

Antonio Carlos "Tom" Jobim [although not well known as Tom in the US, Jobim was affectionately known by this name in Brazil] (January 25, 1927-December 8, 1994) was a Carioca (Rio de Janeiro native). His family was worried when, barely more than twenty years of age, he decided to abandon his architecture studies to dedicate himself to music. When he started playing piano in nightclubs, their concern increased. His mother and his uncles advised him that his choice of profession was the shortest road to getting a disease that at the time killed many Brazilians - tuberculosis. Only his stepfather, Celso Pessoa, saw in him an artist with a great future and supported his decision. But Jobim did not stray far from architecture; didn't Frank Lloyd Wright say that architecture is petrified music?

When he was twenty-two Jobim married Tereza Hermany. His marriage had a difficult beginning; he was working late hours for very little money. "I was always chasing my rent," he would say years later, reminiscing about the times his stepfather helped him avoid being evicted from the apartment he rented. So he did not hesitate for a second when, in 1953, he was offered a job at Continental Records.

He studied music since his teens with

the best teachers in Rio; he was already convinced that playing in nightclubs (I played for the chatting drunks") demanded very little of the knowledge he had acquired. Working now as an assistant to maestro Radamés Gnattali - no one could be a better teacher for one who dreamed of becoming an arranger - Jobim started to make more money and have more time for his wife and kids. It was daytime work, after all.

At Continental, where he started by writing small arrangements, he was contracted by a singer, Maurici Moura, whose friends told him that Jobim wrote songs. Jobim showed him the samba canção "Incerteza", written together with his childhood friend and fellow-pianist Newton Mendonça - with whom Jobim later wrote such bossa nova classics as "Desafinado", "Samba de Uma Nota Só", and "Meditação" ("Meditation"), three of the most often recorded songs in the Jobim songbook. In april 1954 the name Antonio Carlos Jobim appeared on a Continental 78 rpm recording, but not as a composer; he was the leader of a group, Tom and His Band, backing the singer Bill Farr on two songs. Later in the year Jobim had his first hit, "Teresa da Praia", written with Billy Blanco and featuring two of the best Brazilian singers, Lucio Alves and Dick Farney. At the

end of 1954 Continental released one of the more audacious collaborations of the Tom Jobim-Billy Blanco partnership, *Sinfonia de Rio de Janeiro*, a series of eleven sambas praising the famous city, interpreted by several singers from Continental's roster with timeless arrangements by Gnatelli.

In 1955 the critic Ari Vasconcelos put Jobim in third place in his list of the best arrangers of the year. This was very flattering to Jobim because the tie for first place was between Gnatelli and Lirio Panicalli, another all-time great. Jobim was tied with the famous composer Pixinguinha, the creator of the first arrangements of Brazilian popular music.

In the following year Jobim started working for Odeon (the Brazilian subsidiary of EMI). At sunset he would have a beer at the bar Vilariño, the favorite spot of intellectuals and bohemian artists. At Vilariño, he was told that the poet Vinicius de Moraes was looking for a composer to work with him on the score of a play he had just finished, *Orfeu do Carnival*. The critic and popular-music historian Lucio Rangel introduced Jobim to the poet, telling him Jobim was the ideal person to do the score. De Moraes spoke for about an hour about his play, which was based on the Greek legend of

Orpheus. He wanted to adapt it to present-day Rio and cast only African-Brazilian performers. After listening patiently Jobim had only one question:

"Is there any money to be made in this?"

Rangel took him to a corner and scolded him, "How do you have the courage to talk about money with the poet in a moment like this?"

Little did Rangel know that Jobim, even with a record-