



*Radamés
Gnattali*

Solo & Chamber Works for Guitar

Marc Regnier



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I was first introduced to Radames Gnattali's music through the recordings that the Assad brothers (guitar duo) made many years ago. I was immediately attracted to Gnattali's melodic lyricism (2nd movement, Sonata for Cello and Guitar) which you often find in his lento sections and according to Gennady Zalkowitsch, Gnattali referred to these sections as 'sonhando' (dreaming). The outer contrasting sections and movements of his works have a style that is unique to Gnattali, a style that is full of energy by using Afro-Brazilian rhythms and folk idioms (3rd movement, Sonata for Cello and Guitar) within a European framework. His music can also have an improvisatory (3rd movement, Sonatina for Flute and Guitar) feel to it. Indeed, Gnattali was influenced by jazz and his use of chromaticism, parallel chords and unexpected harmonic progressions speak of this hybrid quality.

I first had the idea for this project many years ago. I wanted to make an entire recording of Gnattali's music including not only his most popular works but also his lesser known works that are equally beautiful. I wanted the project to include solo and ensemble works that best demonstrate the work of Radames Gnattali. My colleagues and I had a great time making this recording, we hope you enjoy!

~ Marc Regnier


3
Radamés Gnattali (1906-1988) occupies a prominent position in the history of twentieth-century Brazilian music as a figure active in both the popular and classical traditions. Through his work as a conductor, arranger, and performer, he shaped the development of Brazilian popular music, most notably as orchestral director at Rádio Nacional beginning in the late 1930s. Through his extensive compositional output across diverse media, he also contributed to the expansion of modern art music in Brazil. Gnattali received recognition with the *Prêmio Shell* (Shell Award), which was presented to him in 1983 in the category of “classical music” (*música erudita*). His works include guitar concertinos, solo concertos for violin and piano, and thirteen *Brasilianas* for varied instrumental groupings, related in conception to the *Chôros* and *Bachianas brasileiras* of Heitor Villa-Lobos.

Born in an Italian immigrant family in Porto Alegre, he began his musical studies with piano lessons from his mother. He studied at the Instituto de Belas Artes of Rio Grande do Sul, where he was awarded the gold medal in piano in 1924. Later he studied at the Instituto Nacional de Música in Rio de Janeiro. He gained facility on a wide range of instruments, including guitar, flute, clarinet, violin, and viola, which he played in the string quartet he founded in Porto Alegre after completing his studies. Settling in Rio de Janeiro permanently, Gnattali worked in radio and film first as pianist and then as conductor, directing the Rádio Nacional orchestra. Rádio Nacional was the most popular and successful radio station of the period; in his work for the station, Gnattali provided music for serials and made arrangements of popular tunes. His stylistic range and evolution was fluid, as the musicologist Gerard Béhague has observed: beginning in the 1950s, Gnattali incorporated neoclassical and neo-Romantic characteristics into a nationalist idiom, and in the 1960s he renewed his interest in fusing the European classical tradition with folk and popular styles, in part through experimentation with bossa nova.¹ The first *Toccata em ritmo de samba* (1950) belongs to this period, as do the first version of the *Retratos* suite (1956-57), the *Dança brasileira* (1958), the *Sonatina for Flute and Guitar* (1959), and the *Sonata for Cello and Guitar* (1969). In his final years Gnattali produced music more immediately based on popular idioms, revisiting such genres as the *samba-canções* and the *choro*. During this period he composed his second *Toccata em ritmo de samba* (1981) and produced the final version of the *Retratos* suite (1981).²

4
The works on this disc encompass multiple styles, from Afro-Brazilian folk and popular idioms to European art music. The *Sonata for Cello and Guitar* and the *Sonatina for Flute and Guitar* have clear links to the classical tradition—for instance, through their exploration of duo sonata textures and their chromatic harmonic language, which demonstrates a familiarity with European modernism and jazz. The elegant slow movement of the *Cello Sonata*, with its expressive and gently syncopated *arioso*, seems to emerge out of the *Andante* of Bach’s *Italian Concerto*. At the same, the sonatas are infused with Brazilian dance rhythms. The use of dance gestures as “topics” of musical discourse is itself characteristic of the art music tradition, from the Baroque dance suite to the integration of courtly and rustic dance rhythms into the sonatas, string quartets, and symphonies of the Viennese classical style. The *Flute Sonatina* exemplifies several of these features. A flute-dominated texture, supported in the guitar by colorful and sometimes pungent jazz-influenced harmonies, gives way in certain passages to close imitation of melodic and rhythmic motives between the instruments. The chromatic sonorities are shifting, even protean in character; the harmonic colors in the second movement occasionally have an “impressionistic” quality. The final movement is a virtuosic *tour de force* for flute, like a nimble jazz improvisation. Here, lively dance rhythms alternate with more abstract interludes and rhapsodic, lyrical moments; this construction of individual movements out of strongly contrasting sections is also characteristic of Gnattali’s music.

