Winning singer Gregory Porter, to open for his sold-out UK tour, performing among others three times in the esteemed Royal Albert Hall in London. Berry's single "Hold on" from the Album "Berry Street" won her the Gold Award for high record sales.

RANDAL CORSEN

Randal Corson (1972) is a highly regarded pianist, composer and arranger from Curaçao. Randal has had great achievements in jazz, but also in classical and popular music, in Curaçao as well as in the Netherlands, where he has lived for over 20 years. He is an Edison Jazz Award laureate and has also been awarded the Boeli Van Leeuwen Award by the Curaçao government for writing an opera completely in Papiamentu. He is the great-grandson of Antillean composer and poet Joseph Sickman Corson (1853-1911) and has made an album documenting the music of his great-grandfather. Randal regularly performs on stages all around the world and he has worked with artists Izaline Calister, The Metropole Orchestra, Tania Kross, Paquito D'Rivera, Horacio Hernandez, Antonio Sanchez and the late Roy Hargrove, amongst others. He has had numerous hits on the local music charts since moving back to Curaçao in 2012 and in May 2018 he received the Cola Debrot Award, which is the most prestigious award given to people who made an exceptional contribution to the culture of Curaçao.

JEAN-JACQUES ROJER

Jean-Jacques Rojer is a guitarist, composer and arranger from Curaçao. He has performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City with Paquito D'Rivera and he has also worked with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, led by Wynton Marsalis, at the Lincoln Center in New York. His latest jazz recording features Jeff "Tain" Watts on drums and Warren Wolf on Vibraphones.

Rojer grew up in a very musical family on the Caribbean island of Curaçao. His father, Robert Rojer, an acclaimed pianist and composer, is a direct descendant of the composers Jacobo Palm (1887-1982) and Jan Gerard Palm (1831-1906). Rojer's father, together with Randal Corson and Kris Berry, all appear on a recording made by Rojer in 2017 with original arrangements of music composed by his great-grandfather Jacobo Palm. Rojer attended the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Holland, graduating cum laude in 2003. Besides the above mentioned, Rojer has played and recorded with Ilan Chester, Andy Narell, Phillip Harper, Izaline Calister, Marjorie Barnes, Nederlands Blazers Ensemble and many others on stages all over the world.

Producers

C. Jared Sacks, Jonas C. Sacks

Label manager

Sjoerd Vriesema

Recording engineer

C. Jared Sacks

Mastering engineer

Tom Caulfield

Cover Design

Sandy Tan

Booklet Design

Nina Louiza

Booklet photography

Jonas Sacks

Recording location

MCO, Hilversum the Netherlands

Recording date

August 7 & 8, 2019

Microphones

Bruel&Kjaer 4006, Schoeps, AKG

A/D Converter

DSD256 Horus, Merging Technologies

Amplifiers

Van Medevoort, Holland

Cables

van den Hul

Mixing board

Rens Heijnis, custom design

Editing software

Pyramix, Merging Technologies

Mastering room speakers

Grimm LS1

Just Listen Records thanks:

Floor van der Holst, Ted Brady, Brian Moura, Bill Dodd

This music is available in its original recording resolution as a download from NativeDSD.com

©2019 Just Listen Records

Raís

Randal Corsen

Kris Berry

Jean-Jaques Rojer

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Konfiansa (R. Corsen, L Berry-Haseth) | 3:10 |
| 2. Señorita di Pietermaai (C. Heyer) | 4:24 |
| 3. Tòg mi sa (R. Plaate) | 5:37 |
| 4. Serenada (I. Provence, P. Lauffer) | 6:15 |
| 5. Sunú (O. Behilia) | 5:03 |
| 6. Dalia (folklore) | 2:29 |
| 7. El loco Juan Carabina (A. Nazoa, S. Díaz) | 3:59 |
| 8. M'a yega lat (R. Plaate) | 3:51 |
| 9. Misterio (R. Corsen, L Berry-Haseth) | 3:51 |
| 10. La Mariposa (J. Corsen, C. Corsen)* | 4:44 |
| 11. Ojos Malignos (J. Pichardo) | 5:23 |
| 12. E baka pintá (F. Aanholt) | 5:59 |
| 13. Tonada (J. Rojer) | 2:06 |

*adapted by J. Palm

Total time 57:31

JLoro - All Rights Reserved Just Listen Records, part of Native DSD Music v.o.f.