

Latin American Serenade

Gregg Nestor, Guitar

Carlos Lyra
Baden Powell
Antonio Lauro
Manuel Ponce

Mario Gangi
João Pernambuco
Laurindo Almeida

Benito Canonico
Rodrigo Riera
Carlos Atilano

Agustin Barrios Mangore
Album Notes by Tom Williams



Album Produced by Gregg Nestor

**Recorded at Penguin Recording, Eagle Rock, CA
Between April and June, 1991**

Engineer: John Strother

**Digitally Mastered by
Jonathan Marcus, Orpharion Recordings**

Album Art Direction: Mark Banning

Mr. Nestor's Guitar by José Ramirez, 1984

Front Cover: Rainbow in the Mist, Iguassu Falls, Argentina, South America

Back Cover: Angel Falls, Orinoco Basin, Canaima National Park, Venezuela

Traycard and CD Label: San Rafael Falls, Quijos River, Amazon, Ecuador

The guitar music of Latin America is as rich and varied as the influences that have inspired it. Latin history is interwoven with the beauty and nuance of two predominant languages – Spanish and Portuguese – as well as hundreds of regional cultures that have provided both its artistic variety and vitality. Nowhere is this more manifest than in its music.

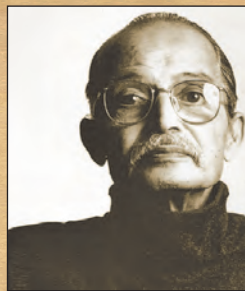
Gregg Nestor takes us on a musical journey to a number of Latin American points of interest, amply demonstrating why this repertoire is a treasure for classical guitarists.



CARLOS LYRA (b. 1939) is a Brazilian singer and the composer of numerous bossa nova and “Música Popular Brasileira” classics. He was a major figure among bossa nova musicians who emerged

soon after the genre’s pioneers - João Gilberto and Antonio Carlos Jobim – established the style. Later, he joined singer Nara Leão as part of bossa nova’s activist wing, seeking a return to its samba roots. Gregg Nestor has chosen Brazilian guitarist Paulinho Nogueira’s arrangement, dutifully transcribed by Luis Zea, of one of Carlos Lyra’s most popular compositions – *Aruanda*. In Afro-Brazilian folklore, “Aruanda” is a

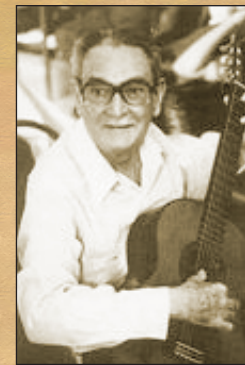
mythical, idyllic place; a legendary land of peace, freedom and equality longed for by generations of African slaves in Brazil.



Brazilian composer/guitarist **ROBERTO BADEN POWELL DE AQUINO (1937-2000)**, popularly known as Baden Powell, was one of the most influential musical

personalities of his generation. His father, a scouting enthusiast, named him after Lord Robert Baden Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts. In 1962, Baden met the poet-diplomat Vinicius de Moraes, Antonio Carlos Jobim’s lyricist at the time, and the two collaborated on a number of songs that became some of the classics of Brazilian popular music. Bossa nova was the prevailing sound, but Baden and Vinicius wanted to combine Afro-Brazilian forms such as Candomblé, Umbanda and Capoeira with Rio de Janeiro’s samba forms. The result was a song cycle released in 1966 on the LP “The Afro-Sambas of Baden and Vinicius.” Gregg Nestor has chosen one of the most famous of the Afro-Sambas – *Canto de Osanha* (Chant of Osanha). Osanha is an Orisha (supernatural being) of the Afro-Brazilian religion.

