

## **The Brazilian Soul of San Francisco's Boca do Rio: CD Debuts June 19**

*Guitar/composer Kevin Welch and Boca do Rio, his San Francisco-based samba group, debut with a self-titled CD on June 19. Welch, a UC Davis student who has completed his doctoral coursework on Brazilian ecology and sustainable resource use, is as passionate about the environment as he is about his music.*

Richmond, CA ([PRWEB](#)) June 8, 2007 -- The rich and potent music of Brazil has famously seduced many listeners beyond that country's borders. Kevin Welch, a San Francisco-based guitarist/vocalist/composer, became immersed in - and transformed by - samba while living in Brazil in the early '90s and fell decisively under its sway. In 1995 he started Vivendo de Pao, a seven-piece band that recorded two albums and remained active for nearly a decade; in the late '90s he developed an offshoot of the group called Boca do Rio.

[Boca do Rio](#), which since its beginnings has evolved into a rotating ensemble of Brazilian and American musicians under Kevin Welch's leadership, makes its CD debut June 19. Its self-titled album, on Welch's own Vagabundo label, explores the synergy between jazz and Brazilian roots music.

Boca always had a jazz sensibility - "Improvisation is a huge part of what we do," Welch admits - but samba is at the heart of the band's music. "I think Americans need to hear samba as much for its spirit as its musicality," he says. "The roots of samba are about community in the groove, just as jazz is about musicians coming together."

Boca's name is taken from the Portuguese "mouth of the river" - the place where myriad streams and sources converge into one powerful, flowing, physical energy. Welch says the group makes *musica organica*, music that is explicitly influenced by his connection to Brazil but filtered through the sensibilities of his California base, which he shares with his musical partners on the new CD.

Those partners include his co-producer Jon Evans, who also served as recording and remix engineer as well as music director, and who has toured with Tori Amos for the last eight years; keyboardist Jacob Aginsky, a recording artist in his own right (with his seminal Bay Area group Subnautic) who's studied at the San Francisco Conservatory and with Mark Levine, Herbie Hancock, and Eddie Marshall; and percussionist Alex Calatayud, from Goiania, Brazil, who grounds the group's sound in the rhythmic traditions of his homeland.

From the *baiao* rhythms of the opening track "Time Alone" to the cross-cultural illumination articulated in "My Samba" ("whoever joins in with swinging feet in this samba ... understands my happiness"), to the universally irresistible samba rhythms of "Beija Quem" and "Mulher Preguicosa," Boca do Rio showcases the band's best songs from the last ten years plus a few new ones.

Kevin Welch, born in Minneapolis in 1970, spent his first three years in Germany, near Frankfurt; his mother was Austrian-born, and his first language was German. The family moved again, to England, when he was three, then relocated back to the U.S. - Summit, NJ - in 1978.

Welch studied cello while living in England and continued to play throughout high school, touring Europe as a member of the New Jersey Youth Symphony. At 14 he took up guitar, with an interest in classic rock.

As an undergraduate at Brown University, Kevin studied anthropology and ecology and spent a life-changing

junior year in Brazil. "It was in the Amazon, a program in Amazonian development, deforestation, biodiversity," he recalls. "This was the template for my interest in combining music and the environment."

It was also the first time he heard samba. "I really heard Brazilian music embodied in the culture," Kevin says, "and it had a powerful impact on me! When it came time to celebrate, all the struggles of people's difficult daily lives were set aside without hesitation, and the music uplifted everyone who was there."

Welch, who wrote his thesis on indigenous rights and the sociopolitical structure of Brazil, decided to go back to school two years ago "in order to have meaningful day work that also integrated my passion for Brazil and the environment." He has just completed his doctoral coursework at the University of California in Davis on Brazilian ecology and sustainable resource use, and intends to conduct field work, traveling back and forth between the Bay Area and Brazil, writing and working with Brazilians in a meaningful way. He would like to be involved with the restoration of Brazil's Atlantic Forest.

Kevin works part-time (and occasionally performs with Boca do Rio) at San Francisco's California Academy of Sciences. For the last five years, he's booked and hosted all the science lectures for the City Arts & Lectures series. In this capacity, he has had a chance to host some of the world's greatest scientific and environmental luminaries, among them Jared Diamond, E.O. Wilson, Amory Lovins, and Al Gore.

"Right now I'm in a new phase in my Brazilian-American synergy," says Welch. "My hope is that songs will come out of this. Art is apolitical, in that it is above politics, but I am very political and it informs what I write." The musica organica created by Kevin Welch with Boca do Rio reflects the concerns and passions of his life to date - and points the way toward what's to come.

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