



## Pedro Aguiar

Winner 2018

‘Alhambra’ International  
Guitar Competition

Brazilian  
Guitar Music

S. ASSAD

GARCÍA AGUILERA

GAROTO • GNATTALI

GUERRA-PEIXE

GUINGA • PEREIRA

PERNAMBUCO

REIS • SÁVIO

VILLA-LOBOS

**Pedro Aguiar: Brazilian Guitar Music**  
**S. ASSAD • GARCÍA AGUILERA • GAROTO • GNATTALI • GUERRA-PEIXE**  
**GUINGA • PEREIRA • PERNAMBUCO • REIS • SÁVIO • VILLA-LOBOS**

Brazilian music, emanating from a vast country situated in an immense continent, draws on many influences including European music, native folk traditions, and jazz. Its range encompasses a multitude of dance forms, songs, and percussive elements. This selection covers many styles from some of the most eminent composers for guitar in a dazzling array of virtuosity and creative energy.

Marco Pereira, born in São Paulo, studied with Isaías Sávio and obtained his Master's Degree from the Sorbonne, Paris, where his thesis was on *Heitor Villa-Lobos and His Work for Guitar*. He teaches harmony, composition, arranging and improvisation at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). As well as being a renowned teacher, he is also a recitalist who has made many recordings and written a variety of instructional publications.

He has been awarded prizes in various international guitar competitions such as the Concurso Internacional Andrés Segovia (Palma de Mallorca) and Certamen Internacional de Guitarra Francisco Tárrega (Valencia). In Brazil he received Sharp Awards for Best Soloist and Best Album of the Year (1994).

'Choro' has various meanings among the popular music of Brazil. It can refer, for example, to Brazilian urban instrumental ensemble music, a group of *chorões* ('serenaders') originating in Rio de Janeiro around 1870. The pieces they performed were often based on European forms taking titles such as *polka-choro* or *valsa-choro*. In the 20th century the *choro* has evolved to absorb other popular dances such as the *maxixe* and *samba*.

Pereira's individual mastery of the *choro* is exemplified in *O choro de Juliana*, involving much instrumental dexterity and strong rhythmic elements. *Bate-coxa* (literally to 'slap thigh'), composed in 1988, is an ebullient dance demanding similar virtuosity on the part of the performer.

Radamés Gnattali, born in Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil, first studied piano and violin, and later the guitar and cavaquinho (a small guitar with four strings). In 1920 he enrolled at the School of Fine Arts at the

University of Rio Grande do Sul where he graduated with honours. Then in Rio de Janeiro he gave a series of critically acclaimed piano recitals and studied at the National Music Institute. In the following years Gnattali established a reputation as a pianist, conductor and arranger, with a considerable contribution to the National Radio Orchestra in Rio from 1936 onwards.

Gnattali was a prolific composer, his output comprising symphonies, string quartets, 26 concertos for different instruments (including six concertos for guitar), ensemble music for various combinations, instrumental works for piano, violin, flute, guitar, etc., as well as a variety of songs.

*Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 1* is one of *Three Concert Studies for Guitar*, written between 1950 and 1981 and dedicated to the esteemed Brazilian guitarist Laurindo Almeida. On either side of the richly rhythmic opening mood, each study presents a slower lyrical episode as a centrepiece, a section which the composer called *sonhando* ('dreaming').

Dilermando Reis, born in São Paulo State but spending most of his life in Rio de Janeiro, is revered as one of the finest exponents of the Brazilian guitar and as a superb composer of works in the national tradition. He began his career in 1935 teaching guitar in a music store known as 'the Silver Guitar'. This eventually gave him the opportunity to perform on the radio, as soloist and accompanist, where he established a national reputation. This led on to many recordings between 1941 and 1975, including no less than a hundred of his own compositions on disc, with his characteristic *choros* and waltzes as well as pieces by Bach, Barrios, Tárrega, Gnattali and Pixinguinha. These recordings included some 20 78 RPM issues and 23 long playing records. In 1975 he recorded the album *The Brazilian Guitar of Dilermando Reis* featuring his last compositions.

