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# **Treasures** from the **New World**

*Vol.3*

Fabio Zanon *guitar*   Marcelo Barboza *flute*   Clélia Iruzun *piano*

# Treasures from the New World *Volume 3*

While the central European pre-eminence in the active repertoire of classical music has been justly challenged in recent years by an increasingly pluralist point of view, the vast, varied, intriguing and accomplished repertoire from the Americas has been much neglected.

Nevertheless, many of the current preoccupations in classical composition had been prefigured by those overlooked composers in the past 100 years or so: how to create a channel of communication with one's community in a post-tonal world; the quest for a national soundscape; the necessity of an ethnic musical identity; rhythm, meter, 'groove' and their formal functions. All these have created a kind of oblique, tangential point of view to the received tradition in which musical priorities are subverted in an unusual, though immediately palatable language.

Piano, guitar and flute are among the most popular instruments in Latin America and have sharply defined social roles. More often than not, local music schools will offer little else than tuition in these three instruments. This repertoire brings all possible combinations between the inherited notion of the piano's authority, the relative freedom of the flute with its ancient, folk-accented antecedents, and the decidedly contemporary voice of the guitar from the streets. It is no accident, or coincidence that all three are regularly coralled together.

Radamés Gnattali (1906-88), the earliest composer here featured, was born in Brazil into an opera-loving Italian family. A thwarted wish to become a concert pianist gave way to an astonishingly fecund life as a composer and arranger, which overlapped with the advent of commercial recordings, radio and television. Over the decades Gnattali produced more than 10,000 arrangements for commercial music and became known for his hybrid, jazz-tinged instrumental sextet. At the same time, he left an extended catalogue of concert works

including symphonies, concertos, chamber music and a lot of piano and guitar music. Thus, he can be seen as a pioneer in the mutual cross-fertilization of classical technique with more ‘popular’ attributes that one today might describe as “crossover”.

He was particularly attached to the versatile guitar virtuosos who worked in the radio studios, like his Brazilian compatriots, Garoto and Laurindo Almeida. The **Sonatina No.2** was written in 1957 for Dilermando Reis, then the best loved guitarist in Brazil, and is dedicated to the poet Hermínio Belo de Carvalho. A leisurely and rhythmic first movement is followed by a feline slow waltz and a lively dance. Gnattali managed to solve the problem of volume disparity between piano and guitar in a precise score, where both instruments seem to be talking to each other.

Born in 1953 in Puerto Rico, Roberto Sierra is one of the most sought-after living composers. Since the Carnegie Hall premiere of his work *Júbilo* in 1987, he has received a constant flow of high-profile commissions, which have brought his music to all major music centres. Challenging the traditional philosophies of symphonic thought, his music seems to draw concentric circles instead, where ideas constantly return slightly modified and embellished, and where present and past intermingle and interact in a dizzying displacement of focus. This is evident in the three pieces written for flute and guitar, between 1991 and 1995, at the request of Susan Morris de Jong and Jeffrey Van, ***Crónicas del Descubrimiento*** (Chronicles of Discovery), a major addition to the repertoire for flute and guitar. Sierra says he had wondered about the bewilderment the native Indians of Puerto Rico must have felt in their first interactions with the Spanish *conquistadores*, and vice-versa.

Accordingly, flute and guitar seem to observe, engage with, excite and provoke each other; each chronicle is a diptych, where, in Baroque fashion, a slow atmospheric piece is followed by a rhythmic one, where Sierra explores unique inflections and metric permutations. ‘Leyenda Tainá’ (Tainá Legend) refers to the Taíno native group from the island of Puerto Rico.

‘Noché’ (Night) evokes the primeval night sounds of the Caribbean, where ‘En Busca del Oro’ (In search of gold) alludes to the precious prize that gave propulsion to the conquest: gold. The other titles are self-evident.

