



THE MUSICAL SCENE

A BIG DRUMMER

Claudio Slon, baterista-símbolo da bossa nova e muito afamado nos EUA, vem ao Brasil para apresentação — gratuita — com a Orquestra Jazz-Sinfônica em São Paulo.

Claudio Slon has a way of captivating his audience. Sitting in the corner behind his left-handed drum set², he spills³ energy, yet subtly⁴, communicatively, never intruding. Slon discovered his talent at an early age, playing many instruments as a boy before settling on drums. The moment of revelation

came when he accepted an offer to sit in with Dick Farney, Luis Chaves and Heraldo do Monte at "Farney's" nightclub. From that moment on, Claudio Slon was a professional jazz drummer. "Dick invited me to join his band," remembers Slon. "I was sixteen...I needed special legal permission to be able to work at night."

In 1961, when only seventeen, Claudio won the Folha de Ouro jazz prize, sponsored by the Folha de SP newspaper. The other winners, along with Claudio, would soon lead what would be Brazil's most internationally recognized musical movement, the Bossa Nova. Names such as Johnny Alf, Leny Andrade and Sergio Mendes, with whom Slon has made 15 recordings, toured worldwide, and even given a performance at the White House for Nixon. Slon muses⁵: "I remember President Nixon introducing us and saying that one of our hits was written for him: "Fool on the Hill."

Before the Bossa Nova exploded, Slon's "toddlers" peers⁶ in Rio had founded a hard-core Frank Sinatra Fan Club. But soon the idol became a fan: Frank Sinatra was one of the most avid Bossa admirers, being honored to sing and record with "Bossa Father" Tom Jobim. And you might guess who was on

drums in the famed "Sinatra & CO." album — Claudio Slon, of course. Claudio is also present on Jobim's world-famous "Wave" album and on numerous other landmark⁷ and platinum recordings initiated at Verve Records by producer Creed Taylor.

During Slon's 30 years in Los Angeles (he moved out in 1994), he was exposed to, played and recorded with heavy weights such as Joe Pass, Hermeto Pascoal, Airto Moreira, Art Farmer, Abraham Laboriel, John Patitucci, Herbie Hancock, Stan Getz and especially Shelly Manne — one of his great influences and friends. When Slon first played at his club (Shelly Manne's Hole), he immediately told Manne that he'd like to study with him. "Only if you teach me how to play Brazilian music," was Manne's response. They became fast friends.

Slon is undoubtedly one of the world's best drummers. After living for short periods in Arizona and Florida, he was recently invited by one of his long time fans, Vartan Tonoian, to move to Denver, to record exclusively for Vartan Jazz/Elephant Records (Slon, fittingly⁸ means "elephant" in Russian). At this jazz club, restaurant and record company, where all recordings are live, quality jazz with top musicians has blossomed⁹ since its opening in 1994, with over twenty releases.

São Paulo will soon have the opportunity to actually see Claudio Slon perform in person. His brother, Daniel Slon, Latin America director of Vartan Jazz/Elephant Records, has organized a free, grand evening at the Memorial da América Latina (SP) for Friday, April 7th. There, Claudio, pianist/composer João Donato and renowned bassist Nilson Matta will play tunes from their CD "Amazonas," recorded in Rio last year. The trio will perform alongside the Orchestra Jazz Sinfônica with arrangements elaborated especially for the show by some of Brazil's best current musicians: João Donato himself, Cyro Pereira, Laércio de Freitas and Proveta, among others. Starting at 9pm São Paulo time (barring last minute problems), this unique event will be transmitted live over the internet for the whole world to enjoy: www.mp3club.com.

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