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# SIMPÓSIO INTERNACIONAL DE MÚSICA BRASIL/ALEMANHA

A report by THÉRÈSE WASSILY SABA



PHOTOS: THÉRÈSE WASSILY SABA

*Georg Schmitz, Rildo Hora, Marialva Barbosa and Nélio Rodrigues.*

IT IS HARD to put into words the impact of visiting a country like Brazil for the first time. I grew up in Australia, so the flowers and trees, the heat and the beach certainly felt familiar. But beyond the physical and visual senses, the comparisons stop. Brazil is a country that has integrated many diverse influences and come up with something that could only be called Brazilian culture. It is nothing like what has been termed the Australian 'Cultural Cringe', a melting pot that failed to create a new hybrid. Brazilian music is a potent mix that has inspired musicians all over the world.

I visited Brazil to attend a guitar festival, held from 22-30 October 2003 and organised by the Guitar Academy of the Musikschule der Stadt Koblenz in Germany in collaboration with the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro. The Koblenz Musikschule has run a very successful annual guitar festival for many years. Performers including Hubert Käppel, Aniello Desiderio and Zoran Dukic are regular guests at the Koblenz Pfingstseminar (Pentecost Seminar), which is directed by Georg Schmitz. He is the Head of Guitar, the Head of the Music Theory Department and the Director of the Guitar Academy at the Musikschule. It was Schmitz's love of Brazil and its music that inspired his collaboration with the Universidade Federal Fluminense. On the Brazilian side were the guitarist Nélio Rodrigues and, from the UFF, Professor Latuf Isaias Mucci and Marialva

Barbosa, who have been guests at the Koblenz festival in the past.

Dorothea Buchwald, the Vice-Director and Head of Strings at the Musikschule, was among the Koblenz delegation in Rio. She spoke about the structure of music education in Germany. Dr Klaus Heinen outlined the history of Koblenz itself, starting with the Celts and Romans. A wine produced in the rich winemaking region around Koblenz added some extra flavour to the lecture.

The German jazz guitarist Ralph Herrnkind gave a lecture on the history of his instrument in Germany. Recordings by Frank Haunschild, Michael Sagmeister, Joachim Schönecker, Joscho Stephan, Ro Gebhardt, Volker Kriegel, Norbert Scholly and Renato Rozic illustrated the lecture. Even more impressive than listening to the recordings was watching and hearing Ralph Herrnkind play along. He has a remarkable technique that we could only glimpse at; unfortunately, he was not programmed for a concert performance. Herrnkind's own jazz background included playing in American clubs with US musicians stationed near his home in Germany, so he has an interesting perspective on the jazz scene from both an American and European standpoint. He explained that jazz music was part of the de-nazification programme after the Second World War. Although there was a lot of jazz in Germany in the 1920s, it was banned under the Nazis, who considered the music a mix of black and Jewish culture.



Zoran Dukic and Aniello Desiderio.

The evening concerts were mostly in the Teatro Municipal of Niterói. I enjoyed Zoran Dukic's programme, which included the *Prelude, Tiento* and *Toccata* by Hans Haug, *Fantasia* by Malcolm Arnold and *Six Balkan Miniatures* by Dusan Bogdanovic. He opened the concert with a sensitively shaped and well-paced interpretation of Bach's *Chaconne BWV 1004*.

Hubert Käppel gave a fine performance of Bach's *Prelude, Fugue* and *Allegro BWV 998*. His interpretation stems from his refined musical tastes, and his dynamics in three pieces by Barrios were beautifully crafted. His programme also included the premiere of *Fantasia* by Georg Schmitz, which is a lively, contemporary exploration of the fantasia style.

