

SEMPRE CRESCENDO – ALL ABOUT JAZZ – 2002

By Jerry D'Souza

The words *Sempre Crescendo* mean Ever Growing and they seem apt for Celia Malheiros. The Brazilian singer has been active in the Bay Area and her first album should help strengthen her credentials as a singer and composer.

The music naturally devolves on the samba and the other lilting pulses that give Brazilian music its indelible character. Malheiros adds impetus by introducing African rhythms into her music. Consequently, the album dances, struts, flexes and radiates joy and happiness. But there are also softer moments, after all love does have a gentle side!

Malheiros has a great band working with her. Among them is Hermeto Pascoal who plays the piano with a radiant, open structure, the perfect complement to the serene vocals of Malheiros on *Sempre Crescendo com o Mestre*. He switches to the melodica on the upbeat, swaying *Fremeto*, that is made all the more enticing by the shifting time structure.

Malheiros plays several instruments on *Woman Being*. Her arrangements are nifty and her wordless vocals, with a chorus coming in on the bed of her instrumentation, makes this a standout. Her singing on *Soul Longing* an English version of *Saudade* is supple and not without a yearning. And for one more from the many outstanding tracks there is *Yemanjá*, which is downright heady. The mood is manifested by an exemplary flute solo from Marcelo Bernardes, and a traditional vocal chant by Mestre Caboclinho. This is a lovely debut, indeed.