Gnattali’s work raises questions not only about the boundaries between “classical” and “popular” music but about the concept of “Brazilian music” more broadly. He worked in a context that was defined by profound concerns with national identity, or “Brazilianness” (*Brasildade*). During the 1930s and ‘40s, intellectuals and artists in Brazil sought to distinguish their culture from the cultures of Argentina, Portugal, and the United States. Rádio Nacional was a powerful instrument in fashioning a nationalist consciousness through its popular music programming; a rival station, far less popular, was Rádio MES, which focused on broadcasts of classical music. The achievement of Gnattali and his colleagues at Rádio Nacional, the historian Bryan McCann argues, was to present “Afro-Brazilian popular music not as mere entertainment but as both a sophisticated artistic form deserving the highest orchestral standards and as a repository of a national cultural essence.”³ Among the questions bearing

on national identity, the role of African influences on the formation of Brazilian culture was paramount.⁴ McCann goes on to note that through his work at Rádio Nacional, Gnattali was instrumental in the “national popularization” of the samba.⁵

The samba gradually emerged in the 1930s and ‘40s as the musical symbol or embodiment of *Brasilidade*. The three concert pieces—two *Toccatas em ritmo de samba* and the *Dança brasileira*—are based on its characteristic rhythmic patterns. An elemental figure that creates the syncopation of many dance forms in Brazilian and Latin-American music, particularly the samba, is the pattern , or *short-long-short*. The rhythmic gesture appears at times unadorned, as in the top voice in this passage from the *Dança brasileira* (a reduction of the rhythm is provided below it):

Dança brasileira, mm. 36-38



The syncopated gestures in this style are distinctive yet highly variable. The opening of the *Dança*, for instance, presents one of several characteristic samba rhythms in the agitated opening figure; reference to the underlying pattern in abstract form may better illustrate the interesting variance on the musical surface:

Dança brasileira, mm. 1-2



One further example may show how the combination of several basic patterns results in a rhythmic language of great variety and nuance:

Dança brasileira, mm. 25-28



In creating “concert” pieces based on popular dance forms, Gnattali exploited a harmonic idiom characterized by dissonance and extended chords, unpredictable and complex melodic lines, and strongly-marked contrasts among sections. The three concert pieces demonstrate the wide range of inflections available to the samba, which maintains its identity through vibrant syncopated rhythms, meter, and spirited tone.

The *Retratos* suite (“Portraits”) is particularly emblematic of Gnattali’s stylistic pluralism. The suite comprises musical portraits of four Brazilian composers depicted through dance types and allusions to specific compositions. Put another way, the suite offers a portrait of Brazilian dances as represented by some of their most celebrated exponents. The suite exists in multiple versions from 1956 to 1981. The first version is scored for *bandolim* and strings, and the final version, recorded here, is scored for two guitars. *Pixinguinha* is the first of the portraits. It honors Alfredo da Rocha Vianna, nicknamed Pixinguinha (1897/98-1973), who was famous for *choros* such as *Carinhoso*. Gnattali met Pixinguinha in the 1930s and worked alongside him at RCA Victor, eventually replacing him as arranger and band-leader. In Rio de Janeiro, Gnattali also met Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934), the composer and pianist celebrated for his tangos. Nazareth also cultivated the European forms of the polka and waltz. It is likely for this reason, and because of Nazareth’s affinity for the music of Chopin, that Gnattali fashioned his portrait as a waltz. The third movement commemorates Anacleto de Medeiros (1866-1907),

a composer renowned for his *choros*. The specific dance form is a *schottische*, typically in duple meter and equivalent to a slow polka, with a possible historical connection to the *écossaise* (each term meaning, of course, “Scottish”). The final movement honors Chiquinha Gonzaga (Francisca Edwiges Neves Gonzaga, 1847-1935), a composer of incidental music and operettas. She was famous for her *tango brasileiro* “O Gaúcho,” composed for the play *Zizinha maxixe* (1895) and modeled after the folk dance *corta-jaca*. One of the principal motives of Gnattali’s movement is a direct citation of “O Gaúcho.” Taken together, these portraits may be situated within the exploration of *Brasilidade*, as they survey and commemorate landmarks in the development of Brazilian music.

A retrospective stance is also expressed in *Saudade* (“Nostalgia”). This piece captures in musical form the concept of *saudade*, a term that suggests the feeling of longing for what is past, of nostalgia and homesickness. The anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes has described the importance of the concept to Brazilian cultural identity: “Brazilians think of their *saudade* as the purest expression of the Brazilian soul, of their heightened sensibility and awareness of the natural and social environment in which they live, of their acute sensitivity to the human condition and to its tragedies, and of loss, longing, and in particular, memory itself.”⁶ The piece is animated by two impulses—one reflective and intimate, the other energetic and even restless—as if presenting two experiences or frames of mind. After a return to the introspective tone of the opening, a short coda allows the restless mood to prevail.