*Se ela perguntar* ('If She Asks'), a waltz, is one of Reis's finest compositions, whether presented as a song with accompaniment or guitar solo. The song begins with the following words:

*Se ela um dia, por acaso perguntar por mim*  
*Diga, por favor, que eu sou feliz ...*  
*É preciso a própria mágia disfarçar assim,*  
*Dissimulando a dor à sombra de um sorriso*

('If she ever happens to ask after me  
Please say that I am happy ...  
Because of my own pain I disguise it in this way,  
Concealing the anguish in the shadow of a smile.')

*Jair Amorim, 1915–1993*

*Xodó da Baiana* ('Xodó of the Girl from Bahia') is one of the most popular guitar solos in the repertoire with its catchy pizzicato introduction and exquisite melodic inventiveness. *Xodó* is a difficult word to translate and may well be of African origin. It expresses a feeling of love and a special affectionate relationship with a lover or a relative.

*Noite de lua* ('Moon Night') is another plaintive and imaginative waltz. It also has verses composed by Reis which begin:

*Vem, vem ver no azul do céu*  
*A lua cor de prata*  
*Mensagem luz de quem ama*  
*Vem, ouvir minha canção ...*

('Come, come, in the blue of the sky  
To see a moon the colour of silver,  
The messenger light of one who loves you,  
Come, hear my song ...')

Aníbal Sardinha, nicknamed '*Garoto*' ('Boy' or 'Lad'), was born in São Paulo, the son of Portuguese immigrants. His first musical experience was with the banjo but later he played the cavaquinho, the acoustic steel string guitar and several other stringed instruments. As with Reis, Garoto established his fame through radio broadcasts in Rio and São Paulo.

In 1939 Garoto was invited to work with Carmen Miranda and the group Bando da Lua, touring the US and also appearing in Broadway revues. In 1954 he won a major competition, producing a recording which sold 700,000 copies but for which he received only a performing fee.

Laurindo Almeida, who knew Garoto well, commented

that in his *choros* the composer 'paints his country, Brazil, into a beautiful aquarelle of colours, sounds and styles. The three basic powers that make up Brazilian music – the Indígena (Indian), African and European – are thematically very evident.'

*Jorge do Fusa* is a classic *choro* embodying all the ingredients of melodic skill, harmonic complexity, and a sly virtuosity with seemingly effortless rapid scale runs. It is not clear why Garoto named a *choro* as *Enigma*, unless he regarded the piece as a riddle to be solved. Technically this is a difficult piece though no such indication must be transmitted to the listener.

Guinga (Carlos Althier de Souza Lemos Escobar), born in Madureira, a working class suburb of Rio de Janeiro, was nicknamed 'Gringo' because of his pale skin. The name by which he is known as an artist, 'Guinga' (pronounced Geen-ga), came from his pronunciation of the word. At the age of eleven he began guitar lessons with his uncle and started composing in his early teens. In 1976 he enrolled for several years of classical guitar studies with Jodacil Damasceno.

In the 1970s Guinga was well known for his role as accompanist to leading singers of the era. He also trained as a dentist, a parallel career he continued for many years. Widely considered as one of Brazil's greatest living composers, as guitarist, vocalist and songwriter it has been estimated that there are over 155 recordings of Guinga's music. His output includes many styles combining jazz with Brazilian genres such as *samba*, *choro*, *frevo*, *coco*, *baião* and *modinha*.

The two compositions on this album by Guinga, *Baião de Lacan* and *Di Menor*, are dazzling studies in velocity in terms of solo performance. (Song versions also exist with appropriately witty lyrics.)

Juan de Dios García Aguilera was born in Madrid but has lived for many years in Córdoba, Spain. He studied in the conservatoires of both Málaga and Granada, numbering Leo Brouwer among his mentors. He is currently professor of composition at the Rafael Orozco Higher Conservatory of Music in Córdoba.

