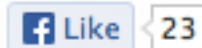


music>review



Deseo

Maria Bacardi
Breaking Records

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Deseo (Spanish for "desire") is the debut album from Cuban-born New York singer Maria Bacardi (whose great-grandfather founded the Bacardi rum company). For *Deseo*, Bacardi—who was raised in Europe after leaving Cuba in 1961 at age 4, following Fidel Castro's ascent to power—chose only "the songs her mother sang to her while exiled in Spain," as her website describes it (go to

www.mariabacardi.com for more info). The titles alone—such as "Sufre Más" ("Suffer More") and "Noche Cubana" ("Cuban Night")—often reflect a deep passion and longing for her native country. Likewise, her heartfelt delivery of each bolero-style Cuban ballad on the CD—including the beautiful "Júrame"—evokes deep emotion from the listener. As Bacardi has been quoted as saying, "My art and music are both fed from my desire for looking for the truth in beauty, despite the forces of pain and grief." Interestingly, singing is a later-in-life career change for the 55-year-old Bacardi, who spent years in the world of theater and visual art (and went by the name Maria Pessino until earlier this year). A top-notch ensemble, including Carlos Gómez on guitar, Pablo Vergara on piano, bassist Yunior Terry and Vicente Sánchez on congas, provides the laid-back musical support for Bacardi's lovely vocals.

