

TEMPO DO BRASIL
solo & chamber works
MARC REGNIER, guitar

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R
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RECORDINGS.

Tacy Edwards, flute
Natalia Khoma, cello
Marco Sartor, guitar
Volodymyr Vynnytsky, piano



It is hard for me to resist the allure of Brazilian music with its exciting rhythms and evocative melodies, this being the second recording I've dedicated to this particular genre of music. In short, this music is simply just fun to play! My goal was to include repertoire that demonstrated the various styles and moods of Brazilian music. It was also important to showcase the versatility and beauty of the guitar as a solo and ensemble instrument. Naturally when selecting classical repertoire of Brazil, Heitor Villa-Lobos' music is usually at the forefront. He is described as "the single most significant creative figure in 20th-century Brazilian art music". The challenge here was to present music that is not over recorded, which is impossible when speaking of *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*, Villa-Lobos' most famous piece and a must to include in this CD. Laurindo Almeida, Sergio Assad, Paulo Bellinati, Radamés Gnattali and Baden Powell are all prominent Brazilian composers and performers with Assad and Bellinati very active on the international stage today. The composers featured on this recording have given me many years of pure joy! I am very fortunate to be surrounded by world-class musicians and more importantly, my dear friends. We hope you enjoy this recording as much as we did making it!

— Marc Regnier 2015

Plucked string instruments have had a vital role in the development of Brazilian folkloric and popular musical cultures. Portuguese colonization introduced *vihuelas* and other guitar-type instruments to Brazil; these then evolved into the Brazilian violas: instruments slightly smaller than the guitar and generally with five double strings. As urban areas started to appear in the early twentieth century, the modern guitar acquired an essential role in the development of Brazilian popular musics. Its affordability, portability and harmonic possibilities made it an inseparable companion to the *chorões*: self-taught, mid-class musicians who wandered in the streets of Rio de Janeiro during the first decades of the century. In turn, the guitar's inherent intimacy made it an ideal vehicle for the development of *bossa-nova*, the worldwide phenomenon that appeared around mid-20th century Rio. It is then of little surprise that Brazil has fostered a number of composers who excelled at performing and writing for the instrument, many of whom have challenged – or erased altogether – the boundaries between classical and popular traditions.

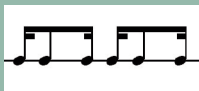
One of the aforementioned *chorões* of Rio de Janeiro was none other than Brazil's most celebrated composer, **Heitor Villa-Lobos** (1887-1959), who, as a child, used to escape his house and join the *chorões* against his mother's wishes. Villa-Lobos later praised his schooling in the streets of Rio while remaining weary of the effects of academia on musicians. After establishing himself at the forefront of Brazilian composers during the 1922 Modern Art Week in São



Paulo, he spent the remaining of the 1920s in Europe, where he went (according to his own remainder) not to learn but to show the music he was composing. His extensive and varied catalogue of works is infused with Brazilian popular and folk musics, something he viewed as a natural consequence of his Brazilian identity.

The guitar remained a dear instrument to Villa-Lobos. Proof of this is the transcription he made of the *Aria* (*Cantilena*) from his *Bachiana brasileira No. 5* immediately after grasping its potential—it was, in fact, to become his most famous work. The *Aria* was written in 1938 for soprano and orchestra of at least eight cellos, part of a set of nine *Bachianas* that fuse Baroque techniques and European instrumental and vocal settings with Brazilian popular musics. The harmonic language, sequences, and perpetual sixteenth notes of the *Aria's* first section quickly portray a Baroque feeling. Shortly after the voice enters, one the most salient Brazilian feature appears: the short-long-short accompanimental pattern that is typical of *samba* (originally a choreography derived from several African rhythms that appeared at the turn of the twentieth century).

Ex.1A: Basic Samba Rhythm



Ex. 1B: *Bachianas Brasileiras No 5*, mm. 5-6, guitar



In the central section of the *Aria*, a poem by poet and soprano Ruth Valadares Corrêa is declaimed, describing a landscape at dawn as a reflection of a *saudade* feeling—a subtle yet unmistakably Brazilian element.

The *Samba classico* (1950) for voice and piano, is a work of similar scope and conception. Villa-Lobos himself wrote the text, under the pseudonym Epaminondas Villalba Filho. It is an ode in homage to folk composers and calls upon their Brazilian spirits to rise—an invocation also reflected in the uplifting spirit of the music. Here too, the harmonic language and sequences communicate the 18th century European, *classico* air, and the off-beat accents of *samba* accompany the melody. The melodic contour (an ascending leap followed by descending steps) and sequential phrasing are also typical of Brazilian musics. Taking some creative liberty very much in vein with the popular spirit of the work, in this recording pianist Volodymyr Vynnytsky adds contrapuntal lines to the printed score.

