



**Nation Beat perform a mix of Brazilian maracatu beats and more during GlobalFest.**

**BRAZILIAN FUSION**

**Brooklyn drummer Scott Kettner explores the roots of maracatu and more**

By Ernest Barteldes This year's GlobalFest includes 13 acts—ranging from Dominican Republic's 84-year-old troubadour Puerto Plata, Argentina's tango-fusion master Chango Spasiuk, French Gypsy guitar virtuosos Samarabalouf and Italy's Dylanesque Vinicio Caposella—and includes a local band, Nation Beat, that's regularly mixing together Brazilian beats in Brooklyn. Drummer Scott Kettner's fascination with maracatu, the obscure beat that hails from the countryside of the northeastern Brazilian states of Pernambuco and Ceará, came about while he was studying with Billy Hart at the New School.

"He was teaching Afro-Brazilian beats such as samba, frevo and afoxé, and I asked him what else about Brazil he had heard about," explains Kettner. "And he told me about maracatu."

Eventually Kettner traveled to Recife, where he came into contact with Jorge Martins, a master percussionist who leads his own outfit in Brazil. Kettner was observing Martins to learn the style, when he noticed a resemblance between that genre and other Afro-inspired beats. "I spent a short time there, and I went into the favelas with him, and noticed a connection with Cajun [people] in New Orleans."

Upon returning to the U.S., he began assembling the band, trying to find musicians who would be interested in this kind of fusion. One of the earliest to join was California-born Skye Steele, a violinist who explores various influences in his playing. (Full disclosure: I was also contacted to play bass.) The band continued to evolve, and late in 2006 they released their debut, *Maracatu Universal*. Their current lineup includes Kettner, Steele, Mike Savino (bass), Rafa McGregor (guitar) and Eduardo Guedes (percussion) and new vocalist Liliana Araújo.

A mutual friend introduced Araújo, born and raised in Fortaleza, Brazil, to Kettner. A singer with classical training, she was a runner up on "Fama," Brazil's version of "American Idol," and originally sang backup during the sessions for their disc. "It took a while to take care of immigration, but we finally got everything and she's our permanent singer," explains Kettner. "She brings in the folkloric elements of Brazil. She's an amazing singer, and she helps keep the music authentic."

During GlobalFest, Nation Beat will showcase material both from their debut and from their upcoming recording. "We will have a lot of fusion between forró, maracatu, coco (another genre from Pernambuco that dates from the 19th century) and New Orleans music," explains Kettner. "It's incredible how the lap steel guitar and everything else is really blending naturally."

Nation Beat play at GlobalFest Jan. 13, Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (betw. 3rd & 4th Aves.), 212-353-1600; 7, \$40.