

Heitor Villa-Lobos 1887-1959

Brazil's foremost composer, Villa-Lobos produced a huge body of work (over 1,500 compositions) of remarkable scope and variety, as well as traveling widely and remaining active as a performer (cellist), conductor, folklorist, educator and writer. Largely self taught, his early career involved expeditions to uncover the national folk idioms, and his music is suffused with the charm of Brazilian melodies and the vigor of its rhythms.

Bachianus Brasileiras No.5 Aria

The Brasileiras represent one of Villa-Lobos's most successful experiments. Throughout nine contrasting pieces the form and style suggest both Bach and Brazilian music. The impression is not one of fitted opposites, but of absorption and generation. The Aria of No. 5 is a very famous creation, written for soprano and eight celli, although numerous other interpretations exist. Any appeal of this guitar arrangement is, I think, largely due to two things. The music itself is haunting, and then Bach translates well to guitar – there are many fine examples – and the Brazilian style is naturally suited to it.