~ *Blake Stevens*

References

- (1) Gerard Béhague, s.v. “Gnattali, Radamés,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 2001 [2nd. ed.]).
- (2) Dates of composition are given in accordance with the work catalogue available at <http://www.radamesgnattali.com.br>.
- (3) Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 35.
- (4) McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil*, 2.
- (5) McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil*, 47.
- (6) Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 436.

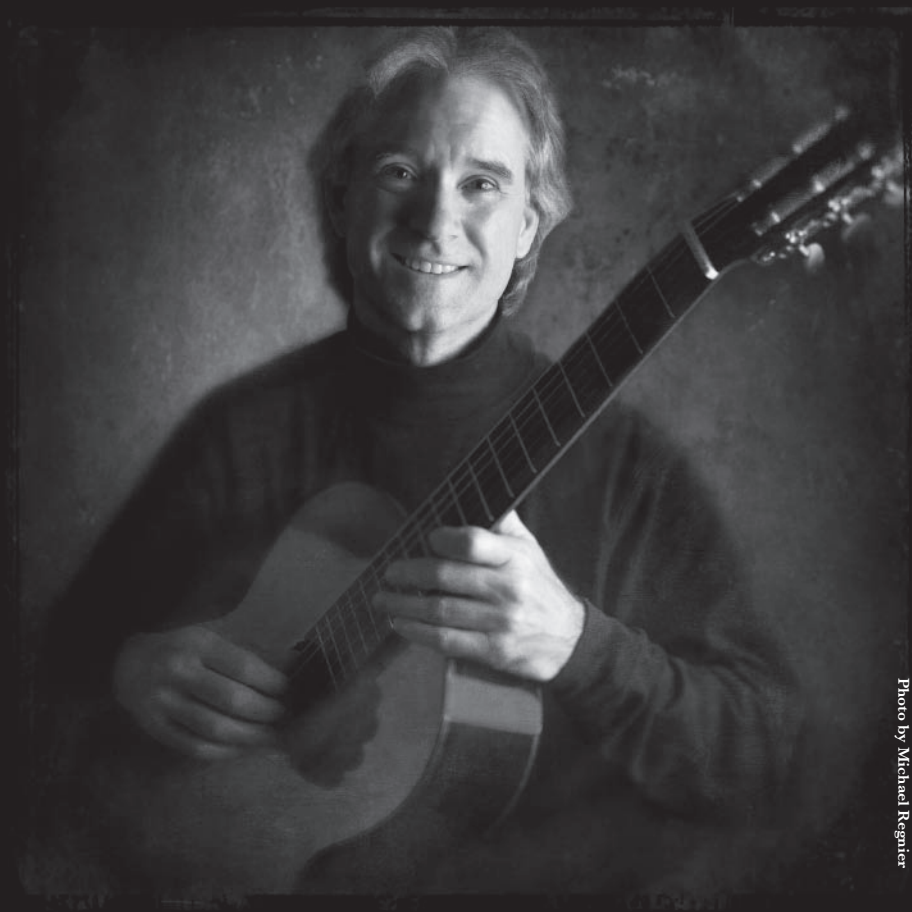


Photo by Michael Regnier

Marc Regnier

Marc Regnier was born in Florida and began studying the classical guitar at the age of six with his father, a now retired art professor. When Marc was fourteen, he accompanied the family move to London where he was introduced and began taking lessons with guitarist and composer Timothy Walker (former student of Narcisco Yepes). Immediately after his return to the United States the following year Marc gave his concert debut and accepted a part time instructorship teaching at Anderson College in South Carolina.

Two years later Aaron Shearer invited Marc to study with him under scholarship at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University. After graduation Mr. Regnier moved to California where he continued to perform while studying with Christopher Parkening (former student of Andres Segovia) and Rey de la Torre (former student of Miguel Llobet). It was Rey de la Torre who introduced Mr. Regnier to composers Joaquin Nin-Culmell (former student of Manuel de Falla) and Julian Orbon (former student of Aaron Copland) which resulted in Regnier collaborating with both internationally respected composers. During this time Deutsche Grammophon President, Dr. Andreas Holschneider, heard a live recording of Regnier and stated that he “has a great talent, technically almost perfect.” Joaquin Nin-Culmell said “Of all the young guitarists I have heard in recent years, Marc Regnier is by far the most brilliant performer... he represents the best of the classical Spanish tradition.”

