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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 Nélío 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 Nélío 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 *Inspiração* by Garoto, the fast-moving *Reminiscencias Cariocas* by Othon Salleiro and *Passacaglia para Fred Schneider* 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,

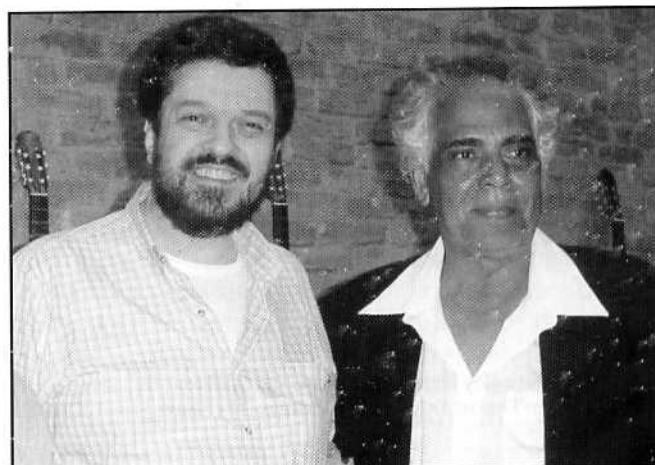
teachers such as Mario Haro and members of local guitar societies. The Brazilian luthiers exhibiting included Jó Nunes, Claudio Arone, Adriano Sampaio, Antonio de Pádua, José Chagas, Lucas Braz, Mário Bezerra, Maurício Barros, Ricardo Dias, Rogério dos Santos and Tércio Ribeiro. The German guitar maker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

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 Nélío Rodrigues.

certainly worth the effort. Aniello Desiderio gave a good performance of Rodrigo's *Concerto de Aranjuez*, with the orchestra conducted by Ligia Amadio. As an encore, he played an arrangement of Erik Satie's *Gnossiennes*. Desiderio's interpretational style teases and plays around with the music. His tone quality was beautiful.

Some fine teachers traveled with the delegation from the Koblenz Musikschule, along with a number of the fine students from the specialist Koblenz Guitar Academy including Tristan Angendendt, Manolis Anastasakis, Nicolas Kyriakon, Mathias Lang, Stefan Schmitz, Britta Schmitt and Thomas Ihring. Russell Poyner, a young performer from England who was a prizewinner at the Koblenz Guitar Festival in 2002, joined them. The 16-year-old Robert Stolz had not been expecting to perform but was called in as a last-minute substitute. He played Giuliani's *Rossiniana* very well considering he had spent the previous day at the Maracá Stadium watching football, and had little time for preparation, or sleep for that matter. The Brazilian young performers were Gabriel Pitta, Ivan Paparguerius, Marco Antonio Correia Lima, Lucas Porto, Marios Victoria Wagner, André Marques Porto, Gustavo França, Luciano Cesar Moraes and Humberto Amorim. These young players all participated in masterclasses but also gave recitals as part of the Young Artists in Concert series of recitals during the festival. There was also a large ensemble of guitars called Orquestra de Violões de Escola Villa-Lobos which played simple ensemble arrangements of pieces by Pernambuco, Reis, Gismonti, Nazareth and Baden Powell. Music brings people of different cultures together soon after befriending each other, the Brazilian and German students organised a football match.

On one evening, four young performers took turns on the stage of the Teatro Municipal. Tristan Angendendt started with some Bach and then played *Capricho Diabolico* by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Here is a young player with an excellent balance of technique, musi-



Britta Schmitt and Russell Poyner.

cianship and just the right amount of confidence. Russell Poyner played *Sonata* by Antonio José, more nervously than the previous day when he played a half concert in Rio de Janeiro, but shared concerts always create problems. Stephan Schmitz suffered a little from the same problem and played very cautiously. However, his solo recital in the Young Performers Series was fine, musically and technically. Manolis Anastasakis played Barrios's *Le Cathedral*. He had previously had the opportunity to play one movement of the Barrios work on the *Good Morning Brazil* programme on the world's biggest television station, TV Globo. Poyner and Britta Schmidt also played short pieces on the programme, which also included an interview with Nélío Rodrigues about the symposium.

The weather was hot, between 30C and 40C, throughout our stay, so it was essential to have windows and shutters open. This meant that the music of birds singing and the commotion of chickens and roosters were included in the soundscape of the masterclasses. Nicolas de Souza Barros was fortunately fluent in English, having studied for some time at the Royal Academy of Music in London with Michael Lewin. Nicolas was very good-humoured and had plenty of ideas for the students. They chose to play pieces by Salleiro and Villa-Lobos. Günter Schillings was presented with works including Diabelli's *Sonata in A major* in his masterclasses. Students were keen to play the Bach *Chaconne* to Zoran Dukic, having heard his fine concert performance. Aniello Desiderio was excellent in his teaching of phrasing and interpretation of Sor's *Andante Largo* and, in particular, in discussing how to determine the appropriate speed of vibrato. Hubert Käppel was equally inspiring in his teaching. He heard a performance of *Four Short Pieces* by Frank Martin. It was interesting to hear about the discrepancies between the published version and a second version of the work that the composer gave to a friend. Less successful were the masterclasses by Nélío Rodrigues, simply because of communication problems.



Turibio Santos and Dorothea Buchwald.