The Brazilian guitarist Paulo Pedrassoli shared a concert with Nicolas de Souza Barros for an evening of 20th century Brazilian music. Paulo Pedrassoli played five *Estudos Populares Brasileiros* by Geraldo Vespar, *Suite para Violão* by José Vieira Brandão and *Sonata para Violão* by the Brazilian composer César Guerra-Peixe, a contemporary of Villa-Lobos. He ended with Villa-Lobos's *Studies No.8* and *No.10*. Nicolas de Souza Barros played a more popular but well-contrasted programme that included his own arrangement of *Confidencias* by Ernesto Nazareth, a gentle interpretation of *Inspiración* by Garôto, the fast-moving *Reminiscencias Cariocas* by Othon Salleiro and *Passacaglia para Fred Schneiter* by Edino Krieger.

In his enjoyable solo recital at the Teatro Municipal Aniello Desiderio played a more Spanish programme with works by Albéniz, Turina and Pujol. In the second half, although the playing was good, I found it difficult to listen to five pieces by Barrios, Maria Luisa Anido, Lauro, Brouwer and Piazzolla played together as a *South American Dance Suite*. Intellectually, however, the idea seems fine.

There was also a guitar makers' exhibition in the foyer of the Teatro Municipal. I met Sérgio Abreu and many other Brazilian guitar makers,

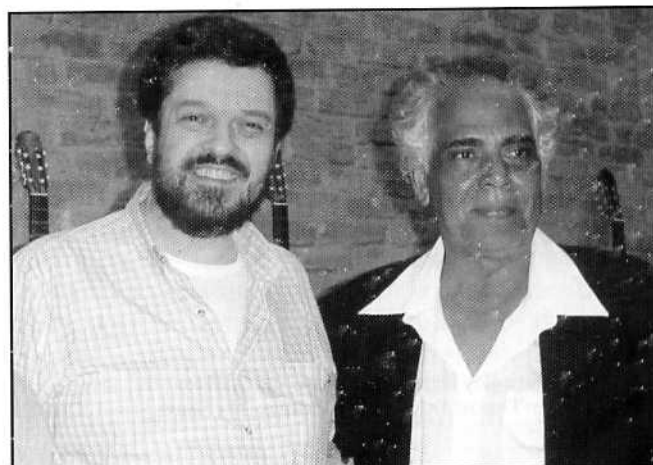
teachers such as Mario Haro and members of local guitar societies. The Brazilian luthiers exhibiting included Jó Nunes, Claudio Arone, Adriano Sampaio, Antonio de Pádua, José Chagas, Lucas Braz, Mário Bezerra, Maurício Barros, Ricardo Dias, Rogério dos Santos and Tércio Ribeiro. The German guitar maker Michael Wichmann, of Hamburg, also attended.

I spoke with José Miranda Pereira, the President of *Av. Rio*, the Guitar Association of Rio de Janeiro. The association was established in 2001 and has around 300 members. They publish a monthly bulletin of events, including not only classical guitar but also popular guitar and flamenco. The October bulletin included the score of a short work by Nicanor Teixeira with whom José Miranda Pereira had studied. There is a casual monthly meeting which is open to the public and anyone can come and play, but they also have a monthly recital given by a professional performer in the fine Auditório do Sesc-Flamengo in Rio de Janeiro. The audience at the concert I attended impressed me; they were very attentive and open to both the modern and more traditional guitar repertoire. *Av. Rio's* website address is: [www.av.rio.org.br](http://www.av.rio.org.br).

Of course, a visit to Rio must include a visit to the Villa-Lobos Museum. I cannot overstate how impressed I was. The museum's director, Turibio Santos, has a fine team of experts. The museum has an admirable outreach programme for schools and each year in November - the month of Villa-Lobos's death - hosts a festival. We were taken into the archive and had the privilege of seeing the original manuscripts by the musicologist Maria Cristina Mendes.

Turibio Santos has recorded over 50 discs and has been a great source of inspiration to guitarists throughout the world. He set a great example as a musician and his kindness as a teacher has benefited many performers.

At 10.30am on Sunday morning the enormous hall of UFF was filled beyond capacity, with people sitting in every available space in the aisles. Despite a temperature of 31C, it was



Sérgio Abreu and Nêlio Rodrigues.

