

PROJECT 88

April – May 2022

CONCERT SERIES

200 Years of Brazil

Saudades do Brasil

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Pedro Rogério Aguiar

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Consul General of Brazil

Benoni Belli

 Project 88
Music Academy



PROJECT 88 MUSIC ACADEMY

April – May 2022

WELCOME TO OUR 4TH SEASON

We are proud to share with you our 2021/2022 Season. We have a new brand, a new website and a new opportunity to support our organization by becoming a Friend of Project 88. During this season, we will feature quarterly editions of the Project 88 Magazine highlighting events, interviews and guest artists. Stay tuned for upcoming concerts, events, and more!



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Élida DiPaula,
Executive and Artistic Director

Desirae Diehl,
Director of Operations

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Nayelii Duran, *violin*

Peter Saltzman, *piano*

Élida DiPaula,
piano and composition

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Catey Sullivan, *Writer/Editor*

David Powers, *Writer*



SEE WHAT OUR COMMUNITY HAS TO SAY

“Awesome teachers, incredible program, amazing musicians.”

FROM A MUSIC ACADEMY PARENT

“Great musicians playing great music in a great venue is hard to beat.”

FROM A CONCERT ATTENDEE

“I’m so glad Project 88 is part of our community.”

FROM A BERWYN RESIDENT



Project 88 Concert Series is a collection of Saturday evening concerts that present classical music to the community. Free and open to the public, we host a variety of performances, including solo recitals, chamber music, and larger ensembles.



We are grateful for our current partners who help us achieve our mission within the communities we serve.



A Note from the Artistic Director



Project 88 was born from a vision and supported by many visionaries. In 2018 when we established the first season of concerts, we did not think Project 88 would grow so fast and so quickly. Never did we anticipate these accomplishments so soon: that in three years we'd be able to match our goals and open the music academy; that we would have a longer list of artists devoted to our mission and willing to help us kickstart this organization; or that our roster of volunteers eager to make this institution successful would continuously grow. The common factor of our success was your support; even during the catastrophic events of 2020 you were committed to our mission and helped us remain hopeful that our organization would continue to thrive.

Now during our fourth season I am overjoyed with pride to announce the expansion of Project 88 Music Academy, a new format for the concert series to be live-streamed on our digital platform, an ever-growing structure to interact with our audiences and supporters, the launch of Project 88 Magazine, and a membership program that cultivates opportunities for people to intertwine their love for music and their belief in our mission.

During this 2021/2022 Season the concert series will happen on the second Saturday of every month from October to May. We celebrate several remarkable historical events and feature many incredible artists. We are opening this season with a performance of mainstream jazz, showcasing this wonderful music genre for the first time in our concert series. We celebrate 100 years of Astor Piazzolla, and our Holiday Brass concert returns to celebrate the holiday spirit. During the second half of our season we highlight the art of piano playing, including the complete Études by Chopin, which is one of the most important works written for piano. This is an exceptional educational opportunity for our students in the academy and a delight to any audience. We will commemorate the cultural independence of Latin countries and celebrate the 100th year since Modern Art Week in Brazil that made such an incredible impact on the cultural history in Latin America. This season we will also feature two events dedicated to showcasing our students and faculty.

We are proud to bring to you so many artists with a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Our new options for designated giving are designed to give our patrons the opportunity to directly impact our programming. Donations to the concert fund impact our ability to continue producing concerts of this variety and caliber to the public. Donations to the scholarship fund help us to continue making our high-quality music education affordable for students in the Music Academy. Friends of Project 88 nurtures relationships and bring new ways for patrons to support and collaborate with our organization.

I would like to thank all our volunteers, our family and student ambassadors, and you for your support. I welcome you to our 2022 Season!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Élider DiPaula". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Élider DiPaula
Executive and Artistic Director

A Note from the Board of Directors



What an unprecedented year it has been, one filled with challenges and many successes. But, none of the achievements would have been possible without the help of many hands, all under the direction of Élider DiPaula, who was the conductor of our organization.

