

Reviews:

straight.com

Music Choice in The Georgia Straight
Publish Date: 9-Mar-2006

Netherlands-born chanteuse Astrid has described her music as global-retro/bossa urban–jazz chill—which is another way of saying North European lounge. Her voice and style recall Norway’s Beady Belle, but Astrid also plays flute and saxophone on several of her self-penned songs from the album *Red Umbrella*. It’s a sound best suited to small spaces like Rime, where Astrid plays this Wednesday (March 15), accompanied by several of Vancouver’s finest jazz musicians, including keyboard wizard Chris Gestrin and guitarist Kerry Galloway.

THE VANCOUVER SUN

The Queue
Publish Date: July 21, 2005
by Marke Andrews

3 1/2 stars

Astrid Sars, who prefers a one name moniker, describes her debut CD as "global-Retro/Bossa, Urban Jazz/Chill with smooth vocals" which pretty much covers all bases. It is also a very hip recording, one which should find a good cross-section audience of young and old-school listeners.

As a vocalist, Astrid is kind of a cross between Bebel Gilberto and Sade: she'd be at home at a Brazilian carnival or an urban lounge. For the samba-beat *Running Home*, she lays down a silk-edged vocal as Kerry Galloway plays a Brazilian-style acoustic guitar (Galloway, who arranged and produced the record double-tracks guitar and bass on many of the songs, all of which were written by Astrid). She gives *Heart* a bluesy, chanteuse treatment, and utilizes electronic vocal manipulation for the easy moving *Spinoff*. Keyboards player Chris Gestrin and Cellist Finn Manniche combine beautifully on the ballad *Turn me Loose*.

Besides singing Astrid is also accomplished as an alto saxophonist and flutist, her alto sax just right for the slow-groove *Eyes of Abraham*, and her flute helping to propel *You Gave Me Wonder*.

The Province

E-Today: Quickspins
Publish Date: July 19, 2005
Tom Harrison
Red Umbrella (independent)

As genre-hopping goes, this combination of boss-nova and jazz is confident and stylish. Astrid sings with a soft-peddled purr but has strong backing that gives full range to her flute and sax. Co-Producer Kerry Galloway adds some imaginative affects as on *You Gave Me Wonder*. B

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Going Out: Music

Publish Date: May 27, 2005

by Tony Montague

On the cover of Astrid Sars' debut CD *Red Umbrella* the music is described as "global-retro/bossa urban-jazz chill". That's a lot to promise. Fortunately the Netherlands-born chanteuse, alto saxophonist, and songwriter delivers. Sars is one of the most experienced artists on the Vancouver jazz-lounge scene, and her recording is a sophisticated stylistic blend, characterized by tight arrangements, smooth vocals, and sultry ambience.

Red Umbrella's title track – a medium-paced ballad [is] about how small acts of generosity can transform the way you view the world. Sars sings it in a breathy voice that's halfway between Bebel Gilberto and Marlene Dietrich, and the arrangement has an appropriately urban flavour.

THE VANCOUVER SUN

West Coast News section

Publish Date: May 20, 2005

by Malcolm Parry

On Astrid's CD *Red Umbrella*: "The 11 songs distantly echo Pink Martini and Mimosas Groups, as well as Brazilian chanteuse Astrud Gilberto, Singer Astrid adds flavour by playing alto Sax and flute."

"Just like a nice cool breeze on a hot summer day Astrid sings us some refreshing new bossa sounds with hints of mellow pop melodies, jazzy passages and funky smooth grooves. The sounds are familiar but with a refreshingly nice vibe... a great remedy to warm up a room during those cold winter days... just pop it in and escape to that warm destination of your dreams."