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**CD Review by Ronald E. Grames**

**EPIGRAMS** • Danilo Mezzadri (fl) • BLUE GRIFFIN 453 (58:29)

**GUARNIERI** Improvisations Nos. 1–3. **GUERRA-PEIXE** Melodies Nos. 1–3. **SANTORO** 4 *Epigrams*. *Fantasia Sul América*. **LACERDA** Improvisations Nos. 1 and 2. *Ostinato*. *Variações sobre Escravos de Jó*. **PITOMBEIRA** *Seresta* No. 2

Brazilian artist Danilo Mezzadri, professor of flute at the University of Southern Mississippi, came to the U.S. to earn his advanced degrees, including a doctorate, from Michigan State University. While quite active in the musical life of his adopted home, he retains a deep interest in the music of his native country, where he first studied flute at the School of Music and Fine Arts in Paraná. His first CD, *Brazilian Soundscapes*, released in 2009 on the Blue Griffin label, is a program of 21st-century Brazilian works little known in the U.S. This second release, on the same label, explores similarly unfamiliar repertoire: the complete solo flute works of four revered 20th-century Brazilian composers, Camargo Guarnieri, César Guerra-Peixe, Cláudio Santoro, and Osvaldo Lacerda, as well as a 2001 work by composer Liduino Pitombeira.

The program, in a very real sense, plays out the tensions between European serialism and Brazilian nationalism in the music of Guarnieri, Guerra-Peixe, and Santoro. Uncredited above, but central to this story, is German flutist and composer Hans-Joachim Koellreutter. Trained in dodecaphonic techniques in Germany, he emigrated to Brazil in 1937 and became a major stimulus for the New Music movement of that country. All three composers fell under his sway, and several of these works, written between 1941 and 1948, are serial or show a strong influence: Guarnieri's first two *Improvisos* (Improvisations), Guerra-Peixe's first two *Melopéias* (Melodies)—though they are transitional works—and Santoro's *Epigrams*. This last also includes some experimentation in extended techniques. All three composers eventually came to embrace tonality, with increased incorporation of folk or folk-like elements in their music, and that growing influence can be heard in each chronological series of works. Guerra-Peixe's *Melopéia* No. 3 (1950) clearly shows its Brazilian roots, as does Santoro's much later *Fantasia Sul América* (Fantasy South America, 1983).

Guarnieri and Santoro were initially emphatic about the break; the first for aesthetic and the other—a Communist—for political reasons. Interestingly, both returned to serialism in some form, later on, without turning their backs on Brazilian

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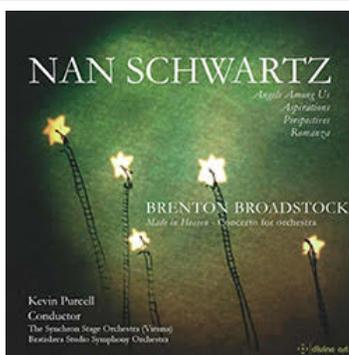
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music. Lacerda, a student of Guarnieri, and briefly of Vittorio Giannini and Copland in the U.S., wrote in the modalities and rhythms born of folk music from the start. Pitombeira, from the next generation of Brazilian composers, has, too. Here, in the *Seresta* No. 2, he has created a tribute to two composers of *serestas*—serenades—typically performed at night by strolling singers. The two movements—the first elegiac and the second dancelike—are the most obviously and delightfully Brazilian of the works offered.

An hour-long solo flute recital is a hard thing to pull off, especially when there are similarities in style, even with the differences noted. Mezzadri does it exceedingly well, his glowing, golden tone a constant pleasure and his vivid musicality bringing each work to life, regardless of tonality. The sound quality, as is usually the case for this label, is outstanding. The notes are brief but interesting. The release as a whole is an enjoyable excursion through unfamiliar territory, of interest to flutists, in particular, I imagine, but also those who, like me, regret that we know so little about the music of our southern neighbors. **Ronald E. Grames**

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