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BRAZILIAN PORTRAIT
Villa-Lobos & The Guitar Music of Brazil

All of the music on this recording was written for the guitar or inspired by its magical sound. In Brazil, the guitar is the solo instrument par excellence and has been used in classical as well as popular music. It is a traditional instrument of the chorôs who were originally working class, mainly amateur musicians. They formed groups very much like the jazz bands in New Orleans and transformed the popular European music of the late nineteenth century into something more vital and syncopated, reminiscent of the rhythms of the African slaves (slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888). Foremost among the early chorôs was João Pernambuco (1883 - 1947), an untrained musician who earned his living as an iron-worker, but supplemented his income by playing in clubs and bars with his group Caxanga. It was on those occasions that he met Heitor Villa-Lobos (1897-1959), a towering figure in the history of Brazilian music, who gained his musical training as a chorão in the streets of Rio de Janeiro as much as in the Conservatoire in Paris. Villa-Lobos was responsible for notating many of Pernambuco’s improvisations, and indeed was influenced by them, as evidenced by the similarity of the opening of Sonha de Magia (Dreams of magic) to that of Preludio No. 5. The Chôro, Põe de Mico (translated roughly as itching Powder) must surely have affected the Chôros of Villa-Lobos, classical versions of the popular form, for many and varied instrumental combinations. The Preludes written in 1940 and dedicated to his wife, Mindinha, are on the other hand, purely classical in form and were given titles by her. These are:

1. Lyrical melody. Homage to the Brazilian country dweller.
3. Homage to Bach.
4. Homage to the Brazilian Indians.
5. Homage to social life, to the boys and girls who go to concerts at the theatre in Rio.

Villa-Lobos was also outstanding as an educator and it was in his capacity as Director of music education for Brazil that he met the Uruguayan Isias Savio (1902-1977) who was active as a concert guitarist and teacher in the country villages of Brazil at the time. Sonha laïa (Dream of laïa, a god of the Macumba), Sãores (a Modinha, slow and melancholy) and Batucada (a lively dance of African origin) are all taken from his series, Scenas Brasileiras - Brazilian Scenes, which were the inspiration for my own arrangements of the Brazilian children’s songs Como Pode O Peixe (How can you live like the fish?), Nesta Rua (In our street) and Samba Lãe (Samba Lele). They are dedicated to Ernesto Nazareth, Villa-Lobos and Savio, all avid collectors of folk music. It was in the back streets of Rio that Savio met and taught a young guitarist who was playing a new type of music which was a fusion of American jazz and the Brazilian Samba. The guitarist was Luís Bonfá (b. 1922) and the musical style was called Bossa Nova - New Beat. Bonfá’s subtle harmonic language and distinctive syncopated rhythms were brought to the notice of a wider audience when he wrote and played the music for the cult film Black Orpheus, a modern interpretation of Orpheus in the Underworld set in Rio de Janeiro at Carnaval time. This recorded version of Manhã de Carnaval (Morning of the Carnaval) from Black Orpheus is an improvisation based on the playing of Bonfá himself. Passeio no Rio (Walking in Rio) is a samba arranged by the fine guitarist Carlos Barbosa-Lima.

Pre-eminent among the composers who developed the Bossa into a worldwide language is Antonio Carlos Jobim (b. 1927), whose delicately chromatic melodies owe much to the cool jazz lyricism of musicians like Stan Getz and Miles Davis. All Jobim’s music is conceived in terms of the sound of the guitar, but it is usually heard as songs backed by a jazz band, not unlike the songs of Schubert, many of which were first composed with guitar accompaniment. It was guitar virtuoso like Roberto Baden-Powell (b. 1937) whose recitals and recordings restored the link between the guitar and Bossa Nova. He is represented on this recording by his evocative pieces Retrato Brasileiro (Brazilian Portrait), Deve ser Amor (It had to be Love) and Canto de Ossanha as well as the stunning arrangement of Samba do Avião (Airplane
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Brazilian Portrait
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Gerald Garcia, Guitar

Luis BONFÁ
1. Manhã de Carnaval (Morning of the Carnaval) (2:27)
2. Passeio no Rio (Walking in Rio) (3:10)

Antonio Carlos JOBIM:
3. Wave (2:33)
4. Samba do Avião (Airplane Samba) (3:17)

Isaias SAVIO:
5. Sonha Ialá (Dreams of Ialá) (3:02)
6. Serões (a Modinha, slow & melancholy) (2:17)

João PERNAMBUCO:
8. Sonha de Magia (Dreams of Magic) (2:50)
9. Pó de Mico (Itching Powder) (3:01)

Heitor VILLA-LOBOS:
10. Prelude 1 (4:26)
11. Prelude 2 (2:47)
12. Prelude 3 (6:18)
13. Prelude 4 (3:58)
14. Prelude 5 (3:24)
15. Chôro No. 1 Traditional (arr. by G. Garcia) (5:03)
16. Como Pode o Peixe (How can you live like the Fish) (2:15)
17. Nesta Rua (In Our Street) (1:50)
18. Samba Lele (1:42)
20. Retrato Brasileiro (Brazilian Portrait) (3:34)
21. Deve ser Amor (It had to be Love) (2:52)
22. Canto de Osanha (2:48)
23. Xaránga do Vôvo (2:30)

Recorded at the Tonstudio van Geest in Heidelberg (FRG) from 11th to 14th December, 1988.
Producer: Martin Sauer
Music Notes: Gerald Garcia

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