



## REMARKABLE ASPECTS OF THE GUITAR'S PRESENCE IN THE BRAZILIAN CULTURE

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Although his first instrument was the piano, when by the end of 1967, Tom Jobim was invited to take part in the TV show *A Man and His Music* starred by Frank Sinatra for NBC, it was handling a guitar that the Brazilian musician revealed the bossa-nova beat to the world, making the genre internationally consecrated and identified as the Brazilian way of musical accompaniment ever since. To a certain extent this was an acknowledgement to the guitar, so much imbedded in our culture already, to the point of being pictured in songs' lyrics as the confidant, the intimate friend to whom the poet complains about the mismatches of love.

Since its arrival in Brazil, on the beginning of the 19th Century, the guitar took over the main function of accompanier of urban genres, either lyric or satiric. It was on the accompanying base of *modinhas*, *lundus*, *cançonetas*, *choros*, *maxixes* and sambas. It was also for the guitar that João Pernambuco, Canhoto, Garoto and Dilermando Reis dedicated their musical creation, a pioneer and fundamental step for the constitution of the soloist popular repertoire.

To perfectly finish off the tripod of the instrument's presence in urban music, Villa-Lobos dedicated a production to the guitar which took root on the world repertoire as one of the most significant works, especially because it gathered different sound landscapes in a collage of influences from regional Brazil like the urban, of tradition with invention.

A very curious aspect identified along the historical trajectory of the guitar, since its most remote ancestors, is the vitality with which the instrument renews and reinvents itself. When it arrived in Brazil, been brought by the Portuguese vessels, the naus, the guitar used to be a double strings instrument (called the Portuguese viola) and of small build. After three centuries, it acquired the shape of an eight, increased in size and was called the guitar. The 10 double strings gave room to 6 simple strings.

Today, the guitars can have 7, 8, 10, 11 strings, its sizes and shapes are diverse, different tuning amplify the instrument's *tessitura* and the inside building details have never reached a definition. Not less vital is the search for new materials and wide experimentation with various woods of different provenances, because we are still looking for more volume and new timbers. None of that is, however, recent. As this curious guitar specimen which is part of the virtual museum collection may attest, the inventions in this field were and are limitless: we know about the existence of harp guitars, two armed guitars, lyre guitars, bass guitars, tenor guitars, and whatever more creativity may allow to be invented. This material richness reveals itself on a musical



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richness. The instrument's presence and importance is not restricted to the Brazilian culture, all it takes is to open some brackets to remember the stupendous rhythmic variety consecrated in Latin American genres.

It's possible, thus, to think about this instrument as a fundamental presence in Brazilian territory, as being responsible for publicizing the most distinct musical genres, having accomplished hand to hand a true democratic exercise not only by the musical plurality of its performance but above all because of its wide social reach.

The guitar, since its arrival here, spread itself throughout the different sectors of Brazilian society revealing an enormous potential of achievement and constituting a legacy of fundamental importance to all those who wish to learn and approach our culture: thus, it made having its bases on the song and its paths on modern invention, both projected in contemporary repertoire.

PORTUGUESE VIOLA:

<http://www.revistadehistoria.com.br/secao/artigos-revista/o-som-do-brasil>

<http://seer.ufrgs.br/EmPauta/article/view/8530/0>

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