

ers to just play like they were playing in two. It flows more. If you're playing bossa nova, then the bass drum is not that important. Sometimes I just play quarter notes because it should be a much lighter approach. Bossa nova is about the guitar and vocals. It's like a ballad. On bossa nova I play flat-footed, but for samba I play heel up, depending upon the volume.

MD: You have incredible control of dynamics. How does one learn to play with such feel and yet so softly?

Claudio: That's the importance of having respect for what's going on around you musically. That also goes back to the classical influence that we

talked about earlier. If you respect the music, you'll try to put the drums at a level where you think they should be. The problem with a lot of young drummers is that they feel when they're onstage that they're not being noticed—they have to do something. They feel uncomfortable and that they need to call attention to themselves. When they go to a concert and see a flashy drummer getting all of the applause, they want that as well. But that is not music.

MD: Getting back to your career, how did you meet Sergio Mendes?

Claudio: I knew him in Brazil. When I arrived in Los Angeles with Walter Wanderley, the Brazilian consulate was throwing a party in our honor. Sergio and his band were playing at the party. It's kind of a funny story, because at that time we were the stars, and when Sergio came up to me to say hello, I kind of answered very casually. I was pretty cocky at that time because of our success.

Then with Walter, our careers went up and then back down. Sergio's career went up and stayed up. And I didn't see Sergio for a long time after that incident. But many years later I was over at [bassist] Sebastian Neto's house, and [percussionist] Rubens Bassini was there as well. They told me that Dom Um Romao was leaving Sergio's band and that Sergio was interested in checking me out.

I went to Sergio's house and played with him and his band, Brazil '66. I had listened to his records, so I was familiar with his music. After a while the entire band went into the kitchen to talk about my playing. I sat there by myself waiting for their "verdict." Sergio came out and said that they were doing a record and asked if I wanted to do it.

At this point I wasn't told that I was a member of the group, they just wanted me for the recording. So we did the record. Then he asked me to be in the group, and I signed a three-year contract. Sometime after that he came up to me and asked if I remembered that party with Walter. I said of course, and then he really let me have it. We had a great laugh over that and became great friends. I worked with him for almost nine years.

Everybody told me that he was very hard to work for, but I never had a problem. If you were professional, knew your parts, and did your job, then everything was okay. When I did my first concert with Sergio, I