

In 1974 I was again visiting Los Angeles. Jobim had come from Brazil. In those years we always remained more or less in touch. He was staying at the Sunset Marquis, a building of apartment suites in West Hollywood on a sloping street south of Sunset Boulevard and just east of the Beverly Hills town line. Jobim wanted me to put English lyrics to "Children's Games" to which he now gave the Portuguese title "Chovendo na Roseira" ("Raining on the Rose Bush"). Because, he said, a double rainbow was a sign of luck, he wanted to call the song "Double Rainbow" in English. We worked very closely on that song and finally finished it.

For all that he was revered in Brazil, Antonio Carlos Jobim was criticized there, and he was not averse to criticizing back. "Some Brazilians," one journalist wrote, "never forgave Jobim for being so extraordinarily successful. He has been described as someone who sold his soul to the United States."

Those who criticize a country most are often those who love it most, not the conspicuous, posturing patriots. Those who truly love a country call on it to adhere to its highest ideals and aspire to even higher ones. Jobim said, "I've never seen a more corrupt, more bureaucratic country than ours." I dare say that cost him a few friends. And he said, "We have this misery mania. Brazil cannot see anything that works. Brazil loves Garrincha [a noted soccer player] but it needs to learn to love Pele. He was a success and Garrincha died a pauper."

The remark was no doubt in response to the resentment of his success. But this attitude is also endemic in the North American jazz world, where success is seen as evidence of mediocrity, while failure, a miserable life, alcoholism, or an early drug death empowers a certain kind of critic to bestow an essentially condescending praise.

Jobim said, "I'm not the one who bad-mouths Brazil. Brazil bad-mouths Brazil." He had even endured criticism for his music itself, as superb as it is. He said, "The more my music is Brazilian, the more they call me Americanized . . . I've dedicated my life to Brazilian music, because you already have the French to write French music and Americans to write American music." For myself, I found his music becoming more deeply Brazilian as he grew older and explored a broad range of the musical materials of his country.

He said, "The praise comes from the people, the roguery from the intelligentsia."

A Brazilian article written about him after his death, for all the admiration in its tone, said that he wasn't much of a pianist or singer. He indeed wasn't much of a singer, but he was a very fine pianist whose simplicity on records was deceptive. Listen to him play electric piano on Ary Barroso's "Brazil" on the *Stone Flower* album. And there are some very good examples of his piano on the *Wave* album.

Interviewing him in Brazil in 1990 for the introduction to the *Tom Jobim Songbook*, Almir Chediak, its editor and compiler, reminded him that Heitor Villa-Lobos had been severely criticized in Brazil.

"He sure was," Jobim responded.

His choices got pretty limited: either change his profession, shoot himself, or do what he did. Fortunately, he chose the best alternative: He faced up to all those people who had absolutely no understanding of what he was doing . . . In defense, he put on vainglory, saying, "I'm a genius," and that was all. He just pretended to be vain. Eventually he had to leave Brazil. And if he hadn't left, I doubt whether he'd have reached the point of achieving world renown as a composer, which he quite deserves.