

• ***SEMPRE JACOB*** •

Jacob do Bandolim Centennial Tribute

New School Brazilian Choro Ensemble

Richard Boukas, director-arranger



Friday, December 8, 2017 800pm

• **Jazz Performance Space** •

ARNHOLD HALL 55 W. 13 St. 5th fl.

New School Brazilian Choro Ensemble

Richard Boukas, director-arranger

Samantha Marshall flute

Louis Arques clarinet

Baptiste Horcholle saxophones

Nick Semenykhin guitar, cavaquinho

Richard Boukas guitar, cavaquinho, mandolin

Andrew Skepasts seven-string guitar

Jonathan Livnate five-string electric bass

Benny Woodward percussion

Sempre Jacob

Jacob do Bandolim Centennial Tribute 1918-2018

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PROGRAM

I. Noites Cariocas	Jacob do Bandolim (1918-69)	(1957)
Doce de Coco		(1960)
Sempre Jacob	Richard Boukas (1953-)	(2017)
Faceira	Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934)	(1926)
Tira Poeira	Jacob do Bandolim	(1956)
2. Estudo para Bandolim Solo	Richard Boukas	<i>SEGUE</i> (2017)
Vibrações	Jacob do Bandolim	<i>SEGUE</i> (1967)
História de um Bandolim	Luperce Miranda (1904-77)	(1974)
Princesinha	Luperce Miranda	(1970)
Picadinho à Baiana	Luperce Miranda	(1974)
Santa Morena	Jacob do Bandolim	<i>SEGUE</i> (1954)
O Vôo da Mosca		(1962)
3. Naquele Tempo	Pixinguinha (1897-1973)	(1947)
Gostoso	Jacob do Bandolim	(1953)
Sarau Pra Radamés	Paulinho da Viola (1942-)	(1980)
Cabuloso	Radamés Gnattali (1906-88)	(1949)
Assanhado	Jacob do Bandolim	(1961)

Special Thanks: the brilliant Musicians for selfless dedication and virtuosity in realizing this vision; Dean Keller Coker and Jazz Staff; Chris Hoffman, Harry Keithline (sound & recording); Jason Lawrence and FEO staff; Jacob do Bandolim and all the legendary composers and Choro musicians who have inspired me for decades and lead to the production of this program.

About Choro and the Program

Choro is Brazil's indigenous form of **popular chamber music**. Its roots trace back one and a half centuries to the fertile environs of Rio de Janeiro, where Brazil's aristocratic salons featured popular European three-part dance forms (a modified *rondo* form **AABBACCA**) such as *Polka*, *Minuet*, *Valsa*, *Quadrille*, *Marcha* and *Schottische*. Incorporating Classical and Romantic melodic and harmonic influences, these forms synergized with the highly syncopated Afro-Brazilian dance forms *lundu*, *batuque*, *maxixe* and *corta jaca*. This helped foster a Brazilian musical nationalism championed by seminal composers including flutist *Joaquim Callado*, pianists *Ernesto Nazareth*, *Chiquinha Gonzaga* and symphonic band composer *Anacleto de Medeiros*.

Informal *rodas* (choro jam sessions) and *saraus* (soirées) typify the bohemian atmosphere in which Choro's daring instrumental virtuosity and agile, spontaneous group interaction are on display. With the exception of a few standout artists, most Choro musicians maintain separate professional careers unrelated to music. In broader terms, Choro is more than a body of repertoire. It is a *way of life*.

The primary difference between Choro and Jazz that one will notice is that Choro players rarely, if ever **improvise** upon the harmonies of the composition. Instead, their creative energies are invested fully in the interpretation and embellishment of the thematic material and symbiotic animation of the accompaniment. The *spirit of improvisation* is *felt*, but in much more subtle terms than an actual solo.

