SÉRGIO AND ODAIR ASSAD

The Brazilian-born brothers Sérgio and Odair Assad are widely considered the most popular and virtuosic guitar duo in the world. Their exceptional artistry and uncanny ensemble playing come from both a family rich in Brazilian musical tradition and from studies with the best guitarists in South America. In addition to setting new performance standards, the Assads have played a major role in creating and introducing new music for two guitars. Their virtuosity has inspired a wide range of composers to write for them: Astor Piazzolla, Terry Riley, Radamés Gnatalli, Marlos Nobre, Nikita Koshin, Roland Dyens, Jorge Morel, Edino Krieger and Francisco Mignone. Now Sergio Assad is adding to their repertory by composing music for the duo and for various musical partners both with Symphony Orchestra and in recitals. They have worked extensively with such renowned artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Fernando Suarez Paz, Paquito D’Rivera, Gidon Kremer and Dawn Upshaw.

The Assads began playing the guitar together at an early age and went on to study for seven years with guitar/lutenist Monina Távora, a disciple of Andrés Segovia. Their international career began with a major prize at the 1979 young artists competition in Bratislava. Odair is based in Brussels where he teaches at Ecole Supérieure des Arts, and Sergio resides in Chicago where he teaches at Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts, yet the majority of their time is spent on tour throughout the Americas, Europe and the Far East.

The Assads’ repertoire includes original music composed by Sergio Assad and his reworkings of folk and jazz music as well as Latin music of almost every style. Their standard classical repertoire includes transcriptions of the great Baroque keyboard literature of Bach, Rameau and Scarlatti; and adaptations of works by such diverse figures as Gershwin, Ginastera and Debussy. Their programs are always a compelling blend of styles, periods and cultures. The Assads are also recognized as prolific recording artists, primarily for the Nonesuch and GHA labels. In 2001, Nonesuch Records released Sérgio and Odair Assad Play Piazzolla, which won a Latin Grammy in September 2002.
Other duo CDs include an album of Baroque works and *Saga dos Migrantes* for Nonesuch. They have recorded Piazzolla discs with Gidon Kremer (Nonesuch) and Yo-Yo Ma (Sony Classical), the latter a Grammy-winner in 1998.

A Nonesuch collaboration with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg in 2000 featured a collection of pieces based on traditional and Gypsy folk tunes from around the world. Since that recording the Assads and Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg have made three highly successful tours of the United States, displaying unique chemistry, humor and stunning virtuosity. In 2003, Sergio Assad wrote a triple concerto for this trio that has been performed with the orchestras of São Paulo, Seattle and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Other highlights of 2002-03 included an 18-city tour as soloists with the Orquestra de São Paulo playing Marlos Nobre’s Concerto Duplo, a piece to be released on GHA in 2006.

The Assad Brothers collaborated again with Yo-Yo Ma on his popular release, *Obrigado Brazil*, a CD that surveyed the musical landscape of the country from classical to tropicalia music, and also featured Rosa Passos, Egberto Gismonti, Paquito D’Rivera and Cyro Baptista. Sergio arranged several of the works on the disc, which captured a Grammy in 2004. Following the release, the Assads toured with Mr. Ma at several summer festivals in the United States, followed by concerts in Europe and Japan. In September 2003 they performed in live concerts at the opening of Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall and Sony released a live CD of these concert performances.

In the summer of 2004, Sergio & Odair arranged a very special tour featuring three generations of the Assad Family. The family presented a wide variety of Brazilian music featuring their father Jorge Assad on the mandolin and the voice of mother Angelina Assad. Sister Badi brought her unique vocal style and extraordinary guitar ability, and Sergio and Odair’s children Clarice, Carolina, and Rodrigo finished the picture on the piano, guitar and vocals. GHA records has released a live recording of the Assad Family and in 2006 will release a DVD of the Assad Family concert at Brussels’ Palais des Beaux Arts. The cultural channel of Belgian television, RTBF La deux, made a documentary on the Assad Family featuring excerpts of the Brussels’ concert. Most recently in 2005, the Assads began a fruitful collaboration with famed Cuban clarinetist, Paquito D’Rivera in the States and Europe.