

AMANDA MARTINEZ

Canadian Latin Jazz singer releases “*Amor*” October 20

Massey Hall presents Koerner Hall concert October 23

TORONTO, August 17 - Heart. It's the centre of the soul and the cradle of love. It moves and inspires people. And it's with heart in mind that **Canadian Latin Jazz singer Amanda Martinez** collaborated on the music for her **new album *Amor***. The much anticipated sophomore disc releases across Canada this fall on **October 20, 2009**.

Thrice-nominated for Latin Jazz Singer of the Year at the National Jazz Awards, the former host of Jazz FM's popular *Cafe Latino* program released her debut full-length disc, *Sola*, in 2006. Bravo! described her as “*An enchantress... a passionate gypsy soul*” and NOW Magazine critic Jason Keller commented that, “*anything this soulfully delivered supersedes language barriers.*”

It was through guitarist **Kevin Laliberté** that she was first introduced to her now husband (and Bass player) **Drew Birston**. Since the launch of her first record, the couple have added a gorgeous brown-eyed boy to the family who goes by the name of Leo.

It's with these new inspirational people in her life that her warm alto voice takes off, a 12-track album written with her band in from the comforts of a candle-lit downtown Toronto living room. As with this year's dramatic weather patterns, so too is the album, a gypsy-soaked ode to warmth and dance that provokes images of naked dirt-stained feet, to looks of love and abandon, and promises to keep. Disc opener **Gitana** is just one of eight original songs penned by Martinez and her band. There's also a heartfelt tribute (a song as lilting and colourful as was her energy and paintings) to her late friend Lupe Rodriguez. **Tómalo** betrays her bandmates Cuban influences while **Te prometo** is a quiet ode to the kind of hopeful love that makes your heart explode with happiness. The disc also includes a simply glowing interpretation of Mexican composer Tomas Mendez Sosa's **Cucurrucucu Paloma**. **Alcoba Azul**, the centrepiece song featured in a pivotal scene in the art-biopic *Frida* (there sung by the glorious Lila Downs) adds a devilish undercurrent of passion to the mix.

The combined energies of Cuban bandmates **Rosendo "Chendy" Leon** (percussion), **Alexander Brown** (trumpet) and **Oswaldo Rodriguez** (violin) with longtime guitarist **Kevin Laliberté**, husband and bass player **Drew Birston** and Martinez's own South African and Mexican heritage influences the music in subtle and delightful ways.

Tickets are on-sale today for her **hometown release concert in Toronto on October 23, 2009** at the Royal Conservatory's new concert venue, Koerner Hall, located at 273 Bloor Street West (at Avenue Road.) Additional fall tour dates will be announced early September. Visit Martinez online at amandamartinez.ca.

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