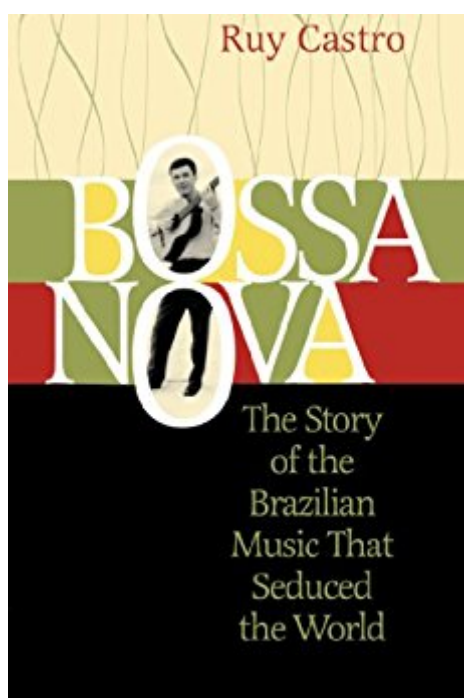


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Bossa Nova: The Story Of The Brazilian Music That Seduced The World



Synopsis

Bossa nova is one of the most popular musical genres in the world. Songs such as "The Girl from Ipanema" (the fifth most frequently played song in the world), "The Waters of March," and "Desafinado" are known around the world. Bossa Nova is a number-one bestseller when originally published in Brazil as *Chega de Saudade*; is a definitive history of this seductive music. Based on extensive interviews with Antonio Carlos Jobim, Joo Gilberto, and all the major musicians and their friends, Bossa Nova explains how a handful of Rio de Janeiro teenagers changed the face of popular culture around the world. Now, in this outstanding translation, the full flavor of Ruy Castro's wisecracking, chatty Portuguese comes through in a feast of detail. Along the way he introduces a cast of unforgettable characters who turned Gilberto's singular vision into the sound of a generation.

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Customer Reviews

This is a great book, but the translation is unfortunately sloppy. Just a few examples I've come across so far: p. viii of Acknowledgments: "... giving detailed descriptions of homes, bars and boats."

The original word was "boate", which means nightclub, not boat!p. 52 "In his daily update on the Zona Sul nightlife (or that of Copacabana, given that Ipanema had been practically annexed by it, and the nightlife in Leblon was so dead that there were doubts of its existence), Maria described..."The original reads: "No seu registro cotidiano da vida noturna da Zona Sul (ou de Copacabana, já que Ipanema era considerado um apêndice e havia dúvidas sobre a existência do Leblon), Maria criava..."The translator missed the point. Ipanema was considered an extension of Copacabana, because it was less important at the time. And she missed the humor of the statement about Leblon. People doubted the existence of Leblon itself, not just Leblon's nightlife. Yes, I'm being picky, but the translator regularly gets little things wrong or misses the point. I read the translation and come to things that don't seem right. When I check the original, sure enough, they aren't. It's still a good read and the overall story still comes through. The new introduction by Julian Dibbell to the English version is very nice. The quality of the printing and the pictures aren't as nice in the English edition. The Brazilian edition, by Companhia Das Letras, has more and better pictures, and glossy full-color fold out maps.

The title of this book makes reference to "Chega de saudade", a revolutionary song written by Tom Jobim, that was recorded for the first time in 1958. Ruy Castro shows us how the Bossa Nova started ("A história" = the story), but he also introduces the reader to the lives of the musicians who "made" the Bossa Nova ("as histórias" = the stories), for example Joao Gilberto, Tom Jobim, Vinicius de Moraes and Sylvia Telles, among others...When we read "Chega de saudade" we are told Bossa Nova's story as if it were a tale: we get to know important facts about that movement, but also entertaining gossip regarding the people who were part of it. Reading this book is quite easy, and you will find that the author makes you smile from time to time with his ironic commentaries. Due to the fact that this is the original version in Portuguese, you won't miss the subtle nuances of meaning that sometimes are lost in the English translation, and you will be able to take delight in several wordplays that Ruy Castro makes throughout the book. On the whole, I highly recommend "Chega de saudade". I give it 5 stars, because I think it is a perfect example of an entertaining but useful book regarding the history of an important movement in Brazilian music. I particularly love this book because I think that it adds a "human dimension" to Bossa Nova. I like to enjoy the songs, but also to know about the lives of those who wrote them, and what inspired the creators regarding each particular song...Of course, this book by itself is not enough: you will need to learn more, and listen to the songs "Chega de saudade" talks about. But where can you find a book that exhausts a subject?. I haven't been that lucky yet, so I will gladly settle for one that allows me to start studying

the subject, and that makes me more interested in it :)Belen Alcat

A thoroughly charming and authoritative history of Brazilian popular music, this book documents the rise of bossa nova, tracking the careers of Joao Gilberto, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Vinicius De Moraes, Nara Leao and others in a gossipy, informal narrative that's a delight to read. Castro brings the mythic figures of Brazil back down to human scale, poking fun at their humanity, their foibles and years of obscurity, while also pointing out their sheer brilliance, and the adoration that Brazilians feel for their music. The chatty, informal tone adds a nice hometown touch that lets you feel as if you were standing on the corner yourself when that gal from Ipanema walked by, cracking jokes with the rest of the fellas. This book is also notable for its emphasis on the now-neglected figures of the great "radio singers," who ruled the public heart in the decades before bossa hit - legendary figures such as Lucio Alves, Aloysio Oliveira, Orlando Silva, Dick Farney and Sylvia Telles whose stars have faded, but are compelling nonetheless. Castro has complete command of his subject, but doesn't feel stuffy or preachy at all. An outstanding book, and required reading for anyone looking for a deeper knowledge of Brazilian culture.

If the English translation of this masterpiece is anywhere near as good as the original, then it's a must-read however much or little you know about Brazilian music. It's got tons of great stories and anecdotes, some comical, some tragic, about the posse of colorful characters (and their colorful country) who created some of the world's most beautiful music. The US reader/listener can now become properly acquainted with people like Roberto Menescal, JoÃfÂo Gilberto, Aloysio De Oliveira, Maysa, Sylvia Telles, Ronaldo Boscoli and countless others who made this all happen. This actually reads like a screenplay! It really makes the music come alive. The narrative spans the mid-40s to the late 60s, and will have you begging for more at book's end. Do yourself a major favor and get this book. It's a Godsend to lovers of music, and not just Brazilian music!

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