When a musician (Brazilian or otherwise) is asked to name the two most important **Choro** artist-composers of the 20th century, invariably they invoke **Pixinguinha** and **Jacob do Bandolim**. I first heard Jacob, his compositions and stellar group *Época de Ouro* about forty years ago. The spirit and virtuosity of his music was totally infectious and swinging in a uniquely different way than jazz. The group was impeccably well-rehearsed, even guitar accompaniments were codified. By the early 1990's I began writing my own choros for the *Modern Mandolin Quartet* and my Brazilian jazz group *Amazôna*.

In 2008, I founded the **New School Brazilian Choro Ensemble**, whose aim was to present a body of Choro repertoire spanning nearly 150 years. Our first few programs were historical surveys, featuring one piece per composer. It was in 2013 that I launched the first tribute program dedicated to a single composer: *Ernesto Nazareth 150 Year Celebration* and in 2014, *Pixinguinha and Contemporaries*.

Knowing that the 2018 centennial of *Jacob do Bandolim* was rapidly approaching, I decided two years ago to develop a comprehensive program to honor the legendary mandolinist, composer and bandleader. This past summer, I dropped all my composing projects and worked to create **Sempre Jacob**— sixteen new arrangements of pieces by Jacob, *Nazareth*, *Pixinguinha*, *Radamés Gnattali*, *Luperce Miranda*, *Paulinho da Viola* and myself.

The significance of this program is further amplified because for the first time in the ensemble's history, two of the three woodwind players (Samantha Marshall, flute and Louis Arques, clarinet) are **Mannes** graduate students. Having collaborated with them in other projects (Louis is part of our *Diálogos Duo*), I knew exactly who I was writing for during the entire arrangement process. Which brings me to describing that process so the listener can better understand exactly what they are hearing, and why.

My process for each piece generally traversed three distinct phases: 1) critical listening to all available released and archival recordings, including live performance videos; 2) extensive transcribing of themes and accompaniments, embedding interpretive embellishments essential to Choro performance practice; 3) integrating these authentic elements with my own creative choices to arrive at a piece of chamber music which codifies Choro's traditional rubric while introducing new material and textures. I estimate the average arrangement required two hundred hours of work. Tonight you will hear the results of that work.

Tonight's program is divided into three segments, each culminating with an intense sub-finale. This permits the presentation of a longer program and offers the extended playing sessions that mark Choro gatherings. The program is being **recorded and videoed for early 2018 release** at a **dedicated webpage** on my site.

Until then, check for updates at:

www.boukas.com/new-school-brazilian-choro-ensemble

About JACOB DO BANDOLIM

Jacob was born **Jacob Pick Bittencourt** on February 14, 1918 in Rio de Janeiro. His parents were Francisco Gomes Bittencourt (originally from the state of Espírito Santo) and Rackel Pick, a Polish Jew who came to Brazil as an adolescent. Jacob showed musical aptitude very early in life, playing harmonica and singing in choirs. At the age of twelve, he abandoned the frustrating study of violin and took his fateful turn to the **bandolim**— Brazil's hybrid adaptation of the Neapolitan mandolin (eight-string) and the twelve-string *guitarra portuguesa*. By fifteen, he was already playing professionally and winning various contests judged by preeminent choro musicians and composers of the time.

Although Jacob was self-taught, he was a dedicated scholar and archivist of Choro repertoire. His own 100-plus body of compositions demonstrates a thorough assimilation of his peers and predecessors. He also incorporated a more modern approach to melodic construction and phrasing, leaning slightly towards Jazz and more clearly the lyrical Romantic melodic affect which arguably came directly through the piano works of *Ernesto Nazareth*.

By contrast, the bandolim virtuoso *Luperce Miranda* (1904-77) was from *Recife* (state of Pernambuco in northeast Brazil) and relocated to Rio in 1928. Early in his career he set the standard of bandolim virtuosity in his group *Turunas da Mauricéia*,— much to the controversy of *cariocas* (residents of Rio), who provincially felt that Rio was the sole birthplace and center for Choro. Unlike Jacob's elasticity of phrasing and embellishment, Luperce came more from the traditional Neapolitan style— his phrasing and embellishments much more taut and melodic-harmonic vocabulary in his compositions less adventurous.

