



Story by: Lynne Cossar

Times of Change

kate ceberano

Singer Kate Ceberano has a burning ambition - she wants to play New York's Carnegie Hall by the time she's 35

Kate Ceberano's personal outlook on life is about as close as you can get to the lyrics of her new single, *Change*: 'Why do people tell us what they want us to hear? All this propaganda stirs up mistrust and fear. Really we should know better. Really we should know better. *Change!* Got to bring more meaning to our lives. Yeah, yeah. We gotta change. Got to get more meaning to our lives.' Since first introduced to Australia as a novice 14-year old singer on the television talent show *Search For A Star*, she has made a habit of re-inventing her style - from promising youngster to pop diva, to the cool

mistress of jazz. "It's hybrid," Ceberano says of her music. "It's soul and jazzy and rhythm and blues. It's all of what America and Europe has to offer, only it's Australian. And Australia's hybrid, let's face it." Audiences like the variety. They even admire her willingness to adapt different styles. But it is her voice - more than anything else - that is the most powerful magnet to Ceberano. That and the 100 percent effort she puts into her performances. When she appeared on *Search For A Star* 15 years ago, she had received no formal training. The voice is a gift, she says. "I've tested it and I've abused it and done everything I could out of disrespect for it. But at the end of the day I really value the fact that I have been blessed to be able to do what I do." We are sitting outside a small café in trendy Tamarama, one of Sydney's eastern beach suburbs. The area

attracts the rich and famous (hence its nickname, 'Glamorama') and Ceberano is a familiar face, both to the staff and the locals. When she arrives - fashionably late as ever - the staff know precisely what she wants; juice, in a tall glass, plenty of ice. Ceberano is on tour, so she's keeping late hours. But there's no sign of tiredness in her famous face. Her third solo album *Blue Box*, from which *Change* is lifted, is about to hit the music stores and she's charged with excitement. *Blue Box* has been a long time in the making. First recorded in New York several years ago, it was scheduled for release in 1994. But major staff changes at Elektra Records - the company that signed her up in the United States - turned everything on its head ("the entire upper echelon of the company was sacked"). Even though the CDs were packed and ready to go, they were never distributed. Ceberano had much invested in

the album. It was to provide the launching pad for her push into the American music scene, not to mention a wider international profile. Burned by the experience, she returned to Australia. Determined to release the album, she called in some trusted friends, those she had worked with on *Brave* (her first solo album that went triple platinum in 1990). She likes the changes that have been made, describing *Blue Box* as "homey and organic". "It's not meant to make any huge statement but I think it's a very strong placement of where I am at the moment," she says. "The songs, the lyrical content. It talks about life as I see it now." *Blue Box* is a mixture of Ceberano's mercurial style. It showcases the music she has experimented with over the years as well as incorporating something different - a gospel sound.