

Mp3 Luiz Simas - Impromptu



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Beautiful original piano improvisations in several Brazilian styles, including Brazilian jazz, choro, samba, Brazilian ballad, bossa-nova 12 MP3 Songs LATIN: Brazilian Jazz, CLASSICAL: Contemporary Details: Luiz Paulo Bello Simas was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1948 in the neighborhood of Tijuca, in the north zone of Rio, into a typical middle class family. His father worked in a bank, and his mother, who later became a math teacher, was a homemaker. He was still an infant when his family moved to Leme, in Rio's south zone, then to Copacabana, where he started piano lessons at the age of four. He practiced on his great grandmother's old Pleyel. They moved again to Rio's north zone, and then back to the south zone to settle in the neighborhood of Ipanema. His grandfather, a dentist who was a pioneer in the use of dental implants in Brazil, bought a large apartment with the help of money he had won in a lottery. At this time Luiz used to listen to a varied cocktail of genres on the radio: samba-canés by Miltoninho, Caubi Peixoto and ngela Maria, samba-de-breques by Moreira da Silva, and a variety of styles by other Brazilian singers. He also enjoyed listening to a collection of LPs that his father had given to him, and which included favorite classic pieces such as Carmen's Habanera, Samson and Delilah, Madame Butterfly's aria, and so on. He practiced Chopin and Bach at the piano, and attended the Escola Nacional de Msica, where he graduated in Music Theory when he was eleven years old. Once in a while his grandparents took him to the opera at Theatro Municipal. Music wasn't Luiz's only interest. He and his brother Jos Roberto enrolled in one of Rio's large catholic schools for boys, Colgio Santo Incio in Botafogo. There he spent his mornings studying, swimming in the pool, playing soccer (he was a terrible player), ping-pong (he was a champ), and having fun with his many friends. After school he would stop at the vendor on the sidewalk to eat some Eskibon ice-cream and then take the trolley on a one-hour trip back home. It was also at Colgio Santo Incio's auditorium that he first attended a bossa-nova concert,

given by one of his buddies who was a pianist in a musical group. At this point, music was becoming more and more important in Luiz's life. In the 60's he fell in love with bossa-nova, with its elaborate harmonies, its subtle and captivating rhythm, with that way of singing which was kind of spoken or whispered, without the vibratos, grandiosity and drama which were so common in the musical styles up to that time. He started to learn acoustic guitar with Beth Carvalho, nowadays a very famous traditional samba singer (at that time she was into bossa-nova, and wasn't very known). And it was singing and playing guitar that he composed his first bossa-nova songs. In 1966 he won a scholarship in a student exchange program and went to the USA to live with an American family in Lakewood, a suburb of Cleveland. He lived with them for a year, then went back to Brazil where he and other musicians started the bossa-nova instrumental and vocal quartet Agora-4. The group signed a contract with Philips, and recorded many tracks in bossa-nova compilation LPs. With the addition of a fifth member and renamed Agora-5, the group participated in one of the first International Song Festivals held in the Maracanzinho arena in Rio singing "Manh de Ningum", a song by Sergio Mendes (that song was later released in the USA by Sergio Mendes' group Brazil 66 with the English title "Look Around"). The performance was totally chaotic: the organizers of the festival decided not to allow instruments on stage, and the group had to do a vocal performance accompanied by the festival's orchestra only, without playing piano, bass and drums. Besides, the mood in Brazil was very anti-American at that time, and when they announced the composer's name the audience booed loudly - only because he lived and made his career in the USA. The group had to perform being booed by 25,000 people. It was a baptism by fire...Nevertheless, that didn't abate Luiz's belief in his music career. He attended architecture college for one year and a half, and after Agora-4 broke up he was invited to join Mdulo 1000, a group that played in dance parties. They had an offer of a very good contract with a night-club in So Paulo, where he went with the group to live for one year. Mdulo 1000 used to play very conventional Brazilian music, bossa-nova and American pop, but while in So Paulo they started to be influenced by the international rock music of Jimmi Hendrix, Steppenwolf, Deep Purple, and by the new tropicalismo music of Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and the Mutantes. With a new quartet line-up of guitar and vocals (Daniel), bass (Eduardo), drums (Candinho) and keyboard and vocals (Luiz), the group started to compose and perform their own songs in Portuguese in a style that years later would be called "psychedelic rock". They returned to Rio, signed with Odeon/EMI, participated in the International Song Festival, gave several shows in playhouses and

