



(LYRCD 7441)

CAPOEIRA LEGENDARY MUSIC OF BRAZIL

Played on the Double Berimbau by Guilherme Franco

TRACKS

(Detailed track information below)

1. Sou Da Mina Do Sante - 3:45
2. Juna - 3:43
3. Juna Verdadeira - 4:16
4. Batida Nova Rapida - 3:26
5. Sao Bento Pequeno - 4:03
6. Parana U E Chant - 3:53
7. Jogo Praticado - 4:06
8. Sao Bento Grande - 4:06
9. Juna Ocarina (Alfano) - 4:59
10. Berimbau in 6/8 - 5:10
11. Double Berimbau Solo (Franco) - 3:03
12. Capoeira Chant Medley - 5:59
13. Bahiano Chant - 4:38
14. Pombagira Chant - 3:48
15. My Beat (Franco) - 2:43
16. Electric Berimbau Jungle - 3:05
17. Berimbau Solo - 5:19

BRIEF HISTORY OF CAPOEIRA

Brazil's indigenous Indian population was widely scattered and probably did not exceed one million in 1500 when Vicente Pinzon, a Spaniard, landed on the northern coast of Brazil. In the same year the Portuguese expedition of Pedro Cabral landed at the easternmost bulge of Brazil, and Cabral quickly claimed the land for Portugal.

The Portuguese, already heavily involved in the profitable Atlantic slave trade, quickly established African slavery in Brazil. The influx of Africans laid the ground for the development of the Capoeira; a unique form of martial art which combines elements of music, acrobatics, and ritual with combat.

It is theorized that African slaves developed Capoeira to defend themselves from (or perhaps to revolt against) the Portuguese slave holders. This theory of Capoeira's development holds that captive slaves would secretly practice the martial art moves to the rhythm of the Berimbau, a bow-percussion instrument that clearly has its origins in African music. The bow is made out of wood with a metal string connected in both extremes with enough tension to create a tone, which is amplified by a gourd resonator at the lower end. Those practicing Capoeira relied on the sound of the Berimbau to provide the tempo and begin the various Capoeira movements, gradually entering a semi-trance state. The theory also contends that a unique type of movement, the kind of moves still evident in Capoeira today, was required in order to accomplish this while wearing ankle chains. Whether this particular theory is entirely accurate or not, it is known that after the end of slavery, roving gangs of what were called "capoeiristas" at times terrorized cities of Southern Brazil and played a role in the war against Paraguay, as well as the 19th century civil uprisings.

Today, Capoeira is a highly stylized dance form, with acrobatic handstands and long flowing foot sweeps (cartwheels). The chants, songs and beat on this CD belong to this ancient art form, which is still practiced in Brazil, as well as elsewhere in the world.

THE BERIMBAU

The Berimbau is a bow-percussion instrument. The bow is made out of wood with a metal string connected at both extremes with enough tension to create a tone. In one of the ends of the bow a Cabaca or gourd serves as resonator. The player holds the instrument with one hand, making the open hole of the gourd resonate by pulling and pushing against his stomach to create different tones. At the same time, the same hand holding the instrument also holds a coin or round piece of metal against the string, which creates different notes. In the other hand, the player holds a bamboo stick and a shaker called caxixi. The player strikes the string creating a rhythmical pattern.

There are 3 different kinds of Berimbau: small, medium and large (corresponding to soprano, tenor and bass). The small one's original name is viola, the medium is gunga, and the large one is berra boi. According to my tradition the word Berimbau is derived

from the name of the wood used to make the instrument, which came from the tree known as biriba. Other instruments used with the Berimbau are: Atabaque (a kind of conga), Panderiro Agogo bell, Ganza, Triangle, etc.

CAPOEIRA SCHOOLS

From North to South Brazil there are many schools called “Academia de Capoeira” which teach the fundamentals and the playing of the Berimbau. Today in Brazil, these schools fall into two categories. One difference between the two is that in the African style the bow is painted with several colors, while the regional is not. Some of the other differences between the two schools involve variations in the dance movements, though the Berimbau music is essentially the same.

THE MASTERS

Master Bimba (Manuel Dos Reis Machado) born November 23, 1900 in Bahia. Master Bimba learned Capoeira with master Bentinho. He is credited with the creation of the “Regional style.” Master Pastinha was 8 years old when he learned Capoeira with African Master Benedito. Master Pastinha represents the Angola Capoeira style in Brazil. My teacher was Master Paulo Gomes from Bahia in Sao Pablo, Brazil. Master Gomes was a direct student of Master Bimba.

