

PUTUMAYO PRESENTS

Brazilian Beat

Brazilian music seems always to be on the cutting edge, even though it remains at its core what it has always been: a magical blend of rhythm and melody. Ever since the early 1960s, when Antonio Carlos Jobim, João Gilberto and others introduced the globe to the suave and sophisticated sound of *bossa nova*, Brazilian music has been part of the soundtrack of hipsters around the world.

A few years later, Jorge Ben Jor borrowed inspiration from American funk, rock and soul to create a *samba* soul sound that resonates to this day. In the years since, *bossa nova* and *samba* have joined forces with electronic music and DJ culture as well as rock, neo-soul and hip hop to create new and exciting sounds that keep Brazilian music relevant and cool.

Yet even though rock, pop, jazz, funk, soul, hip hop, electronica and other non-Brazilian influences have woven their way into the Brazilian music tapestry, the steamy tropical beats and rolling melodies of *samba* and its cousin *bossa nova* continue to provide the underlying framework. Formed from a tumultuous history of colonialism and slavery, the high- and low-pressure musical systems of Africa, indigenous America and Europe collided in Brazil to create a perfect musical storm, one that has been raining gifts of song and dance for hundreds of years.

Tamy — “Samba na Mão, Eu Tenho”

Singer, composer and guitarist Tamy hails from the city of Vitória, the capital of the Brazilian state of Espírito Santo, north of Rio de Janeiro. Tamy started performing in 2001 and placed first at the 2004 New Talents Festival. The same year, she released her first album, *Soul Mais Bossa*, which led to a UK tour and the placement of a number of songs on high-profile international compilations. Tamy’s influences range from *bossa nova* icons such as Tom Jobim and João Bosco to the more contemporary, electronica-tinged flavors of Bebel Gilberto and Céu. Her second album, the self-titled *Tamy*, was created with the help of seven producers, among them Marcelinho da Lua, one of Brazil’s hottest young DJs.

“*Samba na Mão, Eu Tenho*” (I Have *Samba* in Hand) features her sophisticated touch. “It is not easy to make a beautiful *samba* / One that you never want to end / I will try to make a beautiful *samba* / For you to accompany me / A very different *samba* / That stirs the mind, the body and the soul / I have *samba* in hand, *samba* at my feet / I have *samba* in my voice and my heart.”

Bruna Caram — “Feriado Pessoal”

São Paulo singer and composer Bruna Caram has been surrounded by the sounds of *samba*, *bossa nova* and *Música Popular Brasileira* (MPB) since she was a baby, thanks to a long history of music in her family. By the age of 9, Caram was gaining attention as a member of the popular children’s group Trovadores Mirins, and when she was 15, she moved up to perform with parent group Trovadores Urbanos. Caram released her first solo album *Essa Menina* (This Girl) before she turned 20. After getting a degree in music at the University of São Paulo, Caram released her second album, *Feriado Pessoal* (Personal Holiday) to wide acclaim in 2009.

Caram writes most of her own material, including this, the title track of her sophomore album. Over a funky MPB groove, Caram sings, “Today I’m finally getting out / Right on time / I’ll quit whatever used to hold me back / Gonna celebrate, see ya! / Today there’ll be no traps / There’ll be no burdens anymore / I’ll just grant myself a personal holiday / I’m dumping you / Don’t even want revenge.”

Marcos Valle — “Partido Alto”

While he’s not as internationally renowned as Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil or Sérgio Mendes, Marcos Valle is nearly as important in the history of Brazilian music. Born in Rio in 1943, Valle began composing *samba* and *bossa nova* tracks with his brother Paulo. Valle’s classic composition “So Nice (Summer Samba)” was a U.S. Top 40 hit in 1966. Despite this and many other successes throughout the 1970s and ’80s, Valle only recently achieved wide popularity when British dance labels began unearthing and re-issuing his classic albums. Since his older recordings were rediscovered, Valle has returned to the studio and recorded a number of popular albums of *samba* mixed with funky jazz and soul.

