

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Yashmin Charnet-Abler, Paul Abler Interview

What happens when you combine the talents of the quintessential Carioca, singer / songwriter Yashmin Charnet-Abler, with Michigan - born guitarist / composer Paul Abler? Great music and a great love match!

I had the pleasure of seeing Yashmin and Paul Abler perform at Sweet Rhythm in New York, where they took time before their set for an interview.



Debra:

Yashmin, you were born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Where did you live?

Yashmin:

I was born in Botofogo, but grew up in Tijuca.

Debra:

Although encouraged by your family, it was not until you had a chance meeting with Bossa Nova great, Billy Blanco, that you were inspired to seriously pursue singing. How did you meet him?

Yashmin:

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I actually met Billy Blanco by accident at a party that I was at in URCA, and he really inspired me.

Debra:

You attended the progressive Musica de Minas Escola Livre, in the state of Minas Gerais, established by the widely respected Milton Nascimento and Wagner Tiso. How did you select this school?

Yashmin:

A lot of personal things, I was married and I had moved to Minas, and then decided to go to school while I was there. It changed my life in a way; I knew that I wanted music in my life.

Debra:

You performed in Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte in Brazil, and even worked as a DJ. How did your radio experience help you with your performances and recordings?

Yashmin:

I was exposed to all kinds of Brazilian music at the radio station. There were a lot of people there who knew a lot about music and exposed me to older music that I didn't know. I was also exposed to new music and serious critics, and learned that if I have a product, I have to have a niche. I can't sing like Ella Fitzgerald, but I am able to communicate and express my feelings. I went to theatre school to add to my performance, as well as add to my professional credentials.

Debra:

You are involved with the program, [Musicians on Call](#) "founded in 1999, ...to use music to promote and complement the healing process in healthcare facilities...." Other musicians involved in this program include Bruce Springsteen and Eric Clapton, and many others. How did you become involved in this program?

Yashmin:

I'll let Paul answer this, because he was the one that got us involved.

Paul:

Former Warner Brothers Executive Michael Hill told me about this program, and we decided to get involved and perform every couple of months at Sloan Kettering in New York.

Yashmin:

I've done gigs in noisy places, and playing at a hospital is so different. It is a far cry from noisy bars and clubs, because the people really listen to you. After playing 4 hours there, I don't know how the patients feel, but I feel great, and really appreciate what I have. Sometimes people will tell me "wow, this made my day," and it really is a great feeling.

Debra:

Congratulations on your recently released CD, Yashmin Charnet-Abler "Jobim, etc." on [Bossa Nova Music](#). I know that you grew up listening to Antonio Carlos Jobim, João Gilberto and Vinicius de Moraes, etc. How did you come to select the eclectic mix of songs, which include: Só tinha de ser com você by Jobim and Aloysio de Oliveira, I Need You by George Harrison, and S'Wonderful by Gershwin?

Yashmin:

My father listened to a lot of Bossa Nova and Jobim songs. I was born after the Bossa Nova movement, but I got into it from my father. My mother was really into Bolero music, and my grandmother used to sing

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Bolero in Spanish, even though she was from Portugal, she loved to sing in Spanish. I was too young when the Beatles broke up, but when I came to the US in 1987, I liked George Harrison a lot. When I heard, I Need You, performed by the group Boca Libre, I wanted to do it, and then added Flamenco to it. Jobim was crazy about Gershwin, so I got Gershwin from Jobim!

Debra:

You have another CD coming out this year on Bossa Nova Music; "Remember Me", featuring Allen Farnham and James Carter with original material.

Yashmin:

There are 11 songs on "Remember Me", which will be released around May or June 2006, and is a mix of English and Portuguese songs. Paul wrote the music for 9 of the songs, and I wrote the lyrics. Paul and I love the Burt Bacharach song, This Girl's in Love with You, so I wrote the lyrics in Portuguese.

Debra:

Who influences you as a musician/songwriter/singer?

Yashmin:

Everybody! Miúcha, (Bebel Gilberto's mother, who was married to João Gilberto); I once spent all of the money that I earned for a week to hear her sing at Canecão in Rio. I also like a lot of the people from Bossa Nova.

Debra:

What's next?

Yashmin:

Tonight! Actually, "Remember Me" is a big step for me, as it is the first time that I am recording as a songwriter. I think that this work is great; I hope that other people will think so, too! I would really love to see other people recording this music, and establish myself as a songwriter with Paul.

Debra:

Paul, you grew up in Pontiac, Michigan knowing that you wanted to be a musician. You grew up with music - through your mother's records and your drummer grandfather practicing to recordings by Stan Getz and Dave Brubeck. Exposed to Jazz, you have played Jazz, Blues, Funk and R&B. How would you describe the type of music that you play today?

Paul:

It is a fusion of all of those things. I started out with R&B, Jimi Hendrix stuff, straight jazz; now I am trying to put it all together.

Debra:

You moved from Michigan to LA in 1982 and studied with Joe Dorio, Carl Schroeder and Ron Eschete at the Musicians Institute (Guitar Institute of Technology). What was that experience like?

Paul:

It was a great experience. It was more than a school; it was place where we could play music all day and all night. The school was much like California, we would hang out in Joe or Carl's office during the day, and then the students would play music all night.

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Debra:

Next, you moved to Boston to study improvisation with Saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi in 1988. What did you learn from your time with him?

Paul:

With Jerry, I learned basically to have confidence in my ideas; that I was on the right track anyways.

Debra:

In 1990, you moved to Detroit, performing with Marcus Belgrave, Harold McKinney, etc, and also with your own groups. You started recording, had great success, and then began to compose for film and television in 1996. How did that come about?

Paul:

Truly by accident. I was doing some corporate parties for Owens-Corning, and when they promoted the person who booked me, in a way I was promoted, too. When the company decided to start making training films, they knew that I was a composer, and I was invited to compose the music for their films.

Debra:

In 2003 you moved to New York. What brought you to New York?

Paul:

I had pretty much covered the Detroit area, and in 2000 the economy started going down, and as a composer, I have a lot of music and need to be able to market that music, and New York is a much larger market.

Debra:

In 2004, you married Yashmin Charnet. How did the boy from Pontiac meet the girl from Rio?

Paul:

The interesting thing is that somehow unbeknownst to me, one of my CDs accidentally dropped out of the bag I was carrying onto the floor at a club that I was at, and the manager found the CD the next day, and thought I had left the CD for him. He called me, and I ended up playing there. Someone had dropped Yashmin's CD off at this same club, and we ended up meeting at the club in December 2003 and were married in May 2004.

Yashmin:

When we met, we knew one week later that this was it. It was really a love story, much like our music.

Debra:

Paul, you have a new release out, "Fearless", released in February 2006, as well as a forthcoming release "Only Cowboys in Tune", which features the instrumental music of Jimi Hendrix, who influenced you to study guitar. When will that be released?

Paul:

"Only Cowboys in Tune" will be released sometime this summer.

Debra:

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Obviously you're a man who never stops pushing new horizons, what's next?

Paul:

Right now I'm thinking of the next instrumental project. I can't say what it is yet, but it will fuse my interests. Odd as it may seem, I don't conceptualize things. I just hear the music and write it down. I write music like a conversation. I hear a line and that inspires the next line.

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