BEATS

For each motion of the Capoeira dance there are different Berimbau beats. The most popular are included on this recording. There are also several chants the player must learn and perform in front of the Master. The Chants have their origins in West African traditions. Because many of the words are in African languages, as well as various Portuguese dialects, so, at least to my knowledge, it is fairly difficult to translate or to trace the origins of the chants.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Sao Paolo, Brazil, Guilherme Franco began his musical education at the age of 11 on the piano, and two years later he switched to the study of drums with Mr. Penose and Mr. Henrique dos Reis. At the age of seventeen he was performing around the Sao Paolo area and had recorded an album with his own “Ginga Trio.” He was contracted with Sao Paolo, Brazils Channel 4 as the staff drummer with the television trio and as a substitute drummer with the television station’s big band. He was accepted, became a member and concretized with the percussion section of the Sao Paolo Symphony Orchestra and later joined the Sao Paolo Philharmonic.

While enjoying much studio and nightclub work in Sao Paolo, he became affiliated with RCA, and under the direction of Mario Edson, Guilherme worked extensively with Brazilian composer/singer-lyricist Jorge Ben for over two years. His interest in percussion instruments led to his co-founding with Jose Nazario and Oswaldo

L'Alessandro, the first experimental percussion group of South America. At any given time during performances with this group, there would be over 200 percussion instruments on stage at once.

Guilherme's journey to the United States began in 1970 when percussionist Airto Moreira and singer Flora Purnim sought his talents as the drummer for their first US group. While this plan ultimately did not come to fruition, Guilherme soon found himself in the United States engaged in a recording that was to become a Downbeat Magazine five star rated album with Archie Schepp. Four albums recorded with Keith Jarrett Quintet and numerous appearances with other jazz artists landed Guilherme with the McCoy Tyners Sextet in 1973, where he would remain until 1980 making six world tours and recording six albums with the group. During that time he was playing what would be recognized as an innovative of Brazilian percussion music into the American jazz idiom. In 1978 Downbeat Magazine's Critics' and readers' poll voted Guilherme the second best Jazz percussionist in the world.

In 1981 he formed his group "Pe De Boi" (translation: Paw of the Bull) with two other percussionists. "Pe De Boi" would go on to become the band for the grand opening of the now famous downtown Manhattan Latin, Jazz and World Music club, "Sounds of Brazil" (SOB's) During the eighties Guilherme also began a long term affiliation with Gato Barbierri's group with whom he toured the world several times and recorded numerous albums. Also during this decade, "Pe De Boi" joined forces with the Paul Winter Consort in their annual Carnival Celebration at The Cathedral of Saint John The Divine in New York City.

Guilherme maintains a high profile as an active musician who keeps busy both with the many alliances he still maintains and manages to play with groups such as The Triloga Band, The Paul Ashton Quartet, The Mark Morganelli Jazz Forum All Stars, The Eddie Monteiro/Lenny Argese Trio, The Maria Jovan Trio, and the Spirit of Live Ensemble, which performs regularly at the New York City jazz Club, "Sweet Basil's." He has private students at the "O Di Bella" Percussion Center in Bergenfield, New Jersey, and is on the Faculty of the Music Department of Jersey State College.

Jorge Alfano (Producer, Ocarina, vocal), a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and producer. He is also an expert in indigenous Andean, Easter and Indian flutes, as well as many other world instruments. Jorge's playing can be heard on the soundtracks of dozens of documentaries produced by the Discovery Channel, National Geographic Explorer, and feature films. He has played and recorded with Astor Piazzolla, Mercedes Sosa, and has recorded by Lyrichord Discs, The Relaxation Company, and Interworld.

ANNOTATED TRACKS

1. Sou Da Mina Do Sante (3:45)

These chants belong to the great Brazilian Pai de Santo Joao A. T. Filho (Joaozinho Da Gomea). In my interpretation, I played with a 'samba drum street carnival feeling. The

Cuica and my voice play on and off each other like a conversational improvisation. The second chant on this track is called Pomba Gira.

(G.F.: Vocals, Surdo, Agogo, Quinto, Cuica, and Pandeiro).

2. Juna (3:43)

I'll never forget the day that my berimbau master teacher Paulo Gomes played "Luna" for me. He started slowly then gradually increased the tempo, finishing in an upbeat tempo. I thought it was a great concept.

(GF: Berimbau)

3. Juna Verdadeira (4:16)

This is one of my favorite berimbau beats. In this particular beat the caxixi (shaker) is played differently, giving the beat a very particular flavor.