On this remix of Marcos Valle’s rendition of the classic Chico Buarque composition “Partido Alto,” Valle refers to the traditional *samba* style and rhythm, in which a large chorus alternates with one or more solo singers who trade humorous, often improvised verses. Valle’s contemporary electronic rendition has nothing in common with traditional *partido alto*, except perhaps its lighthearted spirit. The song was remixed by Márcio Menescal, a member of the band Bossacucanova and son of *bossa nova* legend Roberto Menescal.

Mônica da Silva — “Aí Então”

Mônica da Silva was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a world away from her mother’s native Bélem, a port city that serves as the gateway to the Amazon rain forest in northern Brazil. Brazilian *bossa nova*, *samba* and MPB were ever-present at home, as were American rock and pop. Indeed, da Silva’s initial musical endeavors were more in the indie rock vein, leading her to form the band Nectar with her brother and sister. After that group disbanded, she moved to Chicago, where she released her first pop and rock album in 2007. The same year, da Silva responded to an ad posted by guitarist Chad Alger, who was looking to start a Brazilian music project. Intrigued by the idea of exploring her musical roots, she joined forces with Alger to record the 2011 album *Brasilissima*, which blends Brazilian *samba* and *bossa nova* with indie rock and pop flavors.

On the dreamy “Aí Então” (And So It Goes), Silva sings, “I never do anything halfway / I do it 100 percent, or I don’t do it at all / I gave you my heart; it was for real / What I got in return was a major disappointment / And so it goes / But no, I can’t take it anymore.”

Fino Coletivo — “A Coisa Mais Linda do Mundo”

Fino Coletivo, the Fine Collective, was formed in 2005 in Rio de Janeiro by a group of musicians seeking to explore the funky sound of *samba* soul, a blend of *samba* with funk and soul music that became popular in Brazil in the 1970s and ’80s. The band grew out of a trio started by brothers Wado and Alvinho Cabral, who hail originally from the northeastern state of Alagoas, and Rio composer Marcelo Frota (better known as Momo). The trio added more members and recorded an eponymous debut album in 2007. Fino Coletivo has received numerous awards and accolades for a hip, catchy sound that manages to be both contemporary and revivalist.

“A Coisa Mais Linda do Mundo” (The Most Beautiful Thing in the World) appeared on Fino Coletivo’s second album *Copacabana*, released in 2010 by Oi Música. Over a classic sound that reflects the clear influence of *samba* soul pioneer Jorge Ben Jor, singer Adriano Siri belts out, “The most beautiful thing in the world / All in yellow / What a beautiful thing / Your warm smile, your steaming embrace / It’s for you that I sing.”

Brazilian Groove Band — “Bananeira”

The result of a 1999 New York City studio session led by Brazilian saxophonist Leo Gandelman, the album *Anatomy of a Groove* languished unreleased for 10 years before British label Far Out Recordings presented this jazz funk collection to the world. The Brazilian Groove Band was formed by an all-star lineup of some of New York’s top jazz and funk artists, and they came together in the middle of winter to jam at Gandelman’s studio in a Brooklyn basement. While the resulting album was supposedly considered “too experimental” for release, the album’s eclectic blend of *samba* grooves and jazz funk eventually saw the light of day.

“Bananeira” is a João Donato classic that has been recorded hundreds of times by everyone from Gilberto Gil to Bebel Gilberto. This instrumental version features Gandelman’s in-the-pocket sax backed by a tight horn section and the unstoppable bass of Guilherme Monteiro and guitar of Sergio Brandão.

BungaLove — “Minha Loucura”

Italian keyboardist and music programmer Marco Ricci and Israeli-born, Italy-based guitarist Michael Levron came together in Rome to form BungaLove, releasing their debut album *Samba Natural* in 2007. While it might sound unusual, Italy has been a productive epicenter for new Brazilian grooves for many years, and Italy-based artists such as Rosalia de Souza, Nicola Conte, Gabin and others have helped popularize the blend of *samba* and *bossa nova* with electronic beats that forms the foundation of this collection.

“Minha Loucura” (My Insanity) features the voice of Dalia Mattioni, who sings, “You are my insanity, my inspiration / You are pure beauty and perfection / I’m crazy to see you / I cannot lose you / You make my life a masterpiece.”

