



**BEST NEWCOMER**

# Deolinda

In keeping with her on-stage presence, Deolinda's vocalist is characteristically effusive when she says how delighted they are about their Best Newcomer Award. "We were ecstatic when we found out that we'd won – it's wonderful!"

Ana Bacalhau (which means 'salted cod') is the captivating first lady in the Portuguese group comprising of husband José Pedro Leitão (on double bass), Luís José Martins (on various guitars) and Pedro da Silva Martins (guitarist and songwriter). Their first album *Canção ao Lado* went platinum in Portugal within months of release. It's based around a fictitious character called Deolinda, a woman who observes life through the lace curtain of her apartment, where she lives with her cats and goldfish. The songs are witty anecdotes of life's trials and tribulations, unrequited loves, national characteristics and snapshots of Lisbon life.

One of the group's most popular hits, guaranteed to get audiences singing along is 'Movimento Perpetuo Associativo'. It jokes about the typical Portuguese trait of complaining about something but when the time comes to act, just staying at home and making excuses. "We found out as we travelled that it's not so much a Portuguese trait but a universal trait because people relate to this song everywhere in the world," says Ana. It's the variety of musical genres – from *fado*, Brazilian samba and Cape Verdean melodies – delivered in a cabaret style by the flamboyant singer and her backing band which all contribute to Deolinda's charm.

After an intense year of touring, culminating in a WOMEX showcase in Copenhagen, the band have been working on their latest album which comes out in Portugal this month. Its title is *Dois Selos e um Carimbo* which translates as 'Two Postal Stamps and One Stamp.' "When you want to send an official document in Portugal," Ana explains, "you need two postal stamps and one official stamp, so it's our way of saying, it's official, here's our second album."

I wonder how the character of Deolinda has progressed since the last album – is she still single, going through a mid-life crisis or



Above: the cartoon drawing by João Fazenda of Deolinda, the fictitious character the band name themselves after

has she hit the menopause? Ana laughs and says: "no, Deolinda has found the secret of eternal youth!" "It's musically a development from what we did in *Canção ao Lado*. We're very happy about it." So can we still expect tales of love? "Yes, definitely, we are romantics – but in Deolinda's very positive way of seeing life."

Next up are some live dates launching the new album in Portugal, followed by a performance at Mawazine Festival in Morocco, then a US tour in the autumn. The album isn't released internationally until September, but to whet the appetite, Ana describes some of the new songs. Their current single is 'Um Contra o Outro,' about a woman's plea to her partner to ditch his obsession with computers and gadgets and to get out and live life "unattached to any cables." Another is rather bizarrely called 'Problemática Colocação de Mastro' (the

Problematic Allocation of the Pole) – about the Portuguese tradition of marching songs and flag waving which happens every June for the saints days. "It's about wanting to have the biggest pole in the world. Everything goes wrong and the pole starts messing around with the saints in the sky. So the saints come down to earth..." Sound a bit strange? Well, yes, but that's just typically Deolinda.

JF



**ALBUM** *Canção ao Lado* was reviewed in #60  
**FEATURE** in #64  
**AWARD** We will be presenting the award in Lisbon on June 8



ERIC CAHNO