Marc Regnier has appeared as soloist, in chamber groups and with orchestra throughout the United States from Los Angeles to several appearances at New York’s Carnegie Recital Hall. He has performed and given master classes in Canada and South America including invitations to perform and give classes in Europe. He has frequently been featured on National Public Radio and BBC Radio with a recent performance celebrating Chopin’s bicentennial.

Marc Regnier lives with his wife, Jane Norrgard, and their five (or is it six) cats. He is currently chairman of the guitar department at the College of Charleston, a position he has held since 1994.

Tacy Edwards

Tacy Edwards, a resident of both South Carolina and Kentucky, is Principal Flute of Orchestra Kentucky, piccoloist of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra (SC) and plays regularly with in the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra. She is the flute instructor at the College of Charleston and has published two flute method books, "Developing Doubtful Digits" and "The Ultimate Workout Book for Professional Flutists." In addition to this recording, she has two CD releases of flute and guitar music: *The Water Is Wide* and *Hauntings*.

Enjoying volunteer work, Tacy has chaired the 2008, 2007, 1995 and 1994 Symphony Designer Showhouses for the Charleston Symphony Orchestra League and has also served as their President. She volunteers for Footlight Players Theatre, the oldest community theater in historic Charleston. Tacy plays on a gold Powell flute and a wooden Braun flute and piccolo.

She has been performing with guitarist Marc Regnier since 1995. Tacy began her professional career as Principal Flute with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic and has played in orchestras in Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, New York, South Carolina, Georgia and Kentucky. She has toured internationally to the Far East with harpist Grace Wong and to South America in the Latin chamber group Chacabuco.



Photo by Vin Duffy

Natalia Khoma

Since winning the All-Ukrainian competition in 1981, cellist Natalia Khoma has won top prizes at the Budapest Pablo Casals Competition (1985), Marneukirchen (Germany, 1987) and the Tchaikovsky (Moscow, 1990) International Competitions, as well as First prize at the 1990 Belgrade International Cello Competition.

A native of Lviv, Ukraine, Ms. Khoma studied at the Lviv Central Music School and the Lviv Conservatory with Evhen Shpitzer and from 1982 until 1990 at the Moscow Conservatory with Professor Natalia Shakhovskaya. In the United States, Ms. Khoma was awarded the Artist Diploma of the Boston University under the direction of Professor Leslie Parnas.

The first and only Ukrainian cellist to have won at the Tchaikovsky Competition, she has since distinguished herself as a recitalist and soloist with orchestras thorough the former USSR, as well as USA, Canada, South America, Germany, Norway, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland, Eastern Europe, South Africa and the Middle and Far East.

In addition to her performing activities, Natalia is a Professor of cello at College of Charleston in Charleston, SC and co-Founder and co-Director of Charleston Music Fest.



Photo by Vin Duffy

Marco Sartor

13 A prize winner in numerous international music competitions, Marco Sartor has performed solo and chamber music concerts in three continents to both critical and public acclaim. He has also appeared as a soloist with orchestras such as the Allentown Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic and Sodre Orchestra of Uruguay among others.

Marco has given master-classes and judged competitions in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and a number of universities and conservatories in the United States. He started the guitar programs at the Carnegie Mellon Music Preparatory School in Pittsburgh, PA and at the Charleston Academy of Music in Charleston, SC, where he is currently based.

For more info please visit <http://www.marcosartor.com>.



Photo by Fernando Serkhochian

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Blake Stevens, Assistant Professor of Musicology

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To my brother, Michael Regnier, for his amazing photography and to my wife, Jane, who through her support over the years has made me a better musician.

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14
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Sonata for Cello and Guitar (1969) (with Natalia Khoma, cello)

[1] I. Allegretto comodo — 4:23

[2] II. Adagio — 3:02

[3] III. Con Spirito — 3:13

Three Concert Pieces (1950–1981)

[4] Dansa Brasileira (1968) for Solo Guitar — 4:01

[5] Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 1 (1950) for Solo Guitar — 3:52

[6] Toccata em ritmo de samba No. 2 (1981) for Solo Guitar — 3:37

Suíte Retratos (for 2 Guitars) (1987) (with Marco Sartor, guitar)

[7] I. Pixinguinha (Choro) — 5:12

[8] II. Ernesto Nazareth (Valsa) — 5:14

[9] III. Anacleto de Medeiros (Schottisch) — 4:14

[10] IV. Chiquinha Gonzaga (Corta Jaca) — 5:07

[11] Saudade (1965) for Solo Guitar — 3:58

Sonatina for Flute and Guitar (1963) (with Tacy Edwards, flute)

[12] I. Cantando con simplicidade — 5:33

[13] II. Adagio — Espressivo e poco Rubato — 4:00

[14] III. Movido — 4:53

Total Time — 60:24



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