(GF: Berimbau)

4. Batida Nova Rapida (3:26)

I created this beat in a very fast mode. I only used the lower note of the berimbau together with the coin and the caxixi. This beat is used for very fast capoeira dances.

(GF: Berimbau and Ganzá)

5. Sao Bento Pequeno (4:03)

This is the first berimbau beat I learned. It is also the most popular beat among the Capoeira fighters. (GF: Berimbau, Pandeiro, Triangle, Agogo)

6. Parana U E Chant (3:53)

This is the most popular chant in the repertoire of capoeira chants. My teacher once told me a little story while playing the berimbau... "two capoeiristas moved to Parana and soon became homesick and created this chant."

(GF: Vocals, Tenor Berimbau, Soprano Berimbau, Bass Berimbau, Agogo, Pandeiro. Rene Ceballos and Jorge Alfano: Vocals)

7. Jogo Praticado (4:06)

I still remember back in the 60's when Brazilian drummer "Dirceu Medeiros" along with master capoeira "Sussuna" came to my little home sound studio in my parent's home in Sao Paulo City. Dirceu sang the chant while I recorded. This chant is a capoeira traditional in honor to the great capoeira master "Bimba" (Manuel Dos Reis Machado, "capoeira regional"). The next chant "Quem Vem La" is in honor of the capoeira fighter himself.

(GF Vocals, Berimbau, Agogo, Conga)

8. Sao Bento Grande (4:06)

This is the second most necessary capoeira beat after "Sao Bento Pequeno" by the capoeiristas. In my opinion it is a very musical beat exploring the low and high notes of the instrument.

(GF: Berimbau, congas, Cencerro)

9. Juna Ocarina (4:59)

In this piece the luna beat is played combined with the Ocarina, Composed and played by Jorge Alfano.

(GF: Berimbau, Surdo, claps – Jorge Alfano: Ocarina)

10. Berimbau in 6/8 (5:10)

On this track I play an old African 6/8 rhythm. It flows toward different improvisational moods.

(GF: Berimbau, Bongos, Surdo, Cencerro)

11. Double Berimbau Solo (3:03)

I conceived the Double Berimbau idea years ago. It took me a long time to create the technology to build and play it. The advantage with this instrument is that you can play an extra note and create a chordal mood.

(GF: Double Berimbau, Surdo)

12. Capoeira Chant Medley (5:59)

When the capoeiristas want to extend their dancing time, I sing this medley, which contains chants in honor of the capoeira masters that I've played with.

(GF: Berimbau, Surdo, Congas, Agogo)

13. Bahiano Chant (4:38)

A very good and old friend of mine – drummer “Joao Nogueira” once took me in Sao Paulo City to a religious ceremony called “Umbanda” and that's where I learned this chant. In that ceremony the spirit that was incorporated into the medium was “Cabloco Bahiano.” I think it is a beautiful chant. The second chant belongs to Joao A.T. Filho.

14. Pombagira Chant (3:48)

This chant is in honor of the “Ladies of the Night” in the religion called “Umbanda.” I used a maracatu drumbeat to add a unique flavor.

(GF: Vocals, Congas, Agogo, Ganzá)

15. My Beat (2:43)

To bring these two cultures together (India and Brazil) was an old concept of mine. I wrote this tabla and berimbau composition.

(GF: Berimbau, tablas)

16. Electric Berimbau Jungle (3:05)

Percussionist “Do UM Romano” was the first musician to explore the electronic berimbau. I got the idea from Alirio Lima in the 70's. My idea is to recreate the jungle conversations between animals, water, birds, etc. My son Ame Franco plays all kinds of bird whistles and rain sticks.

(GF: Electric Berimbau)

17. Berimbau Solo 5:19

The berimbau is an incredible source of sounds. I tried to explore as much as the instrument allows me. The berimbau is naturally a highly improvisational instrument. (GF: Vocal, Berimbau, and Congas)

PRODUCER'S NOTE

“The fusion of cultures is a special phenomenon, but what is still more special is to find a living example of this fusion. The artist from this culture becomes “the keeper of the flame,” the messenger to the world. Master Guilherme Franco is exactly that, the rescuer of a cultural fusion without concessions. As a musician and producer, being part of his creative process has been a blessing.”

Jorge Alfano – Producer/Sacred Sounds Institute

CREDITS

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All compositions written by Guilherme Franco (BMI), based on traditional Capoeira songs except Iuna Ocarina by Jorge Alfano (BMI).



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