Villa-Lobos compiled native melodies during his travels throughout Brazil's Northeast, travels which he later narrated in picturesque stories (albeit of dubitable veracity). These indigenous influences can be linked to the ritualistic nature of his *Distribuição de Flores* (1937) for flute and guitar, a work that also echoes the Brazilian tales and Greek mythology themes of his symphonic poems from 1916-1917. *Distribuição* rests on immediate, basic musical elements: the theme revolves around four pitches, and the occasional embellishments by the flute stay within diatonic collections. The guitar relies mostly on its open strings (themselves within the E minor pentatonic scale) and is used as a percussive accompaniment through most of the piece.

Perhaps most importantly, the work lingers in one mood, with its musical elements stated but not developed, departing from the discursiveness of a more markedly European lineage.

Open to all musics found in Brazil, Villa-Lobos also incorporated salon music, as exemplified in his many *Valsas*—Brazilian version of the European waltz. An example is *Valsa da dor* (*Waltz of anguish*, 1932) for piano. Its sparse and unhurried melody carries great emotionality through its wide descending leaps, occasionally enhanced by ascending arpeggios and fermatas. Symbolizing a journey sinking into pain, Villa-Lobos follows the expected ABACA form, but with each return the A sections are progressively slower. The central episodes are of a sharp contrasting character: the first one stormy and passionate, as if rebelling, and the second one in major tonality and playful character, creating an all the more afflicting last return of the theme in *Lento* tempo marking.

An early *valsa* for piano by Villa-Lobos, *Tristorosa*, serves **Yiorgos Vassilandonakis** (b.1969) as the source for a set of variations for cello and guitar. A native of Greece, Vassilandonakis is currently an Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the College of Charleston. An active composer, his catalogue compiles diverse influences and covers a wide range of genres. The guitar was his first instrument; *Variations on a Waltz by Villa-Lobos* considers the instrument's sonic idiosyncrasies and



successfully couples it with the cello to shed a new light on Villa-Lobos's *valsa*. Vassilandonakis writes:

"Variations on a Waltz by Villa-Lobos revisits a short piano piece by the famed Brazilian composer, and rethinks it in a new context. While the melody, harmony and form are kept close to the original for the most part, its texture, weight and timbre are thought anew and tailored to highlight the interplay between the guitar and cello. Each variation seeks new ways to explore the warm mid-low register in which the two instruments speak best, the infinitely more possibilities for presenting and ornamenting the arpeggiated main line, and constantly redefines their roles, hierarchy, and instrumental possibilities."

As much as these *valsas* derive from and retain European aesthetics, they are also infused with a marked Brazilian identity ("*Brasilidade*"). Another such example is *Valsa sem nome* (without name) by **Baden Powell de Aquino** (1937-2000). Powell was an iconic ambassador of the Brazilian guitar, whose collaborations with Brazilian poets and singers resulted in many timeless classics. This introverted *valsa* from 1971 first appeared on his album *Estudos*. Its unpretentious harmonies support a melody of marked vocal quality. The weighty appoggiaturas of the opening



immerse the work in a introverted and reflecting character. As the melody strives for the high registers of the instrument, echoing sighs of sadness, uncertainty, and ultimately acceptance, the music covers the full array of emotions contained in a *saudade*—that term of difficult translation that approximates a nostalgic, melancholic state, and which to many Brazilians represents a defining trait of their identity.

The *Valseana* by Sergio Assad (b.1952) also speaks of *saudade*, although through different technical means than those used by Baden Powell. Here, an active accompanimental voice creates a more contrapuntal texture, spelling the harmonies and engaging in dialogues with the melody. The longing, reminiscent character is achieved by creating a dream-like atmosphere (most notably through the use of the augmented fourth degree, as in the work's last chord). *Valseana* is the middle movement of *Aquarelle* (1986), Assad's first solo guitar work. *Aquarelle* is based on a germinal motif of three notes; a clear iteration of this motif appears as the opening melody of the third and last movement, *Preludio e Toccata*. The *Preludio* resumes the atmosphere of the *Valseana* and introduces the thematic material to be developed in the *Toccata*. The brilliant *Toccata* exemplifies Assad's idiomatic yet uncompromising writing for the instrument in its relentless motion, intricate polyphonic texture, and ever-shifting accents.

