

# Stereophile

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## Jazz

### ANA CARAM: *Rio After Dark*

Ana Caram, guitar, vocals; Steve Sacks, alto flute; David Finck, bass; Café, Carlos Alberto de Oliveira, percussion; Antonio Carlos Jobim, piano, vocals; Paquito D'Rivera, alto sax, clarinet; Bill Washer, guitar; David Chesky, piano

Chesky JD29. Tr. 54:25

Ana Caram, on *Rio After Dark*, sings and plays guitar on a few of the songs with a charming, youthful tentativeness. On others, she sounds like a seasoned veteran. David Chesky's title tune sets the mood for the entire album, a celebration of life in sight, sound, and feeling. The sunset heralds a sensual awakening to the beauty of Rio de Janeiro at night—a place where "the samba swings until the break of day." This tune flows in an easy-going, gentle manner with Ana's guitar and the accompanying alto flute, percussion, and bass creating a fine ensemble sound that captures the samba spirit nicely. Antonio Carlos Jobim makes an appearance on his famous "Meditation," his piano delicately supporting the captivating vocal duet. Listen to the last Steinway chord as it fades off into silence. No heavy hand on the controls here! I wish other record companies, especially the majors, would display the same sensitivity to their artists. I also yearn for more recordings which capture the nuances of male and female voice as well as this one does. "Viola Fora De Moda" has the potential to become a standard demo cut in high-end audio salons. Ana's sassy guitar playing is featured, along with some of the most realistic-sounding and exotic percussion I've ever heard. Listen especially to the cymbal as it is either struck with the drumstick or caressed with the wire brush. I have rarely heard such keen high-frequency extension captured on either CD or LP. It sounds exquisite, and, once heard, will linger in one's memory like the taste of a fine wine.

Ana's songwriting skills are revealed on "Rainbow" and "Renovação." Each is sensitive, mature, engrossing. She's no slouch on guitar, either, propelling the music forward gently or agitatedly, according to the mood. Track after track on this generous CD brought a smile to my face. The only sour note is Carol King's classic "You've Got A Friend." Sorry, Ana—Carol's version will forever be etched in my mind [As will be Donny Hathaway's on mine.—JA]