*El reloj de Teresa* ('Teresa's Clock') was written in 2017 as the obligatory test piece for the 2018 Alhambra International Guitar Competition held in Valencia. As a

high-level competition requires, this is a thoroughly contemporary composition, both technically demanding and interpretatively challenging.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Heitor Villa-Lobos first studied music with his father. Later he earned a living playing the cello in cafes before travelling to northern Brazil to collect folk songs, and through the interior of Brazil to amass a fine collection of Indian songs. His debut as a composer was made at a concert in 1913. He also met the pianist, Arthur Rubinstein, who became a great advocate of the composer's music.

In 1923 Villa-Lobos went to Paris to stay for seven years at the heart of French musical culture. On returning home he was appointed director of musical education in Rio, a post which enabled him to generate a resurgence in national pride in the depth and quality of Brazilian music. In 1944 he made his first visit to the US.

The musical output of Villa-Lobos covers a huge canvas of symphonies, concertos, choral and chamber music, as well as many instrumental works. Yet it is his guitar music which still attracts fervent popularity. His understanding of the instrument enabled the composer to write in a distinctive personal style. These three *choros* from the early part of Villa-Lobos's career exemplify the composer's close affinity to the national instrument, and *Chôros No. 1* in particular has proved to be one of the most popular guitar solos ever written.

The brothers Sérgio and Odair Assad, born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1952 and 1956 respectively, are one of the top guitar duos, but also eminent solo recitalists. They studied in their formative years in Rio de Janeiro with Monina Távora. Their virtuosity has inspired many composers, including Astor Piazzolla, Terry Riley, Radamés Gnattali, Marlos Nobre, Nikita Koshkin, Roland Dyens, Jorge Morel, Edino Krieger and Francisco Mignone, to dedicate pieces to them. Sérgio Assad, acknowledged as one of the finest contemporary composers for guitar, has a long list of works in his catalogue.

*Aquarelle*, written in 1986 and dedicated to David Russell, the Scottish guitarist domiciled in Spain, is in three movements. The composition is an extended piece

featuring extreme levels of technical challenge. The second movement of this triptych, *Valseana*, marked *Andante*, presents a languidly romantic melody, and has become well known in the concert hall as a solo item in its own right.

João Teixeira Guimarães, known as João Pernambuco, self-proclaimed as 'the troubadour of the poor', was born in north-eastern Brazil but moved to Rio de Janeiro with his family in 1902. He had several temporary occupations, working first in a factory, then as janitor, and later on as a blacksmith. His compositions include over one hundred songs including *choros*, waltzes, *jongos*, *maxixes*, preludes and studies. Pernambuco's *Sons de carrilhões* ('Sound of Bells') has for many years been a popular solo among both professionals and amateurs.

César Guerra-Peixe, violinist, composer and conductor, was born in Petrópolis, the son of Portuguese immigrants. In his career he became renowned for composing many film scores and also wrote a book on the folk music of Recife in northern Brazil. His *Prelúdio No. 5* is very much in the style of the classical guitar rather than paying homage to Brazilian folk music.

Isaías Sávio, born in Montevideo, Uruguay, studied piano from the age of nine but in his early teens started learning the guitar at which he soon excelled. After some years as a concert artist, he moved to Brazil in 1931 where he toured widely giving recitals. Settling in São Paulo he was appointed as professor of guitar at the conservatoire. In 1963 he became a naturalized Brazilian. Sávio composed over one hundred guitar solos, several of which have found their way into the standard concert repertoire.

The term *batucada* first appeared around 1930, meaning various things including a festival and party with *batuques* (originally a lively dance akin to *samba*), a percussion group, or a compositional form. Sávio's *Batucada*, dedicated to Gabriel Pereira, is from his first series of *Cênas brasileiras* ('Brazilian Scenes'), published 1955. It is a brilliant evocation of the *batucada* style involving animated strumming, lively melodies and captivating rhythms.