Sergio Assad's mastery in composing for the guitar is a result of his life arranging, transcribing, and performing music with his brother Odair. The

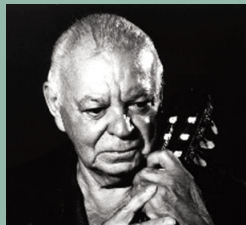


world-renown Assad Brothers came to the attention of Japanese film director Shinji Soumai, who commissioned Sergio Assad to write music for his 1994 Japanese film *Natsu no niwa (Summer Gardens)*, from which *Farewell* is taken. Although the piece's aesthetics might be deliberately international, listeners familiar with Brazilian musics will find an underlying *Brasilidade* in its introverted *valsa* rhythm, oscillating accompaniment (reminiscent of Villa-Lobos's "*Alma Brasileira-Choros No.5*"), and the lyricism of its melody.

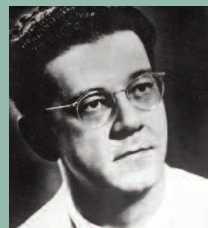
Although Sergio Assad wrote his first tunes in his mid-teens, the Assad Brother's demanding performing schedule placed his composing on hold until the early 1980s. His *Três Cenas Brasileiras* (1984) are among his first formal compositions. They already show traits of his idiomatic yet technically demanding writing for the guitar—akin to his and Odair's performing capabilities. These pieces make open use of Brazilian rhythms and melodies, as suggested by their referential titles. *Pinote* means "buck" and colloquially symbolizes the involuntary jump one makes when shocked. The work opens brusquely in fact, and holds the listener's attention throughout with its unpredictable accents, relentless motion and intricate textures. *Vitoria Regia* is the biggest *nenufar* (*water lily*) from the Amazon river; the water connotations of the work are suggested by its flowing opening arpeggios and the constant array of sixteenth notes that create ebbs and flows in the music. *Recife dos Corais* ("coral reef") provides a brilliant—or, as the name suggests, colorful—closing to the set with its unrelenting energy and festive character. Its last section is of marked percussive character, as if referencing the percussive bands in Brazil, "*batuques*."

The percussive patterns of Afro-Brazilian dances in fact imbed much of the country's instrumental music. A further example appears in *Choro e Batuque*

by **Laurindo Almeida (1917-1995)**. In the *batuque* section, the guitar basses adhere to a rhythmic pattern of long-short notes colored by off-beat chords on the trebles, while the flute percusses a “chee-kah” effect. The work is originally for voice and guitar, with lyrics that celebrate the *batuque*’s “warm rhythm, born deep inside the heart.” Indeed, Almeida kept the Brazilian rhythms he learned in his youth deep inside his heart, even after years of living in the United States (where he emigrated in 1947) and touring internationally. Perhaps a remembrance of his years in Brazil, the *Choro* that frames the *Batuque* has an evocative, *saudade* feel. Almeida’s perennial *Brasilidade*, combined with his openness and versatility as a performer, placed him as one of the precursors of bossa-nova in the United states, mixing the feel of Brazil’s popular music with jazz harmonies and rhythms.

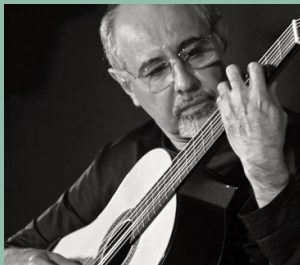


Like Almeida, **Radamés Gnattali (1906-1988)** seamlessly moved between art- and popular-music traditions. He studied piano from an early age and quickly became familiar with a number of other instruments. After moving to Rio de Janeiro he delved into popular music to support himself and became an active performer, conductor, and arranger. Gnattali wrote a large amount of music that contributed to build the Brazilian art-music repertoire while promoting Brazil’s musical identity—as with his notable set of 13 *Brasilianas*, compositions for different instruments in the model of Villa-Lobos’s *Choros* and *Bachianas Brasileiras*.



The guitar was a familiar instrument to Gnattali and occupies a significant place within his output. Exemplary in this regard are his pieces for guitar and piano. Despite the popularity of both instruments, works for guitar and piano duo are scarce, the biggest challenge being creating an involved piano part that does not override the guitar's lesser dynamic range and ability to sustain sound. The **2nd Sonatina for piano and guitar** (1957) reveals Gnattali's understanding of both instruments and succeeds in treating them as equals. In the first movement (*Allegro Moderato*) the guitar takes the lead, introducing the thematic material before the piano echoes and varies it. The movement follows a sonata rondo form, with the closing Coda providing an uplifting ending in A major. The second movement, *Saudoso*, calls for a seemingly improvised interpretation. Its slow pace and chromatic, late-romantic harmonies, common in Gnattali's music, give this movement a reflective, mystic character. The piano meanders through seemingly improvised lines, and the guitar melody, with the familiar ascending leap followed by a step-wise descent, provides a blurry reminiscence of popular singing. The last movement, *Ritmado*, brings the work to a festive close. Strummed guitar chords are followed by playful piano lines, in a call-and-response manner, before the guitar introduces the main pentatonic theme. The contrasting interludes—first by the guitar and then by piano—are humorously interrupted by the unexpected reappearances of the guitar's opening chords. Once again, the Brazilian flair of the movement comes from its accented rhythms and the short-long-short pattern of samba of the main theme.