other venues such as the Museu de Arte Moderna and the Instituto Villa-Lobos, and continued to perform until the beginning of the 70's, when they broke up. In the middle of the 70s' Luiz formed with guitarist Lulu Santos, bass player Fernando Gama and drummer Candinho the group Vimana. Their music was very elaborate and energetic, a kind of Brazilian-style progressive rock. At one point Candinho left the band, which turned into a quintet with Lobo on drums and Ritchie on vocals and flute. The music of Vimana then became even more eclectic, including very orchestrated numbers, catchy and rhythmic funk tunes and even one or two chorinhos. They gave memorable sold-out performances at Teatro Tereza Raquel, in the Museum of Modern Art, in movie theaters and other Rio venues, and had a large and faithful following. This kind of music, however, wasn't taken seriously by the Brazilian record industry at that time. They signed with Sigla (Globo) and recorded an entire LP, but the record company decided to first release a single ("Zebra"), with absolutely no promotion behind it. The LP was never released, Sigla was acquired by another company, and the master has not been found ever since. The group broke-up in the second half of the 70s'. Ex-Yes keyboard player Patrick Moraz invited Luiz Paulo, Fernando, Ritchie and Lobo to form a group with him and go live in Europe. They rehearsed for many months with Patrick in a house in the neighborhood of Barra, but the project never went ahead. Luiz did a lot of studio recordings with several artists both during his Vimana years and afterwards. He was the first musician in Rio (and probably in Brazil) to own an electronic synthesizer, and he was very sought-after by the studios. On Raul Seixas' hit "A Mosca na Sopa" ("The Fly in the Soup"), for instance, Luiz recorded... the sound of the fly! There were weeks when he recorded non-stop: mornings at RCA, afternoons at Odeon, evenings at Sigla. It was also around that time that he created and recorded for Brazil's TV-Globo network the famous "plim-plim" sound clip for their trademark animated logo, still in use today. He also played synthesizer in the orchestra in one Roberto Carlos' series of performances in Caneco.. With the break-up of Vimana the other members of the group started to pursue their solo careers, and Lulu, Ritchie and Lobo became mega-stars. Luiz had decided to slow down his musical career, bought himself a small country house and piece of land in the tiny mountain hamlet of Miranto in the state of Minas Gerais, and settled there. It was a very rustic place the village had no electricity, gas or telephone! The only way to cook was with a wood stove. Luiz' daily chores included waking-up at 4:00 am to water his large vegetable garden (so that the frost wouldn't burn the plants when the sun came out), and chopping wood for the fire. He and his first wife Barbara enjoyed that kind of life very much, and they tried to keep it going for as long as they could.

Luiz would go to Rio regularly to make a few studio recordings, then go back to Miranto. It was also around this time that he started to get interested in natural foods. In 1980, he and his wife went to Boston to study macrobiotics, oriental philosophy and oriental medicine with Michio Kushi at the Kushi Institute. They stayed there for two years, their first daughter Lydia was born, and they went back to Brazil. They spent part of the time in their house in Miranto, and part in a rented apartment in Rio, where their second daughter Julia was born..Toward the end of the 80's Luiz still worked as a studio musician. He also recorded soundtracks for tv (such as all the soundtracks for Fernando Gabeira's series on TV Bandeirantes), went on tour with several renown artists and played and acted in Oswaldo Montenegro's musical "Dana dos Signos". He also participated in guitarist Sergio Dias' group Zod (Sergio was one of the founding members of Mutantes). It was also around this time that one of his songs ("A Sombra da Partida", composed in partnership with Ritchie and Bernardo de Vilhena) was chosen as the theme for one of the main characters of TV Globo's soap-opera "Vale-Tudo"..In 1989 Luiz and his wife separated, and she stayed in the US with the children. He decided to go live there as well, so that he could be near his daughters.That was a very drastic decision. It meant that he would have to leave behind a musical career of over 20 years to start over again from practically nothing. He didn't think he had any other option, though, and ended up settling in New York, where he did all kinds of jobs to survive just like any other recently arrived Brazilian immigrant. Slowly but surely he started to get music jobs as a pianist and singer in Brazilian restaurants, earning very little, but making some money to help with the expenses. He also started to work as an interpreter in the courts.Around 1992, frustrated with the work of background musician in restaurants, and with no patience to play "The Girl from Ipanema" and other very common bossa-novas every day, he was anxious to do something creative again. He had very little money, so he decided to record his original chorinhos on solo piano. That would be a very affordable production, because he wouldn't have to hire other musicians and could finish it in a few hours. He then released his first recording in the US, "New Chorinhos from Brazil", first simply in cassette format and later on as a CD. The latter was very well received by the critics, with Titus Levis from Keyboard Magazine writing that "(Luiz's) playing is sassy, clear, vibrant, yet understated, his music ...sounds fresh, smart, and witty, and Egdio Leito, a reviewer in the website Luna Kafe, saying that Luiz Simas has done an outstanding job! His (recording) ..is by far the very best choro release out of Brazil in recent years...superbly performed.It was also around this time that he started to give his first concerts in New York. Having already a fairly

