

he signed with RCA, often recording with orchestral backing. This medley, from a set exclusively devoted to Jobim's songs, includes three all-time bossa favourites: "Chega de Saudade," "Desafinado" and "Corcovado."

From the original samba version by its composer, Jorge Ben, to the recent funk-jazz reading by Ithamara Koorax - not forgetting Sérgio Mendes and Al Jarreau along the way - the powerful groove-appeal of "Mas que Nada" remains unaltered for almost three decades. One of the top bossa groups, the Tamba Trio, also have scored a big hit with their 1963 recording for Philips. When Tamba became part of the RCA cast in the Seventies, the same guys (Eça, Bebeto & Milito), decided to take the chance to conceive a new arrangement, in some ways even more adventurous than their first take.

During the sessions for Yana Purim's debut album, recorded in 1980, I had the privilege to assemble an all-star band, which included some of Rio's most-in-demand musicians. A gifted lyricist, who collaborated with Michel Colombier, Mal Waldron and Hermeto Pascoal, to name a few, Yana (Flora's sister) performs "Querendo Você," her Portuguese version of "I Apologize," backed by the legendary João Donato on piano, and Azymuth's bassist Alex Malheiros, among others.

Donato is once again featured in another bossa gem from the Eighties, "Saudades de Você," one of the best tracks from Vinícius Cantuária's self-titled debut as a leader. Fresh from his stint as a drummer for Caetano Veloso, Cantuária sings and plays guitar in this album, a very hard-to-find item. Donato's sultry arrangement, for strings & horns, is a lesson in "less is more".

A Jobim standard from the early Sixties, "Samba do Avião" was producer Aloysio de Oliveira's top choice for the first "Jobim & Miúcha" album, recorded a decade later. Singer Heloisa Buarque de Holanda - aka Miúcha - is the sister of one of Brazil's top composers, Chico Buarque de Holanda, also a novelist of moderate success.

No "Focus on Bossa Nova" would be complete without "The Girl from Ipanema." This is a very recent recording, by Gal Costa, who performed many times with Antonio Carlos Jobim in the Eighties. Recorded live in 1999, sung both in English and in Portuguese, it belongs to her tribute album to the *maestro*. God bless him!

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