

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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## The Brasil Guitar Duo covers a lot of ground – from classics to baião

By Sarah Bryan Miller  
POST-DISPATCH CLASSICAL MUSIC CRITIC

It's always amazing just how much musical variety the artists presented by the St. Louis Classical Guitar Society can produce from a relatively simple six-stringed instrument.

On Saturday night the Brasil Guitar Duo started by establishing their classical music cred with a pair of fine transcriptions of music by Domenico Scarlatti and J.S. Bach, moved to Debussy and then took off into an exploration of Brazilian popular music. They proved that -- as spokesman Douglas Lora said - "the bossa nova is not the only thing."

Lora (bearded, with a John Belushi "Samurai Night Fever" topknot) and Joao Luiz (in long, tied-back braids) met as teenagers, and have been performing together for 12 years.

That long partnership showed plainly in the clean, almost telepathic coordination of their playing.

The opening work, Scarlatti's Sonata in C, was a little overbalanced in favor of Lora, but by the opening notes of Bach's French Suite they were perfectly together. They stayed that way for the rest of the evening.

Lora and Luiz took turns in playing the leading and secondary parts, demonstrating equal - and tremendous - facility in both voices and a variety of styles.

They strayed from the printed program early and often after the first two works. That started with

three nicely judged segments of Debussy's "Children's Corner" (ending with a delightful rendition of "Golliwogg's Cakewalk") and continued throughout the second half.

Astor Piazzolla's "Zita" served as a bridge from known musical geography into the distinctively Brazilian world of the samba, maxixe, choro and baião. "We are bringing Brazilian popular music to concert halls," proclaimed Lora.

The infectious dance rhythms of the African-influenced baião were in evidence in a couple of numbers, including one by Lora himself, along with a sweet, plaintive song melody.

The last work was a fine piece of musical perpetual motion translated by Lora as "Nights in Rio de Janeiro," conjuring up the kind of party that you just don't want to end.

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