

Diálogos Brazilian Duo

Louis Arques bass clarinet

Richard Boukas guitar, composer

New School for the Performing Arts/New School University
55 West 13 St. NY NY

Friday, October 27, 2017 730pm Recital Hall 450

- Diálogos for Bass Clarinet and Guitar (2017, world premiere)
 - 1 Diálogo do Sul (guarânia) dedicated to Claude Debussy
 - 2 Retrato de Radamés (choro lento) ded. Radamés Gnattali
 - 3 Gafieira Suingada (samba) ded. Zé da Velha
 - 4 Saudades do Leblon (valsa lento) ded. Guinga
 - 5 Chão do Batuque (batuque) ded. Heitor Villa Lobos
 - 6 Marchinha de Esperança (marcha rancho, 3/4) ded. Itiberê Zwarg
 - 7 Frevo Na Praça (frevo) ded. Pixinguinha
- Choro Branco for Solo Bass Clarinet (2017) ded. Bach

To our Audience: Kindly turn off all electronic devices.

As tonight's performance is being recorded and videotaped, the performers request you *withhold applause* until the end of the program.

WEBPAGE and PROGRAM NOTES: www.boukas.com/dialogos-brazilian-duo
ARTIST CONTACT and E MAIL LIST: richard@boukas.com

Complete concert audio and video of tonight's performance will be streamable on the ensemble webpage in the near future.

Diálogos Brazilian Duo

Bass Clarinet and Guitar possess a unique sonic affinity- yet little contemporary music is written for this special tandem, let alone Brazilian-inspired works. Our goal is to contribute a significant body of work to this special tandem, using it as a focal point for artistic and educational exploration.

As a composer and performer I have always been drawn to the musical formation of Duo. By far the most challenging and exciting chamber context, duo demands an intimate *dialogue* and *intuitive connection* between musicians- one which should be reflected in how original works are conceived and crafted. My noted duo collaborations have been with Brazilian pianist *Jovino Santos Neto*, Croatian tamburisa *Filip Novosel*, cellist *Wendy Law*, and now, French clarinetist *Louis Arques*.

Louis and I met last October via a timely recommendation by Mannes woodwind chair Judith Mendenhall. After we read through earlier pieces I had adapted for clarinet, it became clear that a fertile collaboration was at hand. I decided to name it *Diálogos* (Portuguese for “Dialogues”).

Diálogos for Clarinet and Guitar in seven movements was completed by spring of this year. The bass clarinet has always been my favorite woodwind instrument- ever since first hearing jazz visionary *Eric Dolphy*, Janacek’s sextet *Youth*, or Schönberg’s *Serenade Op. 24*. Knowing that Louis was also an accomplished bass clarinetist, this summer I began composing another seven-movement dedication cycle.

Although this set of pieces was composed within a brief time, they are very contrasting vis à vis Brazilian genre, form, thematic and harmonic language and texture. Three of the seven pieces use alternate guitar tunings to expand the bass register and offer new harmonic possibilities.

Added to tonight’s program is *Choro Branco for Solo Bass Clarinet*- a clear nod to Bach and his majestic solo cello suites.

Complete audio and video of tonight’s performance will be streamable in the near future.

Diálogos Brazilian Duo also presents artist residencies and masterclasses at academic institutions.

LOUIS ARQUES is a multifaceted woodwind specialist from Grenoble, France. Apart from his performance on clarinets, saxophones and vocals, he has taught in French music schools for ten years including the *Paris Conservatoire*. Moving to New York City last fall, he began the Mannes Graduate Program in Performance and rapidly has become one of New York City’s in-demand soloists and orchestral musicians: with the *String Orchestra of Brooklyn* (SOB), *Mannes Orchestra* in venues including Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Louis also plays on Von Vittorelli’s replicas of 18th Century instruments. He is a frequent New Music collaborator, including composer *Elizabeth Hoffman* and *Mannes American Composer Ensemble*. He also performs Afro-Cuban music including the *New School Afro-Cuban Orchestra* and Jazz in club venues including *Birdland*.

