

Haroldo Mauro Jr.
 Bossa na Pressão
 Delira Música DL227 (2005)
 Time: 61'49"

Acoustic Pressure

Reviewed by [Egídio Leitão](#)
 May 2006



If you liked Kees Schoof's review of [Sambajazz Trio's Agora Sim!](#), here is another release honoring the traditional piano-bass-drums ensembles. With just the right amount of original pieces and classic Bossa Nova -- the album is equally divided -- *Bossa na Pressão* is packed with excellent instrumental numbers.

Haroldo Mauro Jr. (Niterói, RJ, 1949), jazz pianist, drummer and composer, began his music career at a very early age. When he was 11 years old, he studied trumpet, then acoustic guitar and drums. At age 15, he gave himself to performing jazz and Bossa Nova. Among his early accomplishments, it is worth noting that he performed with [Ney Matogrosso](#) and then with Victor Assis Brasil in his sextet. His musical career took off very fast. He became a member of legendary drummer Edison Machado's quartet, played with renowned Brazilian stars Elza Soares, [Paulo Moura](#), Naná Vasconcelos, Marcos and Paulo Sergio Valle and several others. It was just a matter of time before he made the move to Boston, where he joined the large number of Brazilian stars living in that city, including Cláudio Roditi, Márcio Montarroyos, Zeca Assumpção. From Boston, he headed to New York and met several other Brazilians there while performing at the Blue Note, Sweet Basil, Village Gate and other clubs. After spending 19 years in the U.S., Mauro returned to Brazil, settling first in Brasília and then moving permanently to Rio, where he now teaches at the University of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO). Since 1997, he has performed with giants such as Milton Banana, J.T. Meirelles, Chris Delano, Idris Bodrioua and Durval Ferreira. For this album, *Bossa na Pressão*, Mauro is joined by Sérgio Barrozo on acoustic bass and [Trio da Paz's](#) Duduka da Fonseca on drums.

TRACKS:

All music by Haroldo Mauro Jr., except where noted.

1. Caminhos Cruzados (Tom Jobim - Newton Mendonça)
2. Rua Juquiá
3. Sabor Carioca (Raul Mascarenhas)
4. Leda
5. Você Vai Ver (Tom Jobim)
6. Big Sur (Alfredo Cardim)
7. Quietude
8. Terra de Angara
9. Lelé do Coração
10. Coisa Mais Linda (Carlos Lyra - Vinicius de Moraes)
11. Desafinado (Tom Jobim - Newton Mendonça)
12. Depois do Natal



SERGIO BARROZO - DUDUKA DA FONSECA - HAROLDO MAURO JR.

and harmonic interest." In particular, the soft piano introduction he plays in "Caminhos Cruzados" brings such a peaceful feeling that the listener is immediately drawn into the beauty of the arrangement. The notes are played as if they were gentle raindrops

Though strongly rooted on Bossa Nova, this album goes beyond the standard Bossa Nova composers as we know them. In fact, half of the tracks here are original compositions penned by Haroldo himself. The remaining six tracks include one track by Alfredo Cardim, another by Raul Mascarenhas, the classic "Coisa Mais Linda" (by Carlos Lyra and Vinicius de Moraes) and three of Jobim's Bossa Nova staples. About Jobim's choices, Haroldo said that he especially likes those tracks Jobim co-wrote with Newton Mendonça, "Caminhos Cruzados" and "Desafinado." He really enjoys performing them and finds them "totally different in atmosphere but equally rich in melodic

touching rose petals. This effect creates a soothing mood of immense excellence. "Desafinado" is vibrant, and "Você Vai Ver" is filled with that "beautiful relation of the common and the surprising. It presents all one expects from a standard bossa-nova tune but at the same time it sounds fresh and catching," he says.

The choice for Raul Mascarenhas' "Sabor Carioca" gives Haroldo plenty of room to let loose with that elaborate melody and make it sounds like an easy tune to play. Don't be fooled, though, as Haroldo states:

"This is a hard tune to improvise on, but is also a lot of fun once you get used to it. I learned it when I performed at The Blue Note with its composer, the accomplished Brazilian tenor saxophonist Raul Mascarenhas. The harmonic structure is a simple four-chord progression that keeps modulating in descending minor thirds. There is a permanent "going-into-a-new-direction" feeling. Because the tonic chord is always omitted, this feeling is increased. I did a couple of chord substitutions to include the tonic chord in order to create the feeling of "arriving somewhere" half of the time."

Another Bossa Nova standard performed here is Alfredo Cardim's "Big Sur." Renowned composer, Cardim is also a fine pianist. His music has been recorded by many, including [Trio da Paz](#). An old friend of Cardim's, Haroldo finds that the beauty of Cardim's tunes "lies in the sweetness and powerfulness they show." This is evidenced in the fine arrangement created for "Big Sur." The only other non-original composition featured in *Bossa na Pressão* is Carlos Lyra and Vinícius de Moraes's "Coisa Mais Linda." Again, here are Haroldo's own feelings about this track:

"One thing I like about this tune's harmony is that it allows for substituting dominant sevenths for the various originally written diminished and other type chords, to obtain a full cycle of dominants, moving by ascending fourths and going through all the twelve roots. This is what I did. It made for an amazingly propelling effect. It also added a nice jazzy flavor to the track. I also re-harmonized the last measures of the middle part and very end of the tune. That, in turn, led to an alteration of the melody, which will come as a surprise to listeners who already know the song."

And it is that surprise that keeps listeners coming back to more of Haroldo's creative arrangements. Though normally played as a very soft tune, "Coisa Mais Linda" here has a progressive sequence created by that "propelling effect" that Haroldo mentions above. The song is fresh and entrancing in this format.

The remaining six tracks of the album are all Haroldo's original compositions. Not only is he an accomplished pianist, he also writes intricate melodies. Take, for example, "Leda" and "Terra de Angara." Haroldo said there is a 10-year span between the time those pieces were composed. Both arrangements also feature a strong presence of Duduka da Fonseca's superb drum playing. That is no coincidence, of course, since Haroldo himself is also a drummer. As Haroldo says, "the drummer is expected to 'comment' on the melody as it develops" in those tunes. His other tunes are also fine examples of his meticulous music writing skills. Whether with "Rua Juquiá," "Quietude" or "Depois do Natal," the listener is the winner. However, just when you think you might have caught on to Haroldo's artistic abilities, he surprises you once again. Just listen to "Lelé do Coração." Haroldo's passion for rich chord changes finds its perfect example in this tune. No one better than the composer himself to explain this melody:

"Although a rigid and complex harmonic frame may restrict the player's flight, it also paves the way for elaborating interesting melodies using fewer notes. That is the case of 'Lelé do Coração'. It is by far the work with highest chord/measure ratio I wrote. There are several sequences of IIm7-V7 progressions, each moving up or down at a different interval: minor second, major second, major third and the tritone. The resulting effect is a strong harmonic drive expediting melodic development during solos."

For the listener, these rich melodic changes are balsamic treats for the heart and soul, just as *Bossa na Pressão* is meant to be.

For more information about the artist and album, please visit Haroldo Mauro's [home page](#).





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