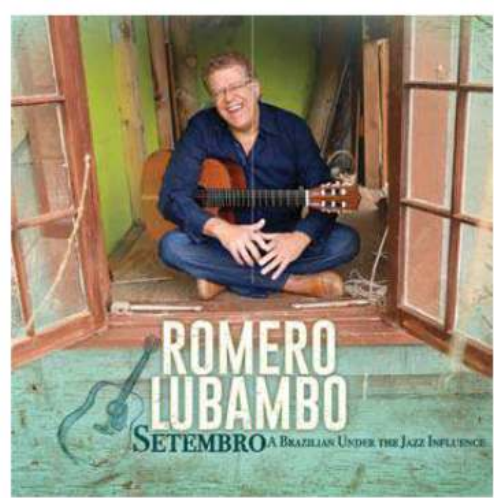




His melancholy bowing on the upright bass complements Sands' atmospheric chords and Owens' shimmering work on cymbals. The disc's two final tracks — a bluesy, shuffling arrangement of the traditional "Down By the Riverside" and a cover of Norman Whitfield's pop-disco theme song for the 1977 film *Car Wash* — don't compare favorably to the album's seven preceding cuts. Still, this is an impressive outing from McBride and his affable young cohorts. —**Bill Meredith**

Romero Lubambo
Setembro: A Brazilian Under the Jazz Influence (SUNNYSIDE)

When it comes to possessing an extensive and well-honed stylistic vocabulary, Brazilian guitarists are truly kings of the hill. It's rare that a string wizard from this South American nation hasn't assimilated a wide range of classical and jazz-related techniques along with a deep understanding of myriad idioms that are



native to their own land. Thanks to a three-decade-long residency in the United States and countless high-profile collaborations with leading jazz artists, Romero Lubambo has enhanced his improvisational skills while retaining his deep understanding of Brazilian and classical idioms.

His versatility is dramatically demonstrated on the set opener of this dozen-track solo recital. "Influência do Jazz," a bossa nova classic penned in the early 1960s by guitarist Carlos Lyra, was a pointed critique of the negative influence of U.S. jazz on Brazil's samba. After a classical-tinged prelude, Lubambo challenges the composer's premise as he dives headlong into a dizzying series of runs through the form, adding more rhythmic fire and improvisational flair with each turnaround.

"Lukinha," a Lubambo original, finds the guitarist projecting the kind of driving, rhythmically robust playing associated with folkloric-influenced styles from the interior of Brazil. Other highlights include "Days of Wine and Roses," which he treats to a melody-respecting and bossa-accented exploration, and Marcos Valle's romantic ballad "Preciso Aprender a Ser Só" (known in English as "If You Went Away"), on which he plays only single notes, gently bending many of them to striking effect.

As the Rio de Janeiro native demonstrates throughout the program, he has long passed the point where conscious decisions are made about which touchstone to emphasize. As a mighty river draws its strength from the melding of many tributaries, a typical Lubambo performance is packed with a winning combination of raw energy, finesse and deeply intuitive, spur-of-the-moment calls that give every take its own sparkling personality. —**Mark Holston**