People are what make Project 88 able to continue, grow and succeed. None of the growth and successes in 2021 would have been possible without the support of many individuals, including artists who performed, the faculty who taught, the volunteers who gave many hours to Project 88 and the Board of Directors, who are truly a working board.

All of these accomplishments would not have been possible without donations from you, our Patrons and from our Donors. Those donors include the Consulate General of Brazil, Unity Church and Atlas Arts Media. Thank you to all of you for all of your assistance. We would not have been able to do it without you.

This year we are rolling out a new program called Friends of Project 88. Take a moment and become a friend, help to support the music academy and to enable us to continue bringing world class music to our community. Details on how you can become a Friend of Project 88 are on our website.

Thank you for all you do; your efforts keep Project 88 able to continue providing music education and access to music in our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Branka Matevich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Branka Matevich
President, Board of Directors

A Note from the Director of Operations



A select few have had the privilege to witness Project 88 grow since its inception; I am one of those fortunate few. Reflecting on the short history of our growing organization, I am amazed at what we've been able to accomplish over the past three years and am ever more excited about what is to come.

We are all still humbled by the fact that our concert series has been an immense success from the beginning, dutifully supported by our wonderful patrons like you. However, we are now continuing to be energized by the support for our Music Academy that continues to grow and change in ways that were a short time ago merely a vision. Project 88 Music Academy began educating its first students last spring, and we are happy to share that most of those students are continuing their education in the program while we concurrently are preparing to accept new students who are ready to begin their musical journey. Returning students in the Artist Academy are learning composition skills, taking private lessons, and engaging with their

peers in group classes. Our new students this fall will either be following in their footsteps or participating in our special new class for younger students which is designed to expose students to basic musical concepts in fun, engaging, child-friendly ways. Our faculty is talented, and our students are stellar. We hope you'll make plans to join us for our Student and Faculty recitals this year!

Operationally, there has also been much work going on in the background! We are launching a new website on a new domain: www.project88musicacademy.org, and we have completely new branding that is clean, colorful, and engaging. Follow us on social media to see this incorporated into new content from our marketing team. We're adding more positions, recruiting more volunteers, and moving the ball forward in more ways than can be adequately expressed in a few paragraphs. If I had to summarize this growth, I'd simply say that Project 88 is thriving. And it's thriving because of the people who continue to pour their heart and soul into this organization: Board members, faculty, staff, students & their families, volunteers, and especially our patrons. Supporters like you who believe in Project 88's mission, are eager to see its impact, and want to help keep propelling it forward.

We thank you for joining us on this journey. Keep your eyes and ears open for more to come in the coming weeks and months!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Desirae Diehl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Desirae Diehl
Director of Operations

ABOUT PROJECT 88 MUSIC ACADEMY

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Mere survival is never sufficient. Yet in times of budget cuts — in effect, essentially all the time — the arts are the first on the chopping block when schools strive to save money. And that invariably sells short kids who might not otherwise learn about the sheer joy of learning to make your own joyful noise.

Learning to translate those bulbous black and white markings and squiggly symbols is like learning the alphabet of your native language. They are a conduit to new worlds. Debussy's *Preludes* can take you to rainy-day Paris. Joplin's rags right to the cusp of the great Harlem Renaissance Jazz-era NYC. Theresa Carreno, the Venezuelan artist who played for President Lincoln at age 9 and was dubbed the Valkyrie of the Piano as an adult, will take you directly to Planet Empowerment.

Education is the prerequisite to gaining access to the infinite worlds that music education offers. Access to that education? Whether it's Beginning Flute, Advanced Music Theory, or a Masterclass, access usually comes with a price tag that can and does translate into gate-keeping.

Élizer DiPaula knows that first hand. Growing up in Anápolis, Brazil, Project 88's Founding Artistic Director had a one-way commute of two hours, on foot, to get to his piano lessons. And those lessons, which he treasured, were only accessible to him at all because he was offered a patchwork of financial aid and scholarships and affordable pricing.

"I know first hand how this kind of help can change someone's life," he said. "When I was younger, I received a parcel of the type of support we've been trying to gather for our students. We want all of them to have access like I did," he said.