Jennifer Higdon (born in 1962) did not seem destined for a career in music at an early age. Her father was an artist who raised her to appreciate the uniqueness of contemporary expressions in art. She grew up on pop music, only started to learn classical music at high school (as a self-taught flautist) and progressed slowly. Later studies with luminaries like Ned Rorem and George Crumb built confidence in her instinctive wisdom: she brought her joy at the big outdoors to her style; her quest is to compose music which makes sense to audiences in the here and now without being subservient to classical forms.

Defined as both a neo-romantic, for her delight in discovering the endless possibilities of tonal structures, and as a neo-minimalist, she has charmed audiences and interpreters with the seamless, organic unfolding of her music. That is what can define **Legacy**, written for the flute, the instrument she is closest to. Her own text establishes the subjective space this work inhabits:

“Where does mourning begin and end? when do we cross over the lines of pain and abuse? does the sadness begin somewhere deep within leading us to that place? when we remember, do we remember the pain or the sadness? how are we marked for such a destiny and how are we marked after passing? through that door? what leads to this path?”

Over a career spanning more than 60 years, Marlos Nobre (born in 1939) is generally seen as the most prominent living Brazilian composer. His strong individuality has been nurtured by the rich musical experiences in his native Recife, a northern city where all strands of Brazil’s cultural melting pot have converged. Thus, he has developed a style where the rhythmic

variety and infectious, saturated excitement and fun of popular festivals combine with his training in post-serial techniques and rigorous sense of form and texture.

*Desafio*, in Brazilian culture, is a duel of musical and poetic skills. Two troubadours, called *repentistas*, face each other in a public space and improvise verses on any given topic, accompanied by their guitars; the discussion can take humorous contours and each strophe casts a challenge to the opponent. Nobre's fascination with this tour de force of spontaneous creativity has led him to create the series of *Desafios*. *Desafio No.1* was written for viola and piano, beginning usually with a cadenza-like introduction followed by a virtuosic toccata. Taking his cue from the *repentistas*, he has re-composed the same material for various chamber combinations. ***Desafio No.37*** was written in 2011 for Clélia Iruzun and Fabio Zanon. The unique feature of this version is that the fiercely difficult cadenza is written for both guitar and piano to play in duet.

Paulo Porto Alegre is a Brazilian guitarist and composer born in 1953. He honed his skills as a composer while he developed a distinguished career as a concert performer; many of his works were written to attend his robust activity as a chamber player. Over the years, he has built a solid catalogue of compositions, most of them for or including the guitar: five solo sonatas, chamber sonatas with flute and cello, trios, quartets, suites and series of études which have been eagerly adopted by his fellow guitarists.

One can sense a strong formal argument inherited from his studies of post-serial music; but the defining moment in his compositional development was the meeting with Radamés Gnattali. It helped confirm his vocation to write music in which the disparate styles of Brazilian, classical and popular instrumental music, converge. *Choro* is the national style of improvised instrumental music, originated in the interaction between imported European dances, like the polka and schottish, and the Afro-descendent musicians, who played them with a unique groove and playfulness. *Choros* have inescapably defined a national identity in classical

Brazilian music as well. Not indifferent to this fruitful blend, Porto Alegre has based many of his works on *choro* forms. Except for the introduction, his **Choro Suite** is in fact a compilation of pre-existing pieces: the 'Xaxado' (a syncopated dance form) and 'Valsa' (a waltz originally called *Strasbourg*) were born as solo guitar movements, while the Tocata-Choro was first written for two guitars and called *Hermética*, in tribute to the jazz player Hermeto Pascoal.

**Alumbramentos**, by Ronaldo Miranda, has a similar story. It was first written for trumpet and piano; later the composer made a lighter and more agile version for flute and piano, and its latest version has been scored for harmonica, cello and piano. Born in 1948, Miranda has secured a much-admired place in the Brazilian musical scene through a constant stream of substantial works, including several symphonic pieces, the operas *Dom Casmurro* and *The Tempest* and a vast catalogue of award-winning chamber and vocal works. He consciously writes in an expanded, dramatic tonal idiom, where reflections and reinventions of tradition are always at the forefront. *Alumbramentos* is a non-programmatic, one-movement piece.

