

**RIP-ROARING JAZZ AT THE RIVER**

The San Francisco Chronicle / Jesse Hamlin

"Saturday was a medium scorcher, musically and weather wise. It began on a wonderful Afro Brazilian note with Escola Nova de Samba dancers and Chalo Eduardo's Brazilian Beat, featuring the honey-voiced Claudia Gomez. They performed spirited music of traditional Afro Brazilian and popular music. Gomez's lovely voice came across with clarity and warmth, singing songs by Brazilian composers Dorival Caymmi and Djavan. She sang circles around the famed Brazilian singer Flora Purim, who closed Sunday's show with a noisy Electric set..."

**CLAUDIA GOMEZ, TIERRADENTRO CD**

Billboard magazine - World music

Colombian-born, Bay Area-based singer songwriter Claudia Gomez explores a variety of Latin musical styles with a marked Brazilian influence on this enchanting label debut. Led by Gomez's strong, affecting vocals, this exquisitely simple and elegant set is marked by the gorgeous flamenco styling of the title track, the percolating multitracked vocals of "Soltarlo", the beautiful choral harmonies of "Aguacerito Llové", the African influenced call and response of "La Guayabita" and the light, sambafied aura of "Debi Llorar" and "Recuerdos de Medellin".

## THE BRUNCH OF LOVE

The East Bay Express / Chiori Santiago

Partnership is the key to any repast and the smooth, lilting melodies of singer Claudia Gomez with guitarist Jeff Buenz and percussionist John Santos was a perfect combination for a Sunday brunch at Kimball's East. If anything, I'd opt for a double order of music, hold the food... The Claudia Gomez Trio managed to glide skillfully through this performance minefield, artfully leading from a sleepy sweet opener through some glistening low key ballads until, by the time it got to an upbeat arrangement of Pablo Milanes composition in the second set, the roomful of diners had laid down their forks to listen. ... In this spare trio format, Gomez has found the proper environment for her singular voice. The caressing quality of that voice belies its sure strength; what you remember are not the flashy surges of power but the way she stretches a note as if it's saltwater taffy, pulling it into a pure steady line with just a hint of vibrato at the end. It's the group's central instrument, supported by an open framework of Santos' nicely restrained percussion- a kind of commentary of bongo, timbal, and maracas-, and the interwoven threads of Buenz's bass. The simplicity of the numbers is what makes them so effective; the band's easy camaraderie and lack of showiness is appropriate for the

setting. For the opening number, Gomez wrapped her melted-butter and syrup-sound voice around Saudacoes, a tribute to Joao Gilberto by Brazilian composer Egberto Gismonti. The time was languid and as full of promise as a sunny morning in early spring, which is exactly what the day happened to be. The musicians seem to be orchestrating a fantasia-type score to the drifting falls of plum blossoms that had week burst forth along East Bay streets. Gomez's original compositions draw from the rhythms of Brazil, Caribbean and her native Colombia. Her piece "This Love" was a headily romantic as pair of mimosas and another "Recuerdos de Medellin" featuring an unusual rhythm-inspired by, Gomez explained, the Indian culture that defined the Medellin region of Colombia, played on maracas behind a lyrical ballad..

... The trio was in fine form, swinging into an original number by Buenz, joining Gomez with a little scating, followed by a rendition of a Cuban melody "Debi Llorar" that had been arranged as a samba. ... Was that all right? Gomez asked when they finished. "We kind of wanted a twenty-voice choir for that one" It wasn't necessary. The Claudia Gomez Trio's strength is that it can make simplicity fill a room.