

In Brazil, in the late 1950s, a new birth of melodicism was occurring, a movement that would become known as *bossa nova*. The central figure in this movement was Antonio Carlos Brasileiro de Almeida Jobim.

My first encounter with his music was in the fall of 1961, on an album issued on Capitol by João Gilberto. Jobim had arranged it; he had also written a number of its songs, including one titled "Corcovado". At that same time, Dizzy Gillespie played an engagement at the Sutherland Lounge in Chicago. With him at the time was a young pianist and composer from Argentina who had lived for a time in Rio de Janeiro — Lalo Schifrin. Gillespie was regularly playing a Jobim tune, "Desafinado".

The harmony in all of Jobim's songs was thoughtful and skilled, reflecting not only his taste for jazz but for the French Impressionist composers. "Insensatez" ("How Insensitive") begins with a harmonic pattern similar to Chopin's "E-minor Prelude". Later, when Jobim was teased about this resemblance, he would note the point where it departs from Chopin's harmony. Pulling his leg more, Gerry Mulligan recorded "E-minor prelude" with a bossa nova feeling⁵.

As the song form evolved in the United States, the harmonic content became more sophisticated, nowhere more so than in the music of Jerome Kern. Jazz particularly relied on harmonic content. The sequences of chords contributed to the forward motion. Harmonically, Kern's music was years ahead of most jazz.

But whereas this new Brazilian music was harmonically engaging, the composers did not depend so heavily on this factor for motion. They found another way to treat the ballad.

⁵ Available on *Night Lights* Verve 818 271-2