

Mp3 Brazzaville - 2002



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Soft and sad, and tinged with a weary sort of sex appeal...explores the worlds of dereliction and exile--war zones, ghettos, welfare hoyels, shooting galleries, train cars, the world wide web in a poetic shorthand that is bandied, buoyed, and embellished 11 MP3 Songs ROCK: Emo, POP: Delicate Details: SF WEEKLY 6/11/2003 by Silke Tudor Brazzaville, the river-port capital of the Republic of the Congo, was founded in 1883 by Pierre Paul Franois Savorgnan de Brazza, a Brazilian-born adventurer of Italian nobility who became a French citizen so that he could explore and colonize Africa. The result of a similarly Byzantine array of influences, Brazzaville, the Los Angeles-based nightclub septet, was founded in 1998 by David Brown, a one-time runaway from L.A.'s Koreatown who tramped through India, Brazil, Venezuela, Spain, Japan, Nepal, and Thailand before becoming Beck Hansen's saxophone player. With bossa nova rhythms lapping softly against a fading accordion, a delicate piano melody wafting through a golden haze of saxophone, and Brown's smooth, unhurried tenor supplying an offhand sort of Parisian cool, Brazzaville is the band you might expect to find at the end of the line in The Night of the Iguana. While the group's peculiar amalgamation of wandering souls -- among them, a Miami-born guitar player raised in Zaire, a Californian sax player currently leading a Cambodian pop band, and a Caribbean-born percussion player raised in Paris -- can cite working relationships with Nina Hagen, Lisa Marie Presley, the Lemonheads, Tom Waits, Ozomatli, Los Super Elegantes, Natalie Merchant, Joan Baez, and Sandra Bernhard, one gets the feeling the band would feel just as comfortable smoldering in dark bar where ruined women and remorseful felons shed their names and soak their memories in grain alcohol and tropical rain. The 11 songs found on last year's Rouge on Pockmarked Cheeks are, like the album's title, soft and sad, and tinged with a weary sort of sex appeal. As on Brazzaville's previous two discs, Brown explores the worlds of dereliction and exile -- war zones, ghettos, welfare hotels, shooting galleries, train

cars, the World Wide Web, and his old neighborhood -- in a poetic shorthand that is bandied, buoyed, and embellished by the band's elegant musicianship. The combination, reminiscent of late-'60s Tropicalia, is at once trendy and touching, but unlike some of the great artists of Brazil's movement, Brown does not stop at the threshold of introspection: On songs like the dusky "Motel Room," in which he sings, "Night is here in my veins/ I'm losing again/ And not much remains/ Come/ Lay down next to me/ And I'll tell you a bit/ Of who I used to be," his languid sympathy takes on the guise of memory. Throughout the album, he imbues loneliness with more shadow-weight than gunships and class riots combined.

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