



HAVANA CARBO – BIO

“Warmth, class, style and substance...beautiful...she has it all...simply impossible not to love.”
Earl Hazell, *Amazon.com*

“A deep, powerful voice...in the Gilberto tradition she creates a kind of a hush around her lyrics...”
Michael Ullman, *High Fidelity Magazine*

Cuban born, U.S.- raised Havana Carbo brings both worlds to her music, infusing each one of her songs with understated passion. “I have to earn the right to sing a song and I need a connection, a compelling story and memorable music to help tell it,” explains Carbo discussing her criteria for repertoire. Hers is a style that defies category, sometimes described as “Chamber Bolero/Jazz”. Carbo weaves her tapestry of meticulously chosen and rarely heard gems as she travels seamlessly between Spanish, English, French, Italian and Portuguese enchanting audiences and critics alike, ushering the listener into her world.

The former Soul Note recording artist (*Street Cries*, 1991, *So I’ll Dream You Again*, 1997, and *Luna de Varadero*, 2005) now celebrates the April 2007 release of *Through a Window, Like a Dream* on MODLmusic, a production on her own label. *Through a Window, Like a Dream* promises the same enthusiastic response given her previous recordings, which garnered glowing reviews from as far as Braga, Portugal to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where Arnaldo Desouteiro, *La Tribuna* wrote that Carbo possesses a “...singularly warm timbre...extraordinary phrasing and stirring expressiveness... and “is destined to develop a cult-following” calling *Luna de Varadero* “SUBLIME...a perfect CD”. As a result Carbo was selected “ #1 Female Jazz Vocalist of 2004 in *La Tribuna’s* “Annual International Artists Poll.”

Growing up in Havana, Carbo displayed a natural facility for the piano at age three, and at eight, she began formal lessons relying mostly on her ear, and memorizing her lessons. Raised in an environment that celebrated music but viewed “nightclub” performing as inappropriate for a young lady, a budding career that began during her New York high school years was cut short. As a teenager, she led a vocal quintet, *The Holidates*, and held her first professional job as vocalist with Bobby Friedlander’s Band. Parental scrutiny prevailed, and a brief marriage later to a Cuban Economics major she met while at Villanova University in pre-Castro Havana dealt the final blow to her musical pursuits.

Her introduction to American popular song and jazz came via Chet Baker, Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Johnny Hartman, Frank Sinatra, June Christy, Mel Tormé, and later Shirley Horn, Maysa, Elis Regina, João Gilberto, Edu Lobo, Ivan Lins and Antonio Carlos “Tom” Jobim. Fascinated and blown away by the directness of Brazilian lyrics, incomparable melodies and harmonies, Carbo taught herself Portuguese to better understand the culture, and to do justice to the song. As luck would have it, while searching for lyrics to a song she heard sung by Gilberto called, “Retrato em Branco e Preto,” she was put in contact with its composer, the legendary Jobim, who gave generously of his time on the telephone by clarifying, translating, and answering her questions.

Twenty odd years, three marriages and four fabulous children later, with life’s experiences as a bonus, Havana finally embraced her major passion - music. In 1984, living in Stockbridge, MA, and married to concert guitarist Ed Flower, Carbo came out of the metaphorical musical closet to create *Havana Midnight*, a Latin jazz group devoted to her arrangements of beloved Latin classics. The group met with instant success, often sharing the stage with the Jimmy Giuffre 4 and Cherry Vanilla. *Another Summer*, a self-produced EP, was reviewed by Michael Ullman for *High Fidelity Magazine*: “...a powerful voice...in the Gilberto tradition she creates a hush around her lyrics”. It led to a Soul Note contract and to *Street Cries*, her first full-length solo CD featuring Gene Bertoncini, Michael Moore, and Marvin Stamm. She was on a roll.

After receiving her MFA from NYU in 1993, which coincided with her divorce decree, she decided to stay in New York and focus primarily on performing. Perseverance, an indomitable spirit, and a quick sense of humor in the face of adversity have been her credo and salvation. Carbo continues to captivate the listener in venues

that vary from Birdland to intimate jazz clubs to concert halls such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Smith College, Aaron Davis Hall, at Jazz Vespers or Jazz Festivals, in Jamaica and Barbados, or in a Paris boîte.

You can order a "Havana Carbo", an exotic rum based drink created in her honor, at the Redbones Blues Café, an upscale Supper Club, in Kingston Jamaica. In any venue she entices the listener with a bolero, a subtle Brazilian bossa, a treasured jazz ballad or one of her own compositions. Havana Carbo is highly regarded by the outstanding musicians with whom she works - Dario Eskenazi, Sean Smith, Oriente Lopez, Helio Alves, Nilson Matta, Vince Cherico, and Gene Bertoncini. She values past collaborations with greats such as Jimmy Giuffre, the late Edson Machado, Michael Moore, Chocolate Armenteros, Romero Lubambo, Negro Hernandez, the Chico O'Farrill Band and Café to name a few.

Her *Stockbridge Requiem* composed for two sopranos, full chorus, organ and Latin jazz quartet was performed at Saint Peter's Church, in New York, and Marian Chapel, in Stockbridge. "Arco Iris", a Chamber piece for soprano saxophone, jazz guitar and piano in five "colors" premiered at Simon's Rock (Bard College) and was selected by Cuban saxophone virtuoso Miguel Villafruela to be performed and recorded in Santiago de Chile. Carbo composed a one-act musical theatre piece and is in rewrites for Living by Ear, a musical tongue-in-cheek autobiographical one-woman show. Segments have been performed at the Golden Fleece Composer Forums. Her instrumental "Dream Waltz" is included on [Through a Window, Like a Dream](#).

Carbo is driven by a desire to keep alive the great but overlooked music of Latin America and the United States, bringing songs out from obscurity...dusting those that have been forgotten for no particular reason other than because it's easier to choose the familiar over the lesser known. Havana believes knowledge and appreciation of our musical history and heritage is essential. To that end it's her "obligation as a singer to shine a light on what must never be forgotten."

Happily divorced, she continues to thrive in a community of extraordinary artists, nourished by love of music, family and friends. She lives in constant awe of the gift that is music, fully aware of the responsibility that comes with the gift, and striving to keep her dream uncompromised.

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For additional information please contact Diana Nazareth/DL Media at 416-815-8883
or via email at dlmedia.canada@sympatico.ca

124 Highland Avenue • Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004 • Tel 610-667-0501 • Fax 610-667-0502
Don: dondlmedia@covad.net • Brad: braddlmedia@coavad.net • Steph: stephdlmedia@covad.net
Diana: dlmedia.canada@sympatico.ca • Erica: dlmediapr@covad.net • Matt: mattddl@covad.net