Venezuelan composer/ guitarist **ANTONIO LAURO (1917-1986)** often incorporated in his guitar compositions a



unique, indigenous musical form - the vals venezolano, or Venezuelan waltz. It combines the folkloric hemiola meter (1-2-3/1-2-3/1-and-2-and- 3-and) with the South American waltz style popular in fashionable

salons throughout the continent during the 19th Century. Like his artistic contemporaries, Lauro was dedicated to creating a strongly nationalistic, identifiable style - a Venezuelan corollary to Argentinian tango or Brazilian samba. Largely unknown beyond the borders of his native country for years, his works were featured beginning in the 1960s in the international concert programs of his fellow countryman, Alirio Diaz. They now form an integral part of the standard classical guitar repertoire. *Natalia* is one of his first folkloric waltz compositions, one of a set of four dating from 1938-1940 that, years later, he named after his daughter. It is arguably his most famous waltz. The three *Venezuelan Waltzes* continue Lauro’s exploration of this distinctly upbeat, native waltz style in a set of very short themes. *Juliana* is among Lauro’s most European waltzes and could easily be re-titled as an etude. It incorporates the more complex form of AABB’CC’. Lauro’s *Variations on a Venezuelan Children’s Song* includes a dedication: “Homage to the guitarists of

the XIX Century." Its inspiration is instantly recognizable to classical guitarists - the theme/variation compositions of Sor, Giuliani, Carcassi and others of their generation. The first half of the melody is the Venezuelan children's song *Palomita Sentada*, but the second half is uniquely Lauro's, who wished to broaden the simple melodic theme.

Lauro's *Tríptico*, composed between 1974 and 1976, consists of three pieces in E minor which the composer combined at the request of Andrés Segovia. The first of these, *Angostura*, is the ancient name for Ciudad Bolívar, Lauro's birthplace. *Madrugada* ("Before Dawn") is an appoggiatura study drawn from one of Venezuelan composer (and Lauro's mentor) Vicente Emilio Sojo's few original works for guitar. It was composed shortly after Sojo's death. *La Negra* was Lauro's niece Armida's nickname. Musically, it is very close thematically to Lauro's more famous *Natalia*. *El Marabino* is a short Venezuelan waltz. A marabino is a resident of the Maracaibo, Venezuela. *Seis Por Derecho* - literally "Six by Right" is a joropo - a dance popular among the native people of the Venezuelan plains. The piece is subtitled "styled after the Venezuelan harp." It is a lively, energetic dance, with what might be described as an "inverted" hemiola alternating between 6/8 and 3/4, and Lauro creates

the illusion of a folkloric harp. The title refers to its 6/8 rhythm, with the *llaneros* or people of the plains giving Lauro the right to adopt their beloved joropo.



Andrés Segovia called Mexican composer **MANUEL PONCE (1882-1948)** the "St. Francis of Assisi of the guitar," referring to Ponce's selfless devotion to creating a serious repertoire for

the instrument. Ponce was among the first of his countrymen to pursue a European musical education, studying in Italy and Germany, and later in Paris with Paul Dukas. He met Segovia in 1923 and wrote five sonatas for him, as well as three theme/variations and arrangements of Mexican folk melodies. Gregg Nestor plays his own arrangement of Ponce's most famous song, *Estrellita* (Little Star), dating from 1912. *Scherzino Mexicano* is a transcription of one of Ponce's piano works.

Italian composer/guitarist **MARIO GANGI (1923-2010)** was a European who was very much at home with Brazilian musical styles, represented in this collection by his *Contrastes Brazilianos Nos. 1 and 2*. The first is a lovely, very



romantic serenade, contrasting with the more up tempo melodic theme of the second.

