

## Hatched Cracks the Surface: Badi Assad's New Release Puts Graceful Brazilian Spin on Pop and EDM Chart Toppers

Skrillex secretly dances to the spirit of *maracatu*. And as for Lorde, somewhere in "Royals" beats a Bahia heart.

The hidden Afro-Brazilian side of some of pop's best-loved tracks comes to light, thanks to Brazil's nimble, virtuosic guitarist and vocalist **Badi Assad**. Ranked by *Rolling Stone* as one of the world's top female guitarists, Assad is from musical royalty (Brazil's acclaimed Assad family). She's incubated a new Brazilophilic way to listen to global hits on her latest release ***Hatched*** (distributed by IDC San Francisco; release: October 16, 2015), rendering them with all the gravity and grace the seasoned, expansive artist is known for.

"These songs surprised me, with their depth, and with the depth of engagement they inspired in young listeners," Assad recounts. "There is so much shallow music, it seems sometimes, and life has been made so shallow everywhere. The younger people are encouraged to live on the surface, and no one has time to go any deeper. Yet if our souls are shallow, where will we be? Some of these songs deal with this very question, and it made me see them in a whole new light."

Quicksilver guitar work and vocal percussion, sweet and stirring singing are Badi's trademarks, and they crack open the unexpectedly lyrical quality and deep sentiments of the popular songs Assad chose to explore, arrange, and make her own.

Assad will give American audiences a chance to experience these songs, as well as her own compositions, live, when she comes as a solo performer to **DC, NYC, Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, Tampa**, and other cities in **October and November 2015**. February 2016 will see her return to the US, for a performance at the Palace of Fine Arts with Adrian Legg.

One of *Rolling Stone's* Top 100 Guitarists and the winner of the 2013

USA Songwriting Competition in the World category, Assad has enjoyed over 20 years on the world stage, acclaimed as one of the finest Brazilian guitarists of her generation. She regularly works in film, music, and dance with inexhaustible versatility. The younger sister of legendary classical guitarists Duo Assad, Badi has forged her own path forward, with nearly a dozen albums and tours worldwide, including legs in China and Cuba this year.

Assad was already brooding over her next album, when a serendipitous conversation gave her an unexpected push. After chatting with a friend and colleague on a trip to New York about a new generation of pop, EDM, and rock songwriters, Assad dug into the songs of Mumford & Sons, Lorde, and many others. The depth and beauty of some of their tunes touched her. She began to hear her own versions, like Assad's tender yet eerie "Hanging Tree," best known as the keystone of the *Hunger Games* soundtrack.

Assad's versions have a distinctly Brazilian lilt, yet remain spare and simple in their arrangements, a departure from her more produced recent recordings. "I wanted something more organic," she reflects. "I transcribed all the songs to the guitar and started an arrangement from there, built it around it." Working with Grammy-winning producer Ruriá Duprat, they kept to a small core of instruments and voice, adding only a fleeting, if delightful, touch of other colors, including Oleg Fateev's jubilant Russian *bayan* (button accordion) on "Sedated," "Stranger," and "Entrelaçar."

Yet it was in dialogue with masterful percussionist Simone Sou that many of the covers' Brazilian sides came dancing out. Sou pushed Assad's fresh takes into distinctly Afro-Brazilian places, subtly making EDM heavyweight Skrillex, for example, sound like he hails from the northeastern Brazilian state of Pernambuco.

The covers feel utterly at home beside Assad's own songs, from the charming love ballad, "Vejo você aqui," written in collaboration with leading Brazilian popular songwriter Zélia Duncan, to the swaying "Entrelaçar." Assad's insistence on substance and spirit finds original expression as well, on "Spirit Dog," a piece based on a poem written

for Assad by thinker and writer David Levitan. “I carried it around with me for years,” smiles Assad. “Until I found the right moment for it. The lyrics mean so much to me, and helped me move away from seeing myself as a victim, as helpless. My brother Sérgio and I added the melody and made it a beautiful track.”

It’s that spirit that ties these diverse covers and compositions together: “I don’t make music that’s pure entertainment, that’s a flash in the pan, that doesn’t reflect who I am,” says Assad. “And I’m always open to things that challenge me, that give the world an opportunity to go where I am going.”