The characteristic syncopated rhythm scheme of the samba has been maintained in the *samba-canção*, a lyrical form that gained ground in the middle of the twentieth century. *Rosto Colado* (“cheek to cheek”) by the São Paulo guitarist **Paulo Bellinati** (b.1950), revisits the style, also known in Brazil as *bolero*. A prolific composer and arranger, Bellinati draws from folkloric and popular sources, approaching them with modern compositional techniques and harmonies. In this work, the base harmonic progression remains traditional, but the extended chords and walking bass lines and chord substitutions establish a modern, jazz-like sound. The moderate pace of the *samba-canção* allows for a more elaborated melody. Bellinati places longer appoggiaturas on the downbeats, playing against the syncopated accompaniment. Melodic triplets, characteristic of *boleros* and *habaneras*, embellish the end of phrases, and some subtle quick ornaments, as if musical depictions of caresses, portray the implicit sensuality of the title.



—Marco Sartor

MARC REGNIER

GRAMMY® nominated classical guitarist Marc Regnier has won the attention and respect of critics, producers, and musicians for over three decades as a performer, recording artist and educator.

This unique artist has been described as that of “a master of his instrument” and “a musician of intelligence, lyricism and subtlety.” Since his concert debut at the age of fifteen, Regnier has performed and given master classes in major series and festivals in Canada, South America and throughout America from San Francisco to several solo performances at New York’s Carnegie Recital Hall. Mr. Regnier has had the privilege of working with Grammy® winning and nominated engineers and producers in his numerous recordings with the Naxos, Marco Polo, Musical Heritage Society and Sono Luminus labels. Regnier’s recordings have drawn such critical acclamation as “Rarely have the repertoire and the skills of a particular artist been combined as effectively... a significant recording on all accounts.” — *Fanfare*. After his debut release *Soundboard* magazine proclaimed... “as pleasurable affair as any first recording since the advent of Manuel Barrueco.”

Marc Regnier began studying the guitar at the age of six with his father and continued his studies years later in London with Timothy Walker, a retired guitar professor of the Royal Academy of Music. Regnier returned to the United States winning a scholarship to study with Aaron Shearer at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. After graduation he continued his studies with Christopher Parkening and José Rey de la Torre in California.

Marc Regnier is currently Professor of Guitar at the College of Charleston and lives with his wife, Jane, and their many cats.

TACY EDWARDS is Principal Flute of Orchestra Kentucky, Second Flute in the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, Piccoloist with the New Sousa Band and the Charleston (SC) Symphony. She is a co-founder and the manager of the new North Charleston Pops! Tacy has three CD releases: *The Water Is Wide*, *Hauntings*, and *Solo and Chamber Works for Guitar by Radames Gnattali*. She is the flute instructor at the College of Charleston. She enjoys construction and home restoration work as an avocation, building orchestras, relationships and opportunities as a volunteer, and memories, special events and mentorships as a musician. Tacy is a past President of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra League and has chaired four Designer Showhouses for the CSOL. She has traveled throughout the world as an artist performer to the Far East and to South America. She is a voting member of the Recording Academy. She divides her time between South Carolina and Kentucky (Charleston and Nashville areas) and is very active in the music scenes in both regions.



NATALIA KHOMA is an internationally renowned cellist. Since winning the All-Ukrainian competition Natalia Khoma has won top prizes at the Budapest Pablo Casals Competition, Markneukirchen (Germany) and the Tchaikovsky International Competitions, as well as First prize at the Belgrade International Cello Competition.



A native of Lviv, Ukraine, Ms. Khoma studied at the Lviv Central Music School and the Lviv Conservatory with Evhen Shpitzer and from 1982 until 1990 at the Moscow Conservatory with Professor Natalia Shakhovskaya. In the United States, Ms. Khoma was awarded the Artist Diploma of the Boston University under the direction of Professor Leslie Parnas.

The first and only Ukrainian cellist to become a laureate of the Tchaikovsky Competition, she has since distinguished herself as a recitalist and soloist with orchestras thorough the former USSR, as well as USA, Canada, South America, Germany, Norway, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland, Eastern Europe, South Africa and the Middle and Far East.