JOÃO TEIXEIRA GUIMARÃES, known as **JOÃO**

PERNAMBUCO (1883-1947), is one of Brazil's most beloved gifts to the classical guitar and its devotees. An ironworker from the State of Pernambuco



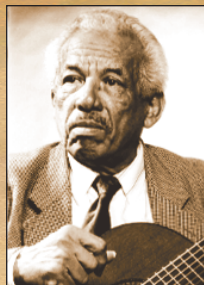
who emigrated to Rio do Janeiro in 1902, he was a very proficient guitarist and a skilled, self-taught composer for the instrument. Sadly, much of his repertoire was lost at the time of his death, because except for Heitor Villa-Lobos's transcriptions of his music, coupled with transcriptions taken from his sparse recordings, his music was not published. Gregg Nestor has chosen Pernambuco's most famous choro, *Sons de Carilhoes*. The title has been translated as "Sounds of Bells" or "Sounds of Carrillons." Since carilhoes can be translated from Portuguese as "bells," "carrillons" or even "doorbells," there has been a friendly debate for years among Pernambuco admirers about the most appropriate translation of the title. Notwithstanding, it is evident that Pernambuco was evoking a bell-like sound from the guitar, evident in both the A and B sections.



Brazilian guitarist/composer **LAURINDO ALMEIDA (1917-1995)** had a rich, varied career that included forays into Brazilian popular music, jazz

and classical repertoire. A 7-time Grammy winner who resided for many years in Southern California, he first performed in the U.S. in 1947 at the invitation of Stan Kenton. Though known for his mastery of varied styles, he was perhaps best known as a “mestre do violão bossa nova,” (master of bossa nova guitar), perhaps Brazilian guitar’s most accomplished non-resident. He is represented here by *Braziliance*, a wonderful example of a contemporary Brazilian choro, incorporating a slightly less-traditional choro form of A-B-A-C-C-A.

Noted Venezuelan composer **BENITO CANONICO (1894-1971)** came from a musical era that immediately preceded Antonio Lauro’s. *Aire de Joropo* again evokes the lively harp-based dance of the Venezuelan plain. Note the high register of the folkloric harp tones imitated by the guitar. The piece is also titled *El Totumo de Guarenas*. A totumo is a gourd tree, reportedly well suited to the crafting of maracas. Guarenas is a small city near Caracas.



Venezuelan guitarist/composer **RODRIGO RIERA (1923-1999)** is from the same generation that produced Antonio Lauro. The two first met in Caracas in 1941 and eventually were fellow

guitar students of guitarist and composer Raul Borges. In 1949, Riera met Andrés Segovia, who encouraged him to further his studies with him. After establishing a career as a concert guitarist, he returned to Caracas to teach guitar, and from there until his death he devoted his energies to composition. His *Venezuelan Waltzes Nos. 1-3* move away from the folkloric, hemiola tradition of his contemporaries and instead are charming miniatures of the parlor or salon style of waltz. *No. 4* hearkens back to the vals venezolano tradition made popular by Lauro.

Venezuelan composer/guitarist/educator **CARLOS ATILANO (b. 1952)** began his musical education playing the native “cuatro” or 4-string guitar. After completing his studies at the Venezuelan Conservatory, he got a full scholarship from the Venezuelan government to study at The Boston Conservatory of Music in Boston Massachusetts, where he received his Bachelor of Music. Of the Venezuelan Pieces on this album, he states: All the Venezuelan pieces for guitar that I have written were inspired by pure love for my native land. Being



away from Venezuela brings in me a kind of intense nostalgia, and with that nostalgia comes a longing for my homeland, its music, places and the aromas of the tropics. All of these

things are conveyed in each of my Venezuelan folk pieces.

My Three Venezuelan Pieces: *Aire Criollo*, *Cancion* and *Valse*, along with *El Vals de Gregorio*, are a good example of that nostalgia, happiness, and longing. The first three were composed in Caracas in 1984 and were dedicated to Antonio Ochoa, my first guitar teacher at the Conservatorio de Musica Juan Jose Landaeta. They were premiered in 1987 by the Venezuelan guitarist Gabriel Guillen. *El Vals de Gregorio* was dedicated to my good friend Gregg Nestor. This piece was composed in 1991 as a “thank you” to Gregg, who really loved these pieces and decided to record them. They were among my first attempts to compose Venezuelan folk music for guitar.



