



Cyro Baptista's Banquet of the Spirits: Infinito (2009)

By Joel Roberts | October 10, 2009

Multi-talented percussionist Cyro Baptista may have the most dazzlingly eclectic resumé in contemporary music. He's performed and recorded with mainstream jazzers like [Herbie Hancock](#) and [Wynton Marsalis](#); downtown experimentalists like [John Zorn](#) and Laurie Anderson; pop icons like Sting and Paul Simon and major Brazilian stars like [Milton Nascimento](#) and Ivan Lins. And he may be the only artist in the world who can list both Yo Yo Ma and Snoop Dogg among his credits.

Baptista's fourth release on Zorn's Tzadik label, and his second with his Banquet of the Spirits band, is billed as a collection of "experimental Brazilian pop songs." But it's unlike any pop music you're likely to hear on the radio, whether you're tuning your set in Sao Paulo or New York. *Infinito* is an exuberant, adventurous, at times frenzied blend of jazz, funk, Brazilian, Afro/Cuban and other Latin American musics—often woven together within a single composition. "Kwanza," a tune penned by keyboardist Brian Marsella, for example, starts off with some funky electric-Miles fusion paired with Latin percussion before shifting rhythms, dynamics and instrumentation reveal a simple, sweet folk melody. But despite the wide-ranging sources and inspirations, the music never sounds forced or clumsy; the sound is seamless and organic, owing to the leader's highly developed vision of music as a global art that exists beyond any artificial national or genre divisions.



Baptista plays a huge array of percussion instruments from Brazil and around the world, as well as homemade instruments like a gas pipe, vacuum cleaner hose and something called a waterphone. One cut, "In Vitrous," features a collection of specially made glass instruments. His core group (Marsella, [Shanir Blumenkranz](#) on bass and oud and Tim Keiper on drums) is augmented by guests including Brazilian guitar great [Romero Lubambo](#), electronics wizard Ikue Mori and rising saxophone and clarinet star [Anat Cohen](#). Several tunes, like the title cut, the gorgeous "Adeus Às Filhas" and the lively "Cantor Cuidadoso" feature vocals, but the emphasis throughout is on high-spirited instrumental exploration. *Infinito* is a joyous, carnival-like treat for listeners who appreciate music without boundaries.

Track Listing: Infinito Coming; Batida de Coco; In Vitrous; Kwanza; Noia; Adeus as Filhas; Coronation of a Slave Queen; Cantor Cuidadoso; Pro Flavio; Blindman; Infinito Going.

Personnel: Cyro Baptista: percussion, vocals; Brian Marsella: keyboards, melodica; Tim Keiper: drums; Shanir Blumenkranz: bass, oud; Kevin Breit: guitar; Erik Friedlander: cello; Romero Lubambo: guitar; Ikue Mori: electronics; Anat Cohen: clarinet, saxophone; Zé Mauricio: conga; Chikako Iwahori: surdo; Scott Kettner: alfaia; Anne Pope: caixa; Sergio Brandao: bass.

Record Label: [Tzadik](#)

Style: [Latin/World](#)