



BEATRIZ

MOMENTOS

**T**raditions say a lot about who we are. As metaphors into the mind, body and soul of our being, traditions are the rituals used to refine the various creative practices that shape our presence in the world. For many musicians this means honoring the cultural influences that inform their music. But for some, it's far more intimate; it's part of a bloodline, the essence of a family tree that has promoted musical excellence for generations. Enter Laura Beatriz, the Cuban pianist, composer, arranger and bandleader, a bright new voice seeking to make her mark with *Momentos (Moments)* an EP showcasing the vibrant pulse of her unique musical language. Emanating from a long Peruchín family history of talented musicians and educators, Beatriz knows first hand about the kind of dedication required to represent the most authentic traditions within Afro-Cuban music that she's known all her life.

Straddling the cultural divide between her Cuban homeland and the bustling artistic energy of life in Rotterdam, Beatriz has cultivated artistic collaborations that have become the passport for her inventive musical personality. One look at her band (percussionist, Steven Brezet, drummer Daan Arets, bassist Patricia Mancheño, trombonist Pablo Martinez, and saxophonist Sylvester "Sly5thAve" Uzoma Onyejiaka II, and special guests flutist Camila Argudin, Gerardo Rosales on güiro, synth and keyboardist Emiel van Rijthoven and Leonid Muños on bata) and you'll find a "United Nations" of inquisitive musical talents collected from The Netherlands, Spain, Venezuela, Cuba and the US.

Having begun her journey on the piano at age four with lessons from her grandmother, Beatriz later trained as a classical pianist at a Cuban conservatory, all while embracing Jazz and R&B masters like Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea, and Stevie Wonder. Throughout her life, Beatriz's most influential teacher has been her father, the master pianist/educator Rodolfo Argudin Peruchín, the key factor in how deftly she navigates traditional Cuban music, Latin Jazz and other musical disciplines that make up the African influence on Caribbean music. For the past four years she's been living and playing in the Netherlands, exploring how to invigorate her Afro-Cuban roots with curious arrangements and the informed use of synthesizers.

After what could have been a promising career as a classical pianist, Beatriz soon found herself migrating towards music ingrained in her life by legendary musicians within her immediate family. From the familiarity of classical and folkloric music her father shared and the Cuban Latin Jazz influence of her great-grandfather pianist Pedro Jústiz Nolasco Peruchín, to the seductive beats of *partido alto* and the popular 6/8 rhythmic structure of Afro-Cuban music, Beatriz gained an elite sense for rhythm while building confidence as a performer even while often banned from bandstands because she was a woman. Still, fear never entered the equilibrium of her ambition and passion to play music on her own terms. "I'm not afraid because I'm well prepared. And if I'm well prepared I will perform excellently," she often says.

Moving on from her initial quartet, Beatriz kept a keen eye for talent, and big ears for the harmonious sonority she demands from the sax/flute/trombone combination within the sextet she now leads. Even her percussionists know they need to play melodically, working through the fluid chord changes of her arrangements that accentuate the spiritual dimension of her work. Composing quickly (often taking only between 15 to 30 minutes to create a song) her work emerges from visualizing sound as much as utilizing her sophisticated understanding of contemporary music theory.

Take for example *Mi Canto*, the powerful introduction to *Momentos* that neatly balances 6/8 and 4/4 time signatures commonly found in Afro-Latin Jazz. Here Beatriz imagined a sacred forest gathering where the philosophy of "*canto*" blossoms into the kind of powerful incantations found within Yoruba spiritual practices. Leonid Muñoz's bata drumming deftly balances the metaphysical divide between Beatriz's synthesizer and the raw energy of Latin Jazz that percolates throughout the song. With *Time Problems*, Beatriz builds a dynamic pendulum between this cherished melody heard throughout her childhood, and the rhythmic force generated by drummer Daan Arets and percussionists Muñoz and Steven Brezet. Ghostnote saxophonist Sly5thAve and guest keyboardist Emiel van Rijthoven add tasty solos to spice up the track.

With a nod to Brazilian pianist/composer Cesar Camargo, *Currumin* (Portuguese for "running") finds Beatriz in full swing, pacing this playful melody with *tumbaos* that creates a lively platform for sparkling solos from trombonist Pablo Martinez, and van Rijthoven. If a global pandemic has anything resembling a silver lining, it might be found in compositions like *Michy*, Beatriz's mercurial remembrance that speaks to the sadness of the epidemic before unleashing the kind of *descarga* that makes Latin Jazz the envy of the world. Just part of Beatriz's tradition of keeping listeners on their toes as she winds up the EP with the controlled fire of her creative spirit.

Staying in the present, Beatriz has created *Momentos* to make music that "spans generations, hopefully creating a path for other musicians to follow." As a snapshot for her burgeoning career, *Momentos* is Beatriz's way of measuring the present state of her musicality; an *aperitivo* of sonic treasures that captivates the imagination, while pleasing the palette such that you immediately long for more. If traditions are who we are, then *Momentos* says everything you need to know about Laura Beatriz - an artist who's barely scratched the surface of her own talents, the musical heritage she holds most dear, and the remarkable array of ideas she seems destined to explore next.