large following, Luiz could self-produce his own shows knowing that he was always going to have a full house. His career then started to pick up. He recorded a new CD ("Recipe for Rhythm") with his original Brazilian jazz-pop songs in partnership with lyricist Ellen Schwartz in which he is the lead singer, plays piano and keyboards, and is accompanied by many world-class musicians. One of the songs in this CD ("Maybe") was also recorded by singer Ana Caram, and released in the US, Europe and Japan. He was also the musical director for legendary Brazilian singer Elza Soares when she lived in New York. Later on he released two other CDs in the US ("Impromptu" and "Luiz Simas Live in New York City"). Luiz gave several courses on the History of Brazilian Popular Music at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and started teaching music and percussion to young children at PS-234, a public school in lower Manhattan. Luiz gives solo piano concerts and shows with his group in very special venues, such as the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (where he played to a sold-out house), the consulate of Poland, the Elebash Theater at the City University of New York, and many others. He has performed in jazz clubs and world music clubs, and played at several festivals in the US (such as the Rocky Mountain Ragtime Festival, in Boulder, Colorado playing his chorinhos and the Hartford International Jazz Festival in Connecticut) and in other countries (such as the Oslo Jazz Festival in Norway). In 2004 Luiz gave two sold-out concerts at the renown Mistura Fina Jazz Club in Rio. It was his first performance in his native city in 15 years. He also appeared in Brazil's main late-night TV show, "Programa do J", giving a 30 minute interview and playing some of his songs. That program was broadcast all over Brazil to an audience of millions of people. Also in 2004 the group Tringulo recorded Luiz's suite Momentos Felizes at the International Music Festival of Maribor, Slovenia, and performed it in their 2004/2005 tour of the USA. Luiz is a co-producer, arranger and pianist on singer Elin Melgarejo's new CD, which will be released in 2006 by Blue Toucan Music. Luiz lives with his wife Maria (an American of Italian ancestry) in an apartment in Manhattan which is also his office and recording studio. After the release of his new CD in 2006 he intends to go often to Brazil to perform, while continuing his career in the US, Europe and other parts of the world. CDs recorded in the United States "NEW CHORINHOS FROM BRAZIL" - A CD with 10 original chorinhos which received great reviews in Keyboard Magazine and in several music websites. Some of Luiz Simas' chorinhos are more traditional in style, while others are quite modern and adventurous. "RECIPE FOR RHYTHM" - A CD with Luiz Simas' original compositions written in partnership with American lyricist Ellen Schwartz. Luiz is the lead singer and plays piano and keyboards

accompanied by a large ensemble of exceptional musicians such as Romero Lubambo, Sergio Brando, Ricky Sebastian, Urban Sanchez, and many others. The songs feature wonderful lyrics in English and Portuguese with beautiful melodies and harmonies, and Brazilian rhythms with a jazzy flavor. IMPROMPTU - A CD of piano improvisations. "LUIZ SIMAS LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY" - Recorded live with his quartet (Luiz Simas - piano, Steve Kowarsky - bassoon, Barbara Blonska - flute, Jorge Amorim - percussion) at an April 2003 concert at the Consulate of Poland in New York. This CD features Brazilian classical and popular music, and includes compositions by Nazareth, Jobim, Villa-Lobos, Simas, Jacob do Bandolim, Zequinha Abreu, plus an original Brazilian style arrangement of Vincent Youmans' "Tea for Two". Reviews New Chorinhos from Brazil CD (Luiz) playing is sassy, clear, vibrant, yet understated his music ...sounds fresh, smart, and witty Titus Levis, Keyboard Magazine Luiz Simas has done an outstanding job! His (recording) ..is by far the very best choro release out of Brazil in recent years...superbly performed. Egdio Leito, Luna Kafe Recipe for Rhythm CD This album is a gem. If you like lush, exotic Brazilian rhythms to dance to, contemplate to, or just to dream or work to, this is just the thing. A very fine surprise The Critical Review

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