

NEW YORK BABY

Polyglot, ethnic-chimera Diana Barrows is an enfant terrible of the New York showbiz scene. Hardly out of her cradle, she took her first piano, singing and dancing lessons, learning the art of seduction shooting diaper and cornflakes commercials. Still a child, she steps on stage - appearing in roles à la Shirley Temple, during presidential galas at the White House. A few years later - after a tap tribute to James Cagney he felt greatly *apriled* by (she'd managed to distil the man's *presence* through her own style and already volcanic temperament) - she becomes lead singer and dancer of *The New York Fire Crackers*, a young talentgang's band that went touring Japan for a year.

After her B.F.A. from N.Y.U., she then decides to brave simultaneously the worlds of Theatre, Cinema, T.V. and Music-Hall, orchestrating her career as she goes along. "I wanted to explore everything," she says, "both inside and outside the mainstream - I still do, convinced that if it's any good, the acting will speak for itself."

Her Broadway credits include a remarkable Trixie, in *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*. Off-Broadway, she is part of many productions, appearing also as Geraldine in *Panama Hattie*.

For T.V., she strings together a number of series (*Knots Landing*,...), sitcoms (*Charles In Charge*,...) and MOWs (*Addicted To His Love*,...). For Hollywood, she specializes a while in horror movies (*Friday the 13th, VII*,...), yet also wins roles in sophisticated thrillers (*Ford Fairlane*,...), romances and spoofs (*My Mom's a Werewolf*,...).

Over the recent years - whether in Europe, Brazil or L.A. - she has constantly returned to one of her many roots: playing in such avant-garde theatrical productions as *As Larvas*, in Portuguese, Cuban comedies (*Juventud Divino Tesoro*) or notable classics, such as Lope de Vega's *Dama Boba*, where 16th century Spanish verse seem second nature to her and "critics agree she's stunning!". Came also a number of idiosyncratic moves in 21st-century-*Nouvelle-Digital-Vague* format, and some dazzling contributions to more

conventional projects, such as a Parisian musical where standard tunes were the call of the day. ("Life," she comments, "is an experiment in God's lab of freedom. One thing freedom cannot do is to remain passive.")

Certainly what makes each of her new directions most remarkable is that not only they add to her arsenal of techniques, but - faithful as she is to her prior styles - they help her keep "her shit", as she artfully says, "always in check". (Check it. You'll see.)

See and hear. For Barrows is also a prolific singer. Her first single, *Looking for You* (Random Records), received a very positive response from the clubs and radio stations of the West Coast as it climbed the charts. Yet to be fair to her musical (and personal) growth, one should also be hipped about her extensive travelling - from Brazil to Siberia - she always took as opportunities to foray different musical (and dance) realms (she not only taps but masters lambada, samba, gangsta hip-hop,...); not to mention her many collaborations with Brazilian bands and groups or amazing recording history, in Japan - in Japanese! As all Latin singers, she considers her voice her instrument.

These days, the "sparkling Diana Barrows" - so speaks the Agence France-Presse - has decided to court the French market with a song from the 70's everyone still remembers; the reason being, the composer of *Michel* - under the spell of her Latin Music - decided to join force with her "subtly magnetic voice" and compose a brand new version of his smash hit for her. Thus rearranged as an R&B-cum-Glam jaunt, beautifully sung by Barrows, Michel energizes the soundtrack of French film *Drôle de Félix*.

Diana Barrows is currently working on a musical about the life of Frida Kahlo.

With several projects in the works, she stars in a film based on Debord's *La Société du Spectacle*, whose voice critics say "she makes us hear for the first time".

Diana Barrows

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PROFILE

Name: Diana Barrows

Residence: L.A., N.Y., Paris

Attributes: Fluent in 5 languages

Strengths: “Somebody questioning me about my enjoyment of music, ended up asking: but what about silence? Could it also be expressed musically? I said: Sure. Give me Elvin Jones, Olodum and three of the Gipsy Kings!”

Quotes: “Life,” she comments, “is an experiment in God’s lab of freedom. One thing freedom cannot do is to remain passive.”

References: “But why has the sparkling Diana Barrows chosen to crusade the francophone market?” Agence France-Presse

Critics: “One usually wants to take actors to task for putting on silly faces, but Barrows not only makes it work, she uses it to great effect when she must play-act her former witlessness to get the husband she wants.” (Referring to Lope De Vega’s *La Dama Boba*)