

- RS:** How did you first meet Jobim?
- OC-N:** It was about 1956, I was sixteen years old. My brothers and I had a group; we were five brothers. The eldest, who was the piano player of the group, just called Jobim at his home and said, "Jobim, my name is Mario Castro-Neves." And Jobim said, "Oh, the Castro-Neves brothers, I've heard of you guys." (It was a very small musical community at that time.) So my brother said, "We have a little garage band here and we would like to invite you to, you know, sip a little beer and talk." Then Jobim said, "Just a second," and called his wife and said, "Oh, we'll be there tonight; I'll grab a cab and come over," —and he did. That was the beginning of the relationship.
- RS:** What did you know of him at that time?
- OC-N:** We knew his songs already, he was already recording . . . later on, the difference in ages became negligible but at the time he was thirty — he was a grown man and I was just a teenager.
- RS:** But was he already famous, did he already have hits?
- OC-N:** He had some hits, yes, but nothing close to what he became. He was a known composer and arranger already in 1956, '57.
- RS:** What was your impression of him?
- OC-N:** Oh, I was mesmerized because Jobim, in addition to being a musician, was an incredible storyteller. He was already involved with nature, he knew the names of birds and fish, and he talked about the forest . . . he was very captivating.
- RS:** Had you ever heard any Brazilian composer like Jobim?
- OC-N:** There were Brazilian composers but none had that sense of . . . Jobim was adding to Brazilian melodies the sense of chord progressions that were not available at the time. If you look at old American songs, at the original lead sheets, [you can see they] are not very good. Jazz men came in and put good chords to the songs. That's the analogy.
- RS:** Would you say that a lot of the influence on Jobim was American jazz?
- OC-N:** I would say American jazz and French harmony, because he heard the classics, too.
- RS:** You mean such composers as Ravel and Debussy?
- OC-N:** Definitely.
- RS:** What about the Gershwins and Cole Porter?
- OC-N:** That music was very prominent in Brazil at the time also. I grew up listening to them as much as I did to other people. We heard Chet Baker. West Coast jazz influenced us a lot because it was a softer music than East Coast jazz. Besides playing the trumpet, Baker sang very softly; that too made an impact on the small group that heard it. On Julie London's album³ with Barney Kessel, she sang "Cry Me a River", which was just basically guitar and voice. I remember wearing out that album just getting the chords right. What he was playing, the chords We drank a lot of the jazz culture.
- RS:** At this point the words *bossa nova* had not come into use in Brazil, had they?
- OC-N:** No. I first recall the expression in the song "Desafinado", [with the lyric,] "It's the bossa nova, / It's a muito natural". Jobim introduced João Gilberto on the back cover of his first LP, saying that João was a "Baiano of bossa nova of twenty-seven years of age" — so the expression began