Jacob's first professional recording was in 1947, a *valsa* "*Gloria*". Shortly after in 1949, he signed with RCA Victor with whom he remained for the rest of his career. In the years 1955-66, he fronted the legendary *regional* (Portuguese for local choro group-for-hire) known as **Época de Ouro** (Golden Era). This featured the ubiquitous seven-string guitarist *Dino Sete Cordas* (*Horondino José da Silva*), six-string guitarists *César Faria* and *Carlinhos de Leite*, *Jonas da Silva* on *cavaquinho* and *Gilberto D'Avila* on *pandeiro* (Brazilian tambourine).

This group released a body of legendary recordings and to this day remain the benchmark for any aspiring choro musician or ensemble. As was common during the era, Jacob was featured on countless radio shows with *Época de Ouro* and other guest Brazilian artists and composers.

Contextually, it is important to keep in mind that *Época de Ouro* and Choro in general enjoyed a huge popularity during the very same period when *Bossa Nova* totally dominated the musical culture and consciousness of Brazil, particularly in Rio.

Despite his fame and endearing public, Jacob never considered himself a truly professional musician. As most choro musicians have managed over the decades, he worked various non-musical jobs: insurance salesman, pharmacy owner and court reporter. Jacob spent the last afternoon of his life at the home of his beloved *Pixinguinha*, dying at the young age of 52. In 2002, a group of dedicated choro musicians and donors founded the *Instituto Jacob do Bandolim*, where not only his own music scores, recordings and personal effects were preserved, but also his own archive of scores and recordings.

Alongside *Pixinguinha* and *Radamés Gnattali* the youthful vibrancy and innovative quality of Jacob's music lives on stronger than ever— hence the title of tonight's program, "***Sempre Jacob***".

About the Music

Segment One

Noites Cariocas (Rio Nights) Jacob do Bandolim (1918-1969) (1957)

Recognized among Choro players and aficionados as a perennial anthem of the repertoire, *Noites Cariocas* captures Jacob's agile, highly embellished and swinging playing style. The arrangement preserves the original recording's melody, harmonies and a few choice *baixarias* (basslines). Set in an **ABB** form, the common performance practice of opening up the B section for trading eight-bar solos with original melody is incorporated. The staple *Época de Ouro* instrumentation adds acoustic bass and select trombone phrases. The use of bass in Choro performance is not traditionally done, where basslines are played by the *sete cordas* (seven-string guitar).

Doce de Coco (Coconut Candy) Jacob do Bandolim (1918-1969) (1960)

The arrangement of this relaxed choro (also in **ABB** form) opts for a more delicate treatment: it uses three guitars instead of the more prevalent trio of *cavaquinho*, six and seven-string guitars. Although harmonically quite diatonic, there are surprising tonal movements to the parallel minor (A section) and to III major (B section). The III chord harmony (whether major or minor) is a very common tonal shift in most staple choro repertoire. My theory is that it is inherited loosely from Baroque harmonic vocabulary— particularly in the Concerto Grossi of Handel Op. 10 and Bach's Brandenburg Concertos.

Sempre Jacob (Forever Jacob) Richard Boukas (1953-) (2017)

A tribute to Jacob, this piece is the second of seven movements from my *Diálogos for Clarinet and Guitar* written for *Diálogos Brazilian Duo* (clarinetist Louis Arques and myself). Set in a slightly modified **AABACA** form, the “A” melody captures Jacob's playfulness and his building of thematic sections with concise motivic gestures. The tonal scheme of the piece is an ascending augmented triad: C major – E minor – Ab major. To listen to the original *Diálogos Brazilian Duo* version, visit www.boukas.com/dialogos-brazilian-duo

Faceira (“Cheeky” or flaunting elegance) Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934) (c. 1926)

A beautiful and elegant *valsa* in traditional AABB'CC'A form, this quartet arrangement featuring clarinet, flute, six and seven-string guitars is based largely on the recording by *O Trio* (clarinetist *Paulo Sérgio Santos*, mandolinist *Pedro Amorim* and guitarist *Maurício Carrilho*— all stellar choro veterans). With a typical tonal structure of Gmajor – Eminor – Cmajor (descending diatonic thirds), the piece exemplifies the strong *Chopin* influence in most *valsas* by *Nazareth*. The clarinet is given rhythmic license with each repetition of the A theme, in this case not notated. Jacob's recording of the piece is quite spare instrumentally and less dramatic compared to that of *O Trio*.