Rogê — “A Nega E O Malandro”

A native of Rio de Janeiro, Rogê first recorded with the group Banda Vera in 1993, but he didn’t release his debut solo album until 2003. Starting in the 1990s, Rogê curated a summer concert series called Rio da Verdade (River of Truth), during which he had the opportunity to perform with Brazilian music legends such as João Bosco and Beth Carvalho as well as newcomers Marcelo D2 and Seu Jorge. In 2009, Rogê won a Brazilian Music Award, the local equivalent of the Grammy, alongside three songwriting partners for Best MPB Group.

Rogê’s latest album is *Fala Geral* (Speaking Generally), released in 2010. “A Nega E O Malandro” (The Woman and the Hustler) was co-written by Rogê and Arlindo Cruz and, along with many songs on *Brazilian Beat*, it owes a deep musical debt to the work of seminal *samba* rock and soul icon Jorge Ben Jor. The lyrics describe a woman’s revenge on her unfaithful husband. “The way that woman got to avenge the hustler / It was tough, it was hard, it was too strong / She was all perfumed, dressed in shorts, tight shirt and heels / Walking out, slamming the door, not looking back / Went to the party and danced.”

Brazuka Fina — “Samba Ti, Samba Eu”

Brazuka Fina is the studio project of singer Helena Cutter and songwriter and producer Denis Porto, both from Rio de Janeiro. Cutter has sung with a number of bands on the Rio music scene, including Rio Sound Machine, Acid X and even the Beatles cover band Acid Beatles. Porto splits his time between his passions: music and surfing. He’s best known for his work with the successful rock band Mr. Sombra. Cutter and Porto first worked together on the soundtrack for a short film, then agreed to collaborate at the suggestion of Scudpromo label head Bruno Scudiere on a project blending *samba* and electronic flavors. The result was the 2007 release *Samba Eletrónico*. “Brazuka” is slang for something or someone Brazilian and “fina” means “fine” or of high quality.

On Porto’s original song “*Samba Ti, Samba Eu*” (*Samba You, Samba Me*), Cutter sings about the nostalgia of a lost love. “Another day, another time / When you went away / *Samba* you, *samba* me / *Samba* that I promised you / *Samba* goes, *samba* comes / *Samba* for us as well.”

Tita Lima — “A Conta do Samba”

While many people can say they grew up in a musical family, few were raised by a member of one of their country’s most influential and groundbreaking bands. Singer-songwriter Tita Lima’s father was the bass player for the pioneering Brazilian psychedelic rock band Os Mutantes, which has impeccable hipster cred. Lima followed in her father’s footsteps, playing bass in her native São Paulo alongside many of the city’s brightest stars. When she sought fame and fortune, however, Lima headed to Los Angeles, figuring that her silky blend of *bossa nova*, acoustic soul, electronica and jazz would be better received outside her country’s traditionalist scene. Since the release of her debut album, *11:11*, in 2006, Tita Lima’s music has been embraced by DJs in Brazil, the U.S., Europe and beyond.

In “A Conta do *Samba*” (On Account of *Samba*), Lima sings, “*Samba* hasn’t died / Nor will it let up / My part in life / Is ready to be lived / It passed me by / And I ran to catch up / Slipping, dancing *samba* / I fell in love.”

Marcello — “Anel de Saturno”

Based in Paris, Marcello Ferreira was introduced to the French public through the appearance of one of his songs on a popular Citroën commercial in the summer of 2002. Marcello was born in the south-eastern Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, the capital of the state of Minas Gerais, which has spawned Brazilian music legends João Bosco and Milton Nascimento.

He was raised on the music of Gilberto Gil, Jorge Ben Jor, Stevie Wonder and Bob Marley, all of whom greatly influenced his music, which features *samba*, funk, reggae and pop. Marcello works regularly with fellow Paris-based Brazilian expats Cathia Werneck and the band Tupi Nago, but most often he performs with his own band. “Anel de Saturno” (Saturn’s Rings) is the title track of Marcello’s debut album. “Ipanema / Divine ocean / Carries me to you / Only in my thoughts I come to you / To float on your breezes.”