In addition to her performing activities, Natalia Khoma is an Associate Professor of Cello at College of Charleston, SC and co-Founder and music co-Director of Charleston Music Fest (www.CharlestonMusicFest.com).

Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, **MARCO SARTOR** is a top prize winner in numerous international competitions, and has performed solo and chamber music recitals in three continents to critical and public acclaim. He has also been a soloist with orchestras in North and South America.



His debut solo recording for Fleur de Son Classics, “Red,” has received rave reviews and been broadcast on national radio. Marco is also featured on Marc Regnier’s GRAMMY® Nominated album “Radamés Gnattali: Solo & Chamber Works for Guitar” on Sono Luminus.

Marco Sartor has been invited to give masterclasses in universities and conservatories in the USA, Uruguay and Argentina. He has started the guitar programs at the Carnegie Mellon Music Preparatory School in Pittsburgh, PA and at the Charleston Academy of Music in Charleston, SC.

Mr. Sartor received degrees from the College of Charleston and Carnegie Mellon University, and recently completed the highly-selective Master of Musical Arts at Yale University. His former teachers include Robert Ravera, Mario Payssé and Eduardo Fernández in Uruguay, and Marc Regnier, James Ferla and Benjamin Verdery in the USA.

Internationally renowned pianist **VOLODYMYR VYNNYTSKY** is a laureate of the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud International Piano Competition in Paris.



Vynnytsky has performed with leading orchestras and appeared in solo recitals in many prestigious concert halls around the world, including Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, Steinway Hall, the Phillips Gallery in Washington D.C., the Great (Bolshoi) Hall at the Moscow Conservatory, the Theatre Champs d'Elysees, Amphitheatre Richelieu de la Sorbonne, Salons de Boffrand de la Presidence du Senat in Paris, St. John's Smith Square in London, Philharmonic Big Hall of Columns (Kyiv), Odessa Philharmonic Theatre in Ukraine, Tsai Performance Center (Boston), Teatro de Santa Isabel in Recife, Brazil, Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg and Baxter Theatre Centre Concert Hall in Cape Town, South Africa among many others.

A popular television and radio guest, he has been featured on NHK-TV (Japan) and in the United States on WQXR-FM in New York, and nationally on NPR.

Born in Lviv, Ukraine, Volodymyr Vynnytsky studied at the Lviv Music School for Gifted Children and later at the Moscow Conservatory. After earning his doctorate from the Moscow Conservatory, he taught at the Kiev (Kyiv) Conservatory.

Volodymyr Vynnytsky has been a visiting member of the piano faculty in SUNY at Purchase, NY and at the University of Connecticut. In 2003 He was appointed Music Director of the Music and Art Center of Greene County, New York.

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Assistant Engineers: Judy Kirschner (**); Dann M. Thompson (*)

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To Reference Recordings

And a big special thanks to my wife and best friend, Jane,
who keeps me reaching for the stars.

TEMPO DO BRASIL – *Solo & Chamber Works for Guitar*

MARC REGNIER, *guitar*

with Marco Sartor, *guitar*, Volodymyr Vynnytsky, *piano*

Natalia Khoma, *cello*, Tacy Edwards, *flute*

- 1 Sergio Assad: “Recife dos Corais” for two guitars 2:09
- Radamés Gnattali: *Second Sonatina* for piano and guitar
- 2 Allegro moderato 4:50 3 Saudoso 4:39 4 Ritmado 4:53
- 5 Baden Powell: *Valsa sem nome* for solo guitar 2:53
- 6 Heitor Villa-Lobos: *Samba classico* for cello and piano 4:14
- 7 Villa-Lobos: *Distribuição de Flores* for flute and guitar 3:47
- 8 S. Assad: “Pinote” for two guitars 2:11
- 9 Villa-Lobos: *Valsa da dor* for solo piano 5:57
- 10 S. Assad: “Vitoria Regia” for two guitars 2:12
- 11 Villa-Lobos: *Bachianas Brasileiras* No.5 for two guitars 4:42
- 12 Paulo Bellinati: *Rosto Colado* for solo guitar 3:14
- 13 Laurindo Almeida: *Choro e Batuque* for flute and guitar 5:06
- 14 S. Assad: *Farewell* for solo guitar 3:02
- 15 Yiorgos Vassilandonakis:
Variations on a Waltz by Villa-Lobos for cello and guitar 6:04
- S. Assad: from *Aquarelle* for solo guitar
- 16 Valseana 3:04 17 Preludio e Toccata 3:15