

STEVEN BREZET

DIFERENCIADO FEAT. LEANDRO LEHART
& SP-RITMO



Brazil and samba. Samba and Brazil. Inexorably linked, samba has danced its way into the hearts of millions while influencing an extraordinary scope of musical innovation revered across the globe. Samba is everywhere. From Africa to the Far East, Europe and the US and so for world travelers like percussionist Steven Brezet, migratory trips to Brazil have only deepened his passion for diving into all things samba. Having embraced the language, culture, communities and instructional generosity of master musicians in São Paulo, Salvador da Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, *Diferenciado* (Differentiated) is an extension of Brezet's personal journey exploring samba and sincere expression of gratitude towards all who have gifted him this musical philosophy he calls home.

Brazil can be a tricky place to navigate, especially for an outsider. Culturally rich but often economically poor, Brezet found kinship within various Brazilian *favelas* (shanty towns) while earning his street degree playing samba. Mastering its percussive foundations while earning the trust and respect of those Brazilians whose entire lives revolve around the art form, Brezet eventually discovered samba's malleability as well as the surprisingly dynamic results when applied to other styles of music. Tugging at these threads, *Diferenciado* acts as tribute and incubator, honoring the cultural heritage of samba while utilizing its flexibility, fusing it to funk, soul, ambient, pop and Latin music.

With age comes experience, and for Brezet that meant leaning into his large, extremely talented community of collaborators including popular Brazilian vocalists Leandro Lehart and

Wilson Simoninha, jack-of-all-arranging Oscar Cordero, the rhythmic authenticity of the São Paulo percussion ensemble *SP Ritmo*, and veteran guest artists from the popular Jazz fusion groups *Snarky Puppy* and *Ghost Note*. This musical sleight of hand, balancing ancestral and modern instrumentation, crafting delicate arrangements that honor and tinker with musical traditions, and the ingenious use of musical vignettes with select interludes, make *Diferenciado* both a familiar and entirely different take on samba.

While songs like *Familia Brasileira*, *Samba Pra Papa*, *Chora Chora* and *Batucada Do Mundo* waltz with the buoyancy samba is well-known for, *Diferenciado*, *Tem Bafafa*, and *Rumbra* charm with musical references to Herbie Hancock inspired funk, *guaguancó*, "samba rock" and smooth jazz. *Congo* and *Quebra* act as the album's delicate but intricate interludes, ambient palate cleansers between the *Diferenciado's* main courses.

Embedded within its own style of musical capoeira, the acrobatic quality of *Diferenciado's* musicality remains grounded by Brezet's commitment to the culture and communities he now belongs to in Brazil. As Brezet has come to appreciate, "an album like this creates its own place in my life and so the spirit of the music has become part of me." In the process, *Diferenciado* becomes a passageway, your passport to the spaces and spirit found within the vivacious communities celebrating the rejuvenative nature of samba.