The youngest composer in this programme, João Luiz Rezende (born in 1979) is primarily known as a superb guitarist and one half of the famed Brazil Guitar Duo. Composition has always been part of his musical outlook, but since moving to New York as a teacher at the Stony Brook University and Hunter College, his works have been especially well-received. This has led to a sequence of commissioned works, including **Três na Pipa** (Three Flying Kites). It has been conceived as a *divertimento* in response to the obvious disparity of volume and tone production among guitar, flute and piano. *Pipa* is Portuguese for kite; the composer has tried to evoke both the visual aspect of a kite's evolutions and the playful and somewhat sarcastic interaction of three kite fliers trying to knock each other out of the sky. Based on a rhythm of *maracatu*, typical of Brazil's north-east, it illustrates the immense variety of inflection and moods the music of the Americas can achieve and acquire against a predominantly tonal and metrically regular foreground.

Fabio Zanon © 2023

# Marcelo Barboza

Flautist Marcelo Barboza has been noted by the critics for his versatility, inventive programming and persuasive performance, on stage as well as on CD. In his native Brazil he was a Co-Principal flautist at the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra from 1994 to 2002, and he is currently the Principal Flute at the São Paulo Opera House Orchestra and the Brazilian Opera Company.



Photo: Nicolas Barboza

He has also been constantly involved in a variety of artistic endeavours, feeling as much at home playing in jazz and contemporary music groups as in early music ensembles. Most notably he has sought to increase the presence of Latin American music in the flute repertoire, both in concert and in his recordings. He has been in constant demand as a teacher in summer courses and has given master classes in Brazil, USA, Europe and Scandinavia.

Living in Sweden from 2002 to 2006, he performed extensively in Scandinavia and freelanced at the Royal Opera in Stockholm and Odense Symphony in Denmark.

Marcelo Barboza started his musical studies at an early age, learning the piano and the recorder. He graduated at the University of São Paulo, where he studied with Antonio Carlos Carrasqueira. After finishing his studies in Brazil, he was awarded grants from the Brazilian government and the British Council to pursue a post-graduate course at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied with Michie Bennett, Richard Taylor, Sebastian Bell and Lisa Beznosiuk (baroque flute). He finished his studies with the RAM Diploma of Advanced Studies and a Master's Degree at the University of London, with a Distinction in Performance. In 2013 he concluded his PHD at the University of Campinas (UNICAMP). He is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

## Clélia Iruzun

Clélia Iruzun's endearing artistic personality, which combines her native Brazilian spirit with her exceptional musical gifts, has enabled this much-admired London-based pianist to build an enviable reputation for her performances of a wide range of music, from the great classical repertoire to works by significant figures from across the Americas.

Clélia has performed over 30 concertos for piano and orchestra, including the great classical and romantic concertos and also important Spanish and Latin American works.



Clélia Iruzun initially studied at the School of Music in Rio de Janeiro before becoming an advanced student at London's Royal Academy of Music, where she won a number of major prizes. She has subsequently worked with Nelson Freire, Jacques Klein, Stephen Kovacevich and Fou Ts'ong, among other international artists, and many important Brazilian composers have written works for her including Francisco Mignone and Marlos Nobre.



Photo : Simon Wier

Clélia's busy life embraces frequent appearances across Europe, the Americas and Asia. She has performed on television and radio in many countries, including frequent broadcasts for BBC Radio 3.