RICHARD BOUKAS is New School Jazz faculty since 1995 and Mannes faculty 1989-95. An internationally recognized guitarist, vocalist, composer, educator and scholar specializing in Brazilian music, his works synergize traditional Brazilian genres with through-composed chamber, jazz and choral forms. Boukas is leader of the acclaimed Brazilian jazz group *Quarteto Moderno*, and has fulfilled commissions for ensembles including La Catrina String Quartet, PUBLIQuartet String Quartet, Berklee World String Orchestra, Atlantic Brass Quintet and Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble. He has released numerous recordings as composer-leader, including *Quarteto Moderno “Live! Ao Vivo!”*, *Balaio (with Jovino Santos Neto)*, *Live at St. Michaels (with Filip Novosel)*, *Amazôna and Embarcadero*. Richard is founder, director and arranger for *New School Brazilian Choro* and *New School Brazilian Jazz* ensembles. Last year he was special presenter at the *Mannes’ New York Guitar Seminar*, and is a *La Bella Strings* artist endorsee since 1980. Visit www.boukas.com

About the music

Diálogos for Bass Clarinet and Guitar (2017)

1 Diálogo do Sul (dialogue of the south) (guarânia) dedicated to Claude Debussy

Set in the southern Brazilian dance *guarânia*. the piece's form is roughly **ABBCDA**, where C and D are slower and more introspective. Although the harmonic language is still tonal in some respects, there is no clear sense of key center- but rather a series of localized colors supporting melodic gestures.

2 Retrato de Radamés (portrait of Radamés) (choro lento) ded. Radamés Gnattali

Alongside *Villa Lobos, Gnattali* (1906-88) is the most important 20th century Brazilian composer. A virtuoso pianist and stylistic chameleon who routinely wrote for his elite circle of musicians, this *choro lento* pits a relaxed groove against virtuosic bass clarinet passages and oblique harmonic shifts. The ambiance of the piece is similar to the opening movement of his masterwork, *Retratos*.

3 Gafieira Suingada (swinging gafieira) (samba) ded. Zé da Velha

Gafieira is a dancehall form of samba blending *choro* and jazz and featuring horns and rhythm section. *Zé da Velha* is the most celebrated trombonist specializing in the genre. The form is a variant of **AABA**. Although the highly syncopated melody seems quite tonal at first listening, there are numerous modulatory passages that all but destroy any sense of one key center.

4 Saudades do Leblon (longing for Leblon) (valsa lento) ded. Guinga

This dark waltz tries to capture the uniquely Brazilian feeling of *saudade*- missing good times past and lost loves. Set in **AABA** form, the B section is a faster waltz that flirts with fleeting hope, only to return to the inexorable final A. The guitar uses a **C-G** tuning in the bottom two strings to achieve an orchestral depth and expanded palette of harmonic colors.

5 Chão do Batuque (roots of batuque) ded. Heitor Villa Lobos

Batuque is an Afro-Brazilian dance form closely related to *maxixe*. The form is a series of harmonic variations below a repeating diatonic theme- reminiscent of *Villa Lobos'* use of folk material in his more serious works. There is a contrasting *baião* section, followed by a guitar solo and expansive Brahmsian texture before returning to the *batuque* tempo. Guitar tuning is same as piece no. 4.

6 Marchinha de Esperança (march of hope) marcha rancho, 3/4) ded. Itiberê Zwarg

Although the *marcha rancho* is typically in 4/4, this 3/4 version in **AABACA form** joins a graceful eighth-note melody with a rich harmonic vocabulary that capitalizes on having one, two or three harmonies per bar, and bass note inversions to navigate momentary modulations. The piece is dedicated to *Itiberê Zwarg*, the innovative bassist-composer with Hermeto Pascoal since 1977.

7 Frevo Na Praça (frevo in the plaza) (frevo) ded. Pixinguinha

Frevo is the furiously-paced music played during *carnaval* in northeast Brazil, which features wind and brass instruments. The **ABBACA form** unfolds with melodic and rhythmic gestures typical of *frevo*, and embedding surprising harmonic shifts to remote tonal areas. The **C** section melody is played by guitar supported by a bass clarinet counterpoint.

(continued)

Choro Branco for Bass Clarinet Solo (empty choro) (choro lento) (2017) ded. Bach

This solo piece is modeled after Bach's solo cello suites which use multi-register single line writing (polyphonic melody). At the same time, it is a slow *choro* in traditional **AABBACCA** form. The main **A** section melody is imbued with a distant pathos and emotional emptiness, while the **B** and **C** sections gravitate more towards major tonalities. The full range of the bass clarinet is used, all the way down to concert bass Bb.

Richard Boukas

New York City

October 2017