Beloved Paraguayan guitarist/composer **AGUSTIN BARRIOS MANGORE (1885-1944)**, toured Latin America extensively, living for a time in



Argentina, Brazil and El Salvador. He wrote works for guitar in many styles, from 19th Century European forms – waltz, gavotte, barcarole and mazurka – to regional South America styles,

including the Brazilian choro, Andean cueca, and Guarani/Paraguayan dance. He is represented in this collection by *Maxixe*, a Brazilian dance in duple time.

From Brazil to Venezuela, Gregg Nestor has provided ample evidence that South America's guitar repertoire is not only alive and well, but growing, as successive generations of talented composers, many of them well-grounded in classical guitar, both draw inspiration from their predecessors and inspire others to keep a rich tradition alive.

Tom Williams
Salt Lake City, Utah
April, 2009

Tom Williams is a classical guitar devotee/player with a particular interest in the history, repertoire and personalities of Brazilian classical and popular music. He is an officer and board member of the Utah Classical Guitar Society.



GREGG NESTOR, guitar

Internationally acclaimed guitarist Gregg Nestor has built a strong following for his abilities as soloist, accompanist and arranger. Finalist in the 1981 New York Concert Guild Competition held at Carnegie Hall, Gregg has recorded and broadcast in Holland, Belgium, Spain and for the BBC in London. In his London debut, The Times critic commented on his being "uncommonly communicative, a real artist in timing and shading, in stylish fluency and tact besides wholehearted communication with his composers." Many works arranged by Gregg Nestor for solo/duo guitars or with various ensemble have been published.

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01. Aruanda (arr. Paulinho Nogueira / Luis Zea)
02. Canto du Osanha (arr. Luis Zea)
03. Natalia
04. Three Venezuelan Waltzes: (El Negrito)
05. Three Venezuelan Waltzes: (La Gatica)
06. Three Venezuelan Waltzes: (La Petronila)
07. Estrellita (arr. Gregg Nestor)
08. Juliana
09. Variations on a Venezuelan Children's Song
10. Scherzino Mexicano
11. Contrastes Brazilianos No. 1: (Delicioso)
12. Contrastes Brazilianos No. 2: (Panoramica)
13. Sons de Carilhoes
14. Braziliance: (Choro)
15. Aire de Joropo
16. Venezuelan Waltz #1: (Melancolia)
17. Venezuelan Waltz #2: (Monotonía)
18. Venezuelan Waltz #3: (Nostalgia)
19. Venezuelan Waltz #4: (Nando Riera)
20. Three Venezuelan Pieces: (Aire Criollo)
21. Three Venezuelan Pieces: (Cancion)
22. Three Venezuelan Pieces: (Valse)
23. El Vals de Gregorio (written for Gregg Nestor)
24. Tríptico: (Angostura)
25. Tríptico: (Madrugada)
26. Tríptico: (La Negra)
27. Maxixe
28. El Marabino
29. Seis Por Derecho

TT = 65:37

Carlos Lyra	2:16
Baden Powell	3:22
Antonio Lauro	3:05
Antonio Lauro	1:24
Antonio Lauro	1:16
Antonio Lauro	0:43
Manuel Ponce	2:22
Antonio Lauro	1:56
Antonio Lauro	7:27
Manuel Ponce	2:31
Mario Gangi	2:25
Mario Gangi	1:28
João Pernambuco	2:03
Laurindo Almeida	3:05
Benito Canónico	1:49
Rodrigo Riera	1:41
Rodrigo Riera	1:25
Rodrigo Riera	1:25
Rodrigo Riera	1:42
Carlos Atilano	1:26
Carlos Atilano	1:59
Carlos Atilano	1:52
Carlos Atilano	1:47
Antonio Lauro	2:06
Antonio Lauro	3:10
Antonio Lauro	2:21
Agustín Barrios Mangore	2:48
Antonio Lauro	1:15
Antonio Lauro	3:28



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