

### **Memories are made of this: Mood Indigo**

“Obrigado” (thank you) – the acknowledgement to the Choir and the signal for this evening’s rehearsal to start as Eric Stark, our Artistic Director, starts educating us not only in South American music and rhythms, but in Portuguese, the language of Brazil. The Choir anticipates its tour of Brazil in May 2024. But for now, it’s business, and the Choir begins an energetic warmup.

I look at the portfolio of music for this Mood Indigo concert. I am used to words like “Laudamus, Gloria, Adoramus” and other such when the choir sings one of the great choral Sacred Works. What is this I see on my score? What is this that now assails my ears? Samba and bossa nova rhythms, cool jazz, songs from way back.....

Time to concentrate: I look at my score: “die yaht, daht, bae, oo, ee, yut, dut, die, ooh, dut” – what kind of words are those to sing – or in my case, stutter? My thoughts fly back to one of my favorite jazz singers decades ago: a young Grace Kelly with her saxophone and elegant scat on her CD *Every Road I Walked*. All those scat sounds flowed so smoothly from her mouth. I listened to the accomplished alto singer on my left (a trumpet player) - out her scat flows, smooth and easy. Hmm, this is going to take me awhile to do in rhythm, let alone legato. We read another song, “Desafinado” (“Slightly out of tune”), or maybe “out of time” is a great descriptor for how I feel, as the words unfurl in rapid time under our director’s baton. Note to self: PRACTICE!

Now, here’s an old Elvis song, “Can’t Help Falling in Love” – do I detect the hand of Michael Davis, Assistant Artistic Director, who will be not only conducting this, but also the smooth choral sounds of “Build Me Up Buttercup”, “Happy Together”, “Brown Eyed Girl”? What fun!

I had not encountered the Brazilian composer/pianist, guitarist, songwriter, arranger, and singer Antônio Carlos Brasileiro de Almeida Jobim (Tom Jobim for short) before. He transformed Brazilian samba into Bossa Nova (“new trend”) and then merged it with jazz to create music forms that were enormously popular globally. Encouraged by his father, he trained as a classical musician and was influenced by Heitor Villa-Lobos’ music, but decided to be an architect. When he found architecture was not for him, he returned to music, and then the music recording business.

We are learning several songs and arrangements of his – maybe we should be dancing to some of them too with their insistent, exciting rhythms. Stop dreaming.... count, count, keep up with the syncopated rhythm. We learn “Samba de uma nota só” (“One-Note Samba”), “Desafinado” (“Slightly Out of Tune”), “Meditação” (“Meditation”), “Corcovado” (“Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars”), “Garota de Ipanema” (“The Girl from Ipanema”), and “Wave”. Each song has its own charm – we sing in English – after all, Jobim had a second home in the US, so why not English? Googling around, I find on Verve Records, there really was a girl who inspired the “Girl from Ipanema”, with photograph included.

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Like the beat, the choir moves on to Jobim's "Águas de Março" (Waters of March). Eric Stark, the choir director, tells us the song was to recall the torrential rains that hit Rio de Janeiro in early spring. Listen carefully, and you will hear rain streaming down, and the over-full streams and rivers gushing and rushing along. The poetry of the words mingles with the piano notes to create a lovely song of appreciation for our earth and world. This is perhaps my favorite song so far.

Please come to hear these wonderful songs, so full of life and energy. The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir presents our "Mood Indigo" concert on Saturday October 14, 2023, at 3pm and 7:30pm at Butler University Schrott Center for the Performing Arts. Go to [www.indychoir.org](http://www.indychoir.org) for tickets.