

# disc data

## THE "NEW BAG"

**B**OSSA NOVA may translate for Brazilians as the "new wrinkle" or the "new beat." In Portuguese slang it may still be considered fairly "hip." But for North Americans, who have a long history of embracing South American rhythms and dancing away with them, it comes as some sort of answer to the twist. Most adults find the bossa nova a good deal easier to master — in its subtle refinements of the samba, a dance at once more refined and more challenging, a dance that renews physical contact between man and woman after a year or more of terpsichorean estrangement, a dance, finally, that re-establishes the post-adolescent as the innovator on the dance floor. The twist, after all, rose phoenix-like from the rank and file of America's teenagers. Hopefully the bossa nova, purely a fabrication of U.S. dancing masters, will set things aright and filter on down. And there will again be peace in the land.

To the jazz musician, however, the "new bag" is a kind of Alliance for Progress spanning the Caribbean (discreetly side-stepping the issue of Afro-Cuban influences), its roots firmly implanted in Brazilian soil. Several American recording artists have been flying down to Rio in recent months to steep themselves in the authentic sounds of the bossa nova, and to investigate its origins. For it all began in Rio, back in 1959, with a group of young musicians led by João Gilberto, a composer, a remarkable singer, and one of the country's finest jazz guitarists. The musical style he and his colleagues developed has perhaps been most accurately described by Brazilian poet Olavo Bilac:

*Barbaric Indian dance, African nostalgia  
And the cries of the Portuguese song.  
Lustful grief, kiss of three longings,  
Amorous flower of three sad races.*

Add American jazz to these traditional ingredients of Brazilian music, and you have the bossa nova—a subtle blend of wistful, easy-going melody, supple improvisation, and a quietly simmering samba beat spiked with more or less than a jigger of funk, to taste.

Record buyers here were first introduced to this new sound in the early '60s with the unheralded release of . . . ▶"Brazil's Brilliant João Gilberto" (Capitol T-10280 mono, ST-10280 stereo). Few then knew who he was, a honey-voiced Brazilian accompanying himself on the guitar, singing "pops in Portuguese." But just about everybody now knows Gilberto as the Big Daddy of bossa novans. A new album, in fact, dubs him . . . ▶"The Boss of the Bossa Nova" (Atlantic 8070 mono and stereo), an

album in which he launches two sure winners—"Amor em Paz" (Love in Peace) by Antonio Carlos Jobim and "Voce e Eu" (You and I) by the lesser-known Carlos Lyra. Both of these bittersweet ballads are naturals for instrumental treatment, and both turn up in a late release by flutist Herbie Mann. . . . ▶"Do the Bossa Nova" (Atlantic 1397 mono and stereo). Here a top jazzman, recorded "on location" in Rio, is backed by native musicians of varying stripe, from a hard-hitting jazz group headed by pianist Sergio Mendes to the more conservative Jobim, who accompanies Mann in "Amor em Paz" and contributes a rare vocal on the track devoted to his now-classic "Samba de uma Nota So" (One-Note Samba).

The last-named is only one of several hits Gilberto introduced in his first album, others being Jobim's "Meditação" (Meditation), Jayme Silva's "O Pato" (The Duck) and his own "Um Abraço no Bonfá" (literally, An Embrace to Bonfá).

Luis Bonfá, a guitarist initially represented in the U.S. by . . . ▶"Amor" (Atlantic 8028 mono and stereo), undoubtedly did more than anyone to acquaint American listeners with what was astir in Brazil musically when he joined Mary Martin on a nation-wide tour in 1958-59. He also composed the popular love theme used in the film . . . ▶"Black Orpheus" (Epic LN-3672 mono only), in which the bossa nova idiom was recognized up North as being, distinctly, a "new thing."

It was only last summer, though, that this musical *nouvelle vague* really began to roll. The first best-seller, an album called . . . ▶"Jazz Samba" (Verve 8432 mono, 68432 stereo), barely mentioned the bossa nova as such, but it paired two leading jazz musicians in a refreshing repertory and brought them together for the first time besides. They were guitarist Charlie Byrd, who had already done plenty of spade work in the bossa's behalf at his Washington (D. C.) club, and Stan Getz, whose graceful, endlessly inventive tenor sax solos were decidedly "in the frame."

From these modest beginnings, and spurred by a growing public demand for more, the American record industry swung into action. Both Byrd and Getz added LPs of their own, Byrd in . . . ▶"Bossa Nova Pelos Passaros" (Riverside 436 mono, 9436 stereo) and Getz in . . . ▶"Big Band Bossa Nova" (Verve 8494 mono, 68494 stereo), with settings by Gary McFarland. These two, along with . . . ▶Coleman Hawkins' "Desafinado" (Impulse 28 mono and stereo) are clearly among the outstanding releases to date. —CHRISTIE BARTER