

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Luba Mason - Interview

Jazz vocalist / songwriter **Luba Mason** takes time out from performing to speak with **Luxury Experience** about touring and about her new album, **Krazy Love** released on the **Sunnyside Records** label.



Luba Mason Performing at the Blue Note New York

LEM:

Luba, thank you for taking time before your performance at the **Blue Note New York** to talk with **Luxury Experience**.

Now that your album **Krazy Love** has been released on the **Sunnyside Records** label, which we reviewed in the **Music Scene**, you have been out on tour with an incredibly talented team of musicians that includes your husband **Ruben Blades**, bass player **Jimmy Haslip** of the **Yellowjackets**, **Dario Eskenazi** of **Paquito D'Rivera**, guitarist **Sandro Albert**, and drummer **Marco Costa**.

What is the experience of performing with them night after night?

Luba:

This is my first time touring as a singer, and although I have toured as a dancer and doing Broadway shows, this is different for me. I also wear many hats on this tour and it is my job to keep the band on schedule, organize the tickets, etc, but I am enjoying it, as the band is really wonderful.

It is great to tour with my husband, Ruben Blades, who took a break from music for the last 5 years when he was the Minister of Tourism in Panama, which recently ended. During that time, he was in Panama and I was living in Los Angeles and we would commute to see one another.

Now that his political duties are over, Ruben has his own tour starting (August 2009), so we are enjoying our time together. People tell us that we have great chemistry onstage; I met him when we were both on Broadway in *The Capeman* and I fell in love with him, and we have been together for 11 years.

LEM:

You co-wrote 8 of the songs on *Krazy Love*. What was your inspiration for the songs and the album?

Luba:

My first album was covers and was an eclectic collage of folk and rock songs. This album started out as

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being an album of Brazilian covers, and when Renato Neto (keyboardist for Prince, and the "real deal" from São Paulo, Brazil), and I had narrowed it down to 12 or 13 songs and he said that we were ready to go to the studio, I decided at the last minute that this was not the album that I wanted to make.

Renato asked me if I wrote songs, to which I replied, "No." Then I told him that I had written a song about 10 years ago that was missing a verse and a chorus, and he told me to show it to him. I did, he loved it, and encouraged me to finish it, which is exactly what I did and finished it that night. Renato provided me with a safe and nurturing environment to write, he loved what I was doing, and encouraged me.

We collaborated on the writing, with Renato providing the rhythm and I would provide the lyrics and melody. The result was freedom in that it was not a pat Brazilian album, and I wrote all of the lyrics for the 8 original songs.

LEM:

Luba, you have an incredible career that has taken you from performing on Broadway to becoming a successful Jazz vocalist. You trained in classical voice, piano and dance, attended the Circle in the Square Theatre School and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and went on to perform in many Broadway hit productions that included **The Will Rogers' Follies, Sunset Boulevard, The Capeman, Jekyll & Hyde, and Chicago.**

You have starred in television as well as performed as a Jazz vocalist internationally. Although many young girls dream of growing up and becoming a singer, dancer, or an actress, very few accomplish all three. How did this become your dream?

Luba:

During my last year of college, I had 8 credits to kill, and since my goal was to be on Broadway and I needed dance training, I dedicated my time to taking dance classes, dancing 8 hours per day. The day after I graduated, I was hired to go on tour in Japan as I was a strong singer and could do the repertoire. I got lucky and I got a job immediately out of college.

LEM:

What music did you listen to growing up?

Luba:

Classical music; I played classical piano for 12 years, and also listened to Slovak folk music. As a first generation American, my parents would not let us listen to rock music, which they thought was too wild. I grew up listening to Barbara Streisand and Broadway music, and later listened to Sting, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, and Annie Lenox. My older sister was an opera singer, so I also listened to a lot of opera in high school.

LEM:

What's next?

Luba:

I would love to do a film, do another album and write more original material, and I am always open for Broadway!

LEM:

Luba, thank you for taking the time to meet with me at the Blue Note in New York on July 13, 2009. Congratulations on the success of Krazy Love and best wishes on the rest of your tour.

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Luba Mason - Krazy Love

Read about [Krazy Love](#) released on the [Sunnyside Records](#) label in the [Music Scene](#). Visit the **Luba Mason** website, www.LubaMason.com to see her upcoming performances calendar.

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