

# BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



**Céu**

*Tropix*

## **Céu Drives Home the Rhythm with Tropix**

*Brazilian singer returns with strong beats and gorgeous melodies*

One of the persistent challenges facing artists is keeping things fresh. Brazilian singer Céu seems to have no problem with this, however. From her self-titled gem of a debut to the dub influenced *Vagarosa*, to the road trip-themed *Caravana Sereia Bloom*, as well as last year's gorgeous live recording, she goes beat heavy on *Tropix* (Six Degrees Records).

In her quest for a more upbeat, rhythm-driven album, she employed the production help of French native Hervé Salters, aka General Elektrijs, who cut his teeth playing keyboards for Femi Kuti and playing with Blackalicious and Lyrics Born, and Pupillo, drummer of one of a longstanding Brazilian feature, Nação Zumbi, as well as his country's most in-demand producer.

Working with them was a dream come true, says Céu. They were able to translate her vision into reality with *Tropix*, which she says is a combination of 'tropical' and 'pixel.'

"Somehow the pixel became a inspiration," she says. "A pixel is a small part of a big thing—defragmentation as a concept. That's also why the album has a lot of arpeggiator keyboard, to capture that sound."

Utilizing Salters' keyboard mastery, Céu has redefined her sound once again. She's never been purely an electronic artist; her global temperament combined with a deep love for Brazil's indigenous sounds shines through on every record. *Tropix* is no different. Any programming only adds to the organic nature of her unique style.

And that style is the result of being brought up in a musical family. Her musicologist and composer father introduced her to an array of musical forms: Root Samba, Afrobeat, Reggae, Jazz. Céu was later taken with artists like Billie Holiday, Erykah Badu, and Ella Fitzgerald. In her own music she pulls from whatever she can use to create a distinct sonic repertoire. The São Paulo native has received four Grammy nominations and has stormed into Billboard charts on a number of occasions, proving both her lasting power as well as her immensely attractive songwriting skills.

The arpeggiator has the honor of kicking off the record with a subtle line supporting Céu's melody on "Perfume do Invisível." The song tells the tale of one woman telling another what she would do if she were invisible, inspired by Italian comic book cartoonist Milo Manara. Manara has made a career of fusing the popular with the imaginative: he's worked with famed movie producer Federico Fellini and penned covers for Marvel Comics, though he's best known for his unforgettable erotic drawings.

The beat-driven "Arrastarte-Ei" begins with a roving bass line thanks to Lucas Martins before expanding into a Questlove-esque rhythm. Again her poetry flies into the fantastic. "It's a love song," she says, "saying that I can transform myself into the sea when my beloved is coming back from a journey."

The emphasis on keyboards and lack of guitar—a staple instrument in her catalog—allows *Tropix* to play with the listener's imagination in new ways. The poppy "Varanda Suspensa" recalls a veranda on a São Paulo beach that she spent many hours sitting on in her youth, "beside my grandpa, watching the landscape change the colors, looking like a tropical expressionism painting."

Not that there aren't any guitars. One kicks off a beautiful tribute of a cover from post-punk band Fellini, also from São Paulo. The 1989 original "Chico Buarque Song"—honoring the legendary singer, writer, and cultural critic—is frenetic and driving with a strong touch of Joy Division. Céu sits back on the groove, keeping the eighties vibe intact with a well-placed synthesizer, crooning in English over the exploding harmony.

Her psychedelic nature fully emerges on "Camadas," a song she co-wrote with a member from Goiania-based rock band Boogarins. Violins float above a Portishead-style landscape as she sings this effervescent love song: "To explain to you who I am / I don't want to have to be another person / I am made of layers and layers."

And it is those layers that her fans around the world have fallen in love with. Born with such a passionate love for the music and cultures of the planet, Céu has taken it all in and returned it with one of the twenty-first century's most distinctive voices. *Tropix* is a stunning effort created by a woman who truly knows no boundaries.

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