Tira Poeira (kicking up the dust) Jacob do Bandolim (1956)

This lively choro in D minor has everything for everyone— a harmonic move to A (V minor) in the A section, and B and C sections set in F major (III) and D (parallel major) respectively— interestingly, the same tonal scheme as Jacob's snakelike chromatic *A Ginga do Mané*. The guitar section is given two features: the first B section and then a “shout chorus” based on the A section's harmonic structure before the closing A melody. Listen for the surprise final chord.

Segment Two

Estudo para Bandolim Solo Richard Boukas (2017) *SEGUE*

Before commencing with a *segue* bandolim tribute to both Jacob and *Luperce Miranda*, I thought it appropriate to begin segment two with a brief étude based on the harmonies of Jacob's *Vibrações*. Like most etudes, the piece is *athematic*— the melodic movement based on a tiny motivic gesture as it winds its way through the underlying harmonies.

Vibrações (Vibrations) Jacob do Bandolim (1967) *SEGUE*

História de um Bandolim (The Story of a Mandolin) (1904-77) Luperce Miranda (1974)

Probably the most dramatic *choro lento* in Jacob's *oeuvre*, *Vibrações* is imbued with the pathos and distinctly Brazilian state of feeling known as *saudade* (longing). Jacob's phrasing is filled with prototypical rubato (difficult to notate, by the way), counterbalanced by the very low guitars played by *César Faria* and *Dino Sete Cordas*. Miranda's *História de um Bandolim* possesses its own sweeping intensity and austerity, and the intertwining of both pieces seemed a very natural thing to accomplish: *Vibrações* (**AAB**) *História* (**AABB**) *Vibrações* (**A**). The arrangement is for the most part an exact transcription from the original recording, rescored to include woodwinds. Pay special attention to the *sete cordas baixarias* (the seven string guitar's rapidly moving basslines at phrase endings) which are the hallmark trait of Choro's dialogue between *sete cordas* and the main thematic instrument.

Princesinha (Little Princess) Luperce Miranda (1970)

This somewhat innocent piece is quite typical of Miranda's *valsas* in that the melody is predominantly eighth-note movement— almost etude-like. Only having two thematic sections (**AABBA**), I took the bold liberty of composing a C section (*valsa brilhante*) to construct the complete typical **AABBACCA** form. The cycle of fifths progression which completes the A section is repeated in the C section with its common move to the Neapolitan (bII) harmony before the final V > I cadence.

Picadinho à Baiana (Stew “Bahia Style”) Luperce Miranda (1974)

This jaunting *polca* is a technical and compositional tour de force. Being that Luperce plays the entire melody on mandolin with no pauses, the challenge in the arrangement was to distribute four bar phrases among the woodwinds without the overall effect sounding piecemeal (a similar issue is addressed later in Jacob's *O Vôo da Mosca*). With a tonal structure of C major – A minor – F major (descending thirds), the **AABB'ACC'A'A** form employs alternative melodies in the repeated B and C sections, somewhat mirroring *Pixinguinha's* “*Um a Zero*”. The trap door falls open after the second C section with an intensely contrapuntal and syncopated trio of clarinet, six and seven string guitars. The final A section roars to the finish line.