Clélia has made a number of highly successful CDs ranging from Latin American composers to concertos by Mendelssohn and the British composer Elizabeth Maconchy. Her SOMM recordings include the International Classical Music Award-nominated *Piano Concertos of Albéniz and Mignone* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Jac van Steen. Concertos by Henrique Oswald and Saint-Saëns (No.5, *Egyptian*), also with the RPO and Van

Steen, received excellent reviews such as: “Brazilian pianist Clélia Iruzun in a stunning performance” (*Musical Notes* Best of 2020) and “impressively executed... another rewarding disc from this team and this label” (*Gramophone*). Her recent CD of Nimrod Borenstein’s Piano Concerto (dedicated to Clélia), Piano Quintet and the piano cycle *Shirim* has been receiving outstanding reviews.

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## Fabio Zanon

Fabio Zanon is recognized as one of the preeminent guitarists of today. His interpretations are admired for their combination of integrity, imagination and a cultivated tone. His varied activities as a conductor, teacher, writer and broadcaster have contributed to placing the guitar in a broader cultural perspective.

A past winner of major international competitions,



Photo credit: Heloisa Bortz

like the GFA Competition in the USA, the Francisco Tarrega in Spain, and Alessandria in Italy, Fabio has played in more than 50 countries, in halls like the Royal Festival Hall in London, Philharmonie in Berlin, Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and as a soloist with orchestras like the London Philharmonic, Russian State Orchestra, Berliner Camerata, Israel Chamber Orchestra and the RTÉ Symphony in Dublin. His repertoire includes over 40 works for guitar and orchestra, many world premieres and virtually all the relevant chamber music repertoire.

He has written a book about Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos and has written and presented the radio shows *The Art of Guitar* and *The Brazilian Guitar* for Radio Cultura in Brazil, as well as the music podcast *Lira*. Fabio is a Fellow and a Visiting Professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London and the artistic manager at the Campos do Jordão Winter Festival in Brazil.

*Fabio Zanon plays a Jeffrey Elliott 2004 guitar with Augustine strings.*

# Treasures from the New World

## Volume 3

Radamés Gnattali (1906-88), Jennifer Higdon (b.1962),  
João Luiz (b.1979), Ronaldo Miranda (b.1948), Marlos Nobre (b.1939),  
Paulo Porto Alegre (b.1953), Roberto Sierra (b.1953)

Fabio Zanon<sup>a</sup> *guitar*, Marcelo Barboza<sup>b</sup> *flute*, Clélia Iruzun<sup>c</sup> *piano*

<b>Radamés Gnattali: Sonatina No.2<sup>ac</sup></b>	[15:19]	<b>Tercera Crónica (Third Chronicle)</b>	
[1] I. Allegro moderato	5:23	[8] Canción (Song)	3:12
[2] II. Saudoso (Longing)	4:44	[9] Batalla (Battle)	3:10
[3] III. Ritmado (Rhythmic)	5:11	[10] Jennifer Higdon: Legacy <sup>bc</sup>	6:55
<b>Roberto Sierra: 3 Crónicas del Descubrimiento</b>		[11] Marlos Nobre: Desafío No.37 (Challenge) <sup>*ac</sup>	6:51
(Chronicles of Discovery) <sup>ab</sup>	[20:04]	<b>Paulo Porto Alegre: Choro Suite<sup>ab</sup></b>	[10:08]
<b>Primera Crónica del Descubrimiento (First Chronicle)</b>		[12] I. Introdução (Introduction)	1:43
[4] Leyenda Taíno (Taíno Indian Legend)	2:17	[13] II. Xaxado-Choro (Brazilian Folkdance)	2:07
[5] Danza (Dance)	2:27	[14] III. Valsa-Choro (Waltz)	4:26
<b>Segunda Crónica del Descubrimiento (Second Chronicle)</b>		[15] IV. Tocata-Choro (Toccata)	1:53
[6] Noche (Night)	4:20	[16] Ronaldo Miranda: Alumbraamentos (Echantments) <sup>*bc</sup>	6:50
[7] En busca del oro (In search of gold)	4:39	[17] João Luiz: Três na Pipa (Three flying a Kite) <sup>*abc</sup>	7:02
* First recordings		<b>Total duration:</b>	<b>73:12</b>

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