Graham Wade



Photo © Neda Navaee

### Pedro Aguiar

Pedro Aguiar is one of the most talented Brazilian guitarists of his generation, and has won 15 international prizes, including the prestigious Alhambra Guitar Competition. Born in Brasília in 1990, he has studied in Brazil, the US, France and Germany, under the guidance of Eduardo Meirinhos, Júlio Alves, Judicaël Perroy and Franz Halász, receiving scholarships from Orlandus Lassus Stiftung, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and the FIPSE/CAPES Exchange Program. Between 2013 and 2018 he was assistant professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München. He has been invited to international festivals which has given him the opportunity to perform with renowned musicians from orchestras such as the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Bayerische Staatsoper, the Münchner Philharmoniker, Opéra Garnier and the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. Working in co-operation with the Kammeroper München he has performed operas by Mozart, Haydn and Rossini in prestigious venues such as the Cuvilliés Theatre, Nymphenburg Palace, and Allerheiligen-Hofkirche, Munich. [pedroaguarguitar.com](http://pedroaguarguitar.com)

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Rooted in European music, native folk traditions and often infused by jazz, Brazilian music encompasses a huge variety of dance forms and songs. Prize-winning guitarist Pedro Aguiar has selected a panoramic recital to illustrate these elements which include the *choro* and music rich in melody and rhythmic vitality. From Villa-Lobos, whose *Choros No. 1* is one of the most popular guitar solos ever written, through to the work of the revered Dilermando Reis, and on to contemporary examples of the genre, this is music of dazzling virtuosity and finesse.

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GUITARS

## PEDRO AGUIAR

### Brazilian Guitar Music

- |   |      |  |      |
|---|------|--|------|
| <b>Marco PEREIRA (b. 1956)</b>  |      | <b>Heitor VILLA-LOBOS (1887–1959)</b>  |      |
| <b>1</b> O choro de Juliana (1990)  | 3:14 | <b>9</b> Choros No. 1 (1920)   | 4:22 |
| <b>Radamés GNATTALI (1906–1988)</b>   |      | Suite populaire brésilienne (excerpts)   |      |
| <b>2</b> Three Concert Studies for Guitar – No. 2. Toccata em ritmo de samba I (1950) | 3:54 | <b>10</b> I. Mazurka-Choro (1908)  | 3:37 |
| <b>Dilermando REIS (1916–1977)</b>  |      | <b>11</b> V. Chorinho (1923)   | 4:21 |
| <b>3</b> Se ela perguntar (c. 1952)   | 3:15 | <b>Marco PEREIRA</b>   |      |
| <b>Aníbal Augusto SARDINHA ('Garoto') (1915–1955)</b>                                 |      | <b>12</b> Bate-coxa (1988)   | 3:05 |
| <b>4</b> Jorge do Fusa (1949) (arr. Paulo Bellinati, b. 1950)                         | 2:46 | <b>Carlos Althier de Souza Lemos ESCOBAR ('Guinga')</b>                          |      |
| <b>Dilermando REIS</b>  |      | <b>13</b> Di Menor (1999) (version for guitar)                                   | 2:27 |
| <b>5</b> Xodó da Baiana (1954)  | 2:50 | <b>Sérgio ASSAD (b. 1952)</b>  |      |
| <b>Carlos Althier de Souza Lemos ESCOBAR ('Guinga') (b. 1950)</b>                     |      | <b>14</b> Aquarelle – II. Valseana (1986)  | 3:15 |
| <b>6</b> Baião de Lacan (1993) (version for guitar)                                   | 2:08 | <b>João PERNAMBUCO (1883–1947)</b>   |      |
| <b>Aníbal Augusto SARDINHA ('Garoto')</b>   |      | <b>15</b> Sons de carrilhões (c. 1914) (trans. Ivan Paschoito, b. 1953)          | 2:24 |
| <b>7</b> Enigma (1952) (arr. Paulo Bellinati)   | 3:53 | <b>César GUERRA-PEIXE (1914–1993)</b>  |      |
| <b>Juan de Dios GARCÍA AGUILERA (b. 1959)</b>   |      | <b>16</b> Prelúdio No. 5 (1973)  | 2:10 |
| <b>8</b> El reloj de Teresa (2017)  | 8:45 | <b>Dilermando REIS</b>   |      |
|   |      | <b>17</b> Noite de lua (1954)  | 3:32 |
|   |      | <b>Isaías SÁVIO (1900–1977)</b>  |      |
|   |      | <b>18</b> Batucada (1952) (ed. Ivan Paschoito, and Carlos Barbosa Lima, b. 1944) | 3:04 |

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