Santa Morena / O Vôo da Mosca (Santa Morena / Flight of the Fly) Jacob do Bandolim (1954 / 1962)

This is an ambitious segue of Jacob's two famous *valsas brilhantes*— contrasting the Spanish-flavored *Santa Morena* (**AABBA**) with the jazzy, relentless Chopin étude-flavored *Vôo da Mosca* (**AABBACCA**). Using only the original thematic and harmonic material as a starting point, this arrangement is entirely new, placing considerable demands on both the woodwinds and guitars. This setting includes denser contrapuntal textures, *hemiola*, and a final reprise of *Santa Morena*. A good closer for section two, and quite a relief when it's over!

Segment Three

Naquele Tempo (in those times) Pixinguinha (1897-1973) (1947)

Just as part two began with unaccompanied solo mandolin, this perennial *choro lento* begins with a solo alto saxophone improvisation based loosely on the harmonic structure of the A section. The arrangement follows the traditional **AABBACCA** form, distributing the melodic material equally in the woodwinds while the weeping low guitars do their murky work below. There is a brief woodwind breakdown at the beginning of the final A section. As with the segue of *Vibrações / História de um Bandolim*, the traditional *regional* instrumentation is preserved with the *sete cordas* taking the bass function and the electric bass being tacet.

Gostosinho (a bit tasty) Jacob do Bandolim (1953)

Probably the most contrasting piece that could follow *Naquele Tempo*, *Gostosinho* is a joyous romp. The original **ABACA** form is extended with an improvised tenor saxophone solo based on B before the final A section and coda. Unlike the majority of guitar parts in which every single note played is notated, here the six string guitar and cavaquinho are playing from mostly chord symbols and get to stretch out a bit on the accompaniment.

Sarau Pra Radamés (soirée for Radamés) Paulinho da Viola (1942-) (1980)

Probably the most modernistic choro in the entire program, *Sarau* is a beautiful tribute to the great *Radamés Gnattali* (see and hear his piece *Cabuloso* next). Most fans know *Paulinho da Viola* as a traditional samba composer-singer—however few outside of Brazil know that he is the proud son of the late *César Faria*, founding guitarist of *Época de Ouro*. So he was surrounded by the best choro in the world his entire life. The arrangement takes advantage of the rich, jazzy extended harmonies. Set in traditional **AABBACCA** form, the final A section uses remote reharmonizations and layered textures between the woodwinds and guitars before the final eight bars.

Cabuloso (unlucky, a cheater) Radamés Gnattali (1906-88) (1949)

Originally from Porto Alegre (state of *Rio Grande do Sul*) *Gnattali* moved to Rio at age twenty and immediately took the world by storm. He was just as prolific and centrally important a 20th century Brazilian composer as *Villa-Lobos* and *Pixinguinha*. The main tragedy is that few of his works are either still in print or available due to his over-protective widow denying access to them. A virtuoso pianist, conductor-arranger and quite a fine guitarist, *Gnattali* was a stylistic chameleon who demonstrated equal affinity for full orchestra, mixed chamber ensembles, jazz trio and quintet, piano duo, and so on. Traversing four generations of Brazilian contemporary music and remaining productive well into his final years, his close circle of friends also happened to be the best musicians in Brazil for whom he wrote some of the most beautiful, sophisticated music ever to come out of Brazil. Although *Cabuloso* was composed by *Gnattali* and recorded by Jacob in 1949, this arrangement uses as its starting point the more recent version by *O Trio* (see notes on *Faceira*, Segment One). Its form is highly irregular in phrase structure and thematic content, except for the central A theme. It shows his harmonic sophistication, jazz leanings and melodic virtuosity.

Assanhado (sassy, witty) Jacob do Bandolim (1961)

Jacob's signature classic, most listeners unfamiliar with Choro think it's a *Django Reinhardt* recording played at double speed. *Assanhado's* **AABB** form sports a bluesy A section and a Bebop B section supported by a cycle of fifths. Following woodwind solos over the A section, a tricky "shout chorus" unison line built on the B section harmonic structure incorporates crossrhythms and a generous dose of chromaticism. A fun way to close the concert.

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Ensemble page: www.boukas.com/new-school-brazilian-choro-ensemble