

Romero Lubambo

Só: Brazilian Essence

SUNNYSIDE 1381

★★★★★

Paulinho Garcia

Beautiful Love

SHRINKTUNES/JAZZMIN

★★★½



It will come as no surprise to anyone who has heard the duo of Luciana Souza and Romero

Lubambo that the Brazilian guitarist is, by himself, the equivalent of an entire samba band. Indeed, at their shows together, it is not uncommon for the singer, whose own skills are prodigious, to stand to one side and stare at him, as if aghast at his fearsome technique. His new CD will evoke the same sense of awe and delight. Besides his celebrated duo work with Souza, Lubambo is a founding member of the innovative Brazilian jazz group Trio da Paz (with bassist Nilson Matta and drummer Duduka da Fonseca). He is also among the most oft-recorded Brazilian guitarists in America, gracing the albums of Dianne Reeves, Yo-Yo Ma, Jane Monheit and other big names.

Here are some synonyms for *Só*, the title of his new live-in-studio album: *sozinho*, *único*, *isolado*, *solitário*—you get the idea. Unlike his excellent 2006 album, *Softly* (MaxJazz), on which he layered tracks using various types of guitars, this one is like having Lubambo come over to your house and play an impromptu concert in your living room. Verisimilitude, not perfection, is the goal; yet there's hardly a note you would change in this set, alternately fiery and intimate, mixing Brazilian classics with his own compositions. The album's subtitle, "Brazilian Essence," perhaps a concession to the marketplace, is apt, but his playing does more than honor the heritage of these tunes; he adds something that is pure Lubambo: tender phrasing, creative jazz voicings and, at times, intense percussive effects. He tosses melodies, bass lines and rhythms in the air like juggling clubs—not one falls to earth.

The album begins with a rhythmic and harmonic exploration of "Aquarela Do Brasil," Ary Barroso's 1939 mega-hit, better known as simply "Brazil." In Lubambo's hands, it becomes an exhilarating tour de force. Sensuous melodies and rhythms abound: "Pedra Bonita," a lovely Mario Adnet samba previously recorded with Trio da Paz; three by Jobim ("Brigas Nunca Mais," "A Felicidade" and "Insensatez"); two by Carlos Lyra, another architect of the bossa nova movement; and four tuneful originals, all compelling and lovely. For good measure, he even throws in a vocal on Lyra's "Coisa Mais Linda," revealing a winning sincerity and gentleness. *Só* is a must for all fans of Brazilian guitar and the purest expression of Lubambo's art to date.

A more conventional expression of bossa nova can be heard in Paulinho Garcia's soulful interpretations of standards on *Beautiful Love*. Ever since João Gilberto whispered and fingerpicked his way into the world's hearts and minds in the early '60s, the guitar-and-vocal bossa nova ballad has had the power to make audiences swoon. On his new album, the Chicago-based Garcia applies his own brand of Brazilian gentle persuasion to a well-chosen program of love songs, mostly from the Great American Songbook, and mostly in English.

Born in 1948 in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, Garcia doesn't sound like anyone else, with a muted, slightly weather-beaten baritone that cuts to the emotional quick of the lyrics. "Like Someone In Love" delivers a compact, tropical version of the Jimmy Van Heusen classic in a brisk 2 minutes, making it seem as if it had been written as a bossa nova—a neat trick. A sincere reading of the 1909 chestnut "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" is a delightful surprise. Except for Chicago, where his talents are well known, Garcia has largely flown under the radar in the States thus far, despite sharing world stages with artists like João Donato and Toots Thielemans. He deserves a wider audience. —Allen Morrison

Só: Brazilian Essence: Aquarela Do Brasil; Brigas Nunca Mais; Paquito In Bremen; Pedra Bonita; Você E Eu; Song For Kaya; Luisa; Coisa Mais Linda; Insensatez; Sambaíba; By The Stream; A Felicidade; Laura. (58:00)
Personnel: Romero Lubambo, guitar, vocal (8).

THE L.A. TREASURES PROJECT

Barbara Morrison

Ernie Andrews

The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra

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"Southern California can be proud of the talent streaming from its pores. That fact was the impetus for what transpired on September 15th, 2013 at a very special music store in San Pedro. At a few CHJO rehearsals earlier that year, vocalists Barbara Morrison and Ernie Andrews were asked to sing with the band. Rehearsals? These were indeed, performances! They threw their heads back and, without microphones, sang as if there were thousands listening. No one could have anticipated the stunning effect it have on the musicians in the room. Jeff Hamilton, brother Jeff Clayton and I agreed... we need to document these artists - these treasures! The celebration took place in a beautiful showroom at Alva's music store. We performed for an audience of jazz lovers and supporters who helped make the night magical. We hope you enjoy listening to this historic event. It was an evening that will live with us forever. Your fan, John Clayton"

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Beautiful Love: Eu Sei Que You Te Amar; When I Fall In Love; Like Someone In Love; Beautiful Love; If You Could See Me Now; With Every Breath I Take; Boulevard Of Broken Dreams; Historia De Un Amor; I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now; Bluesette; That Old Feeling; Do You Remember Me?; But Beautiful; Where Is Love?; Casinha Pequena. (53:03)

Personnel: Paulinho Garcia, vocals, guitar.

Ordering info: jazzminrecords.com

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