Project 88's Music Academy could not have gotten off to a rockier start. It was slated to launch in Spring, 2020. In January that year, the board had hired a program coordinator for the Academy. After a February Open House, the first student applications were accepted. In March, the Academy's opening was moved to August. In August, it was moved to September.

Students are making their way back as we, like everyone in our community, work to rebuild. At present, there are roughly 16 students in the Project 88 Music Academy Preparatory Program. The second semester started in September 2021. The students meet with their instructors via zoom and in person. They are enthused in giving testimonials (see page 8 for Project 88 testimonials).

There is a formal curriculum in place for Academy Operations Director Desirae Diehl's team of string, woodwinds, and keyboard artists. Students follow it, but it can be tailored to individuals as needed.

"The dedication and support I've received from my colleagues, combined with the passion I witness from students, has moved me to be better as a teacher and in my everyday life," said teacher Nayelii Duran. "I joined the



Project 88 team on a whim during its beginning and I'm so thankful I've been able to stay part of it since."

Students receive an average of 2.5 hours a week of instruction including instrument private lessons, composition, ensemble, and studio classes, DiPaula said. "That forms a solid foundation for their artistry and the understanding of music-making. Along with the academic portion of our organization, the students have the opportunity to watch and meet artists that come to our concert series and have a feeling for what is the career of a professional artist," he said.

That's precisely the point, said DiPaula. "At Project 88 Music Academy, we instill inspiration to become a complete artist not just an instrumentalist. Music is more than just an organization of sounds, it's the vehicle to transcribe our life experience and share with others that resonate the same frequency."

For more information about the Project 88 Music Academy, visit project88musicacademy.org/about-project-88/



Hear What People Have to Say

From Students

"I love Project 88 because they taught me how to read music and play the violin. Since we have been taking music theory classes I can now learn a song on the violin and play it on the piano if I want to. My teacher Nayelii is nice and we have fun in our group classes." — *Nani P.*

"I like project 88 because it helped me learn how to read music and play the violin. I love that we get to experience different concerts and learn about a variety of music like jazz, bossa nova, and classical music. Being in project 88 is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I am glad I have a chance to go." — *Lola P.*

"My favorite part of music class is playing games. My favorite game is jump on the staff. It's soooo much fun!" — *Evelyn M.*

"My favorite parts are the music games and making new friends. It makes learning so much fun. I can't wait to go to class!" — *Noah M.*

Anonymous student testimonials

"My favorite part [of class] is when we color the notes."

"I like when we move our body."

"Doing movements is my favorite part of class."

"I liked that you learn about music notes on the staff."

"I like my teacher's shirts."

From Parents

"I love Project 88, they have made a commitment to the community to give children of all walks of life and all abilities the opportunity to learn how to read music and to play an instrument. Their instructors are patient, professional, and passionate. They encourage my children to do their best and foster their curiosity and love of music. Their staff is warm and inviting and every encounter with them is a joyous one. I applied my children to Project 88 on a whim and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made." — *Angela C.*

"Project 88 is such a wonderful program offering age appropriate activities to foster a love and appreciation of music. My kids are excited to go to class and often play the music games later at home. The concerts are also a great way to gain exposure to different genres of music" — *Nicole M.*

"We are very pleased with Project 88 Music Academy. The teacher is great with kids, has made it fun and engaging for all, and my kids are excited to go every week. They have learned important beginning music fundamentals. We recommend it!" — *Felipe M.*

I just want to thank you for this opportunity that you gave my children, Reinaldo and Ashley Perez. Thank you to all the staff for your time and patience that make a difference in our children. This project helps my children to be responsible and they have acquired new music skills every day. Now they spend more time learning something that is super good and spend less time playing video games or something else that is not so beneficial like music for them. Also this has opened more doors for my children. My son feels more confident and he is participating in the music program at school too.

My daughter loves her teacher and she said that learning music is so interesting. She said that she has a great time when she is in her music class. She is learning to read music notes. She asks me every day "mom what day is today", because she knows that on Thursday she has her music class.

My son Reinaldo said that he learned a lot there. He said he has learned [to] read music notes, he is playing the piano faster than before. He has a new teacher, but we know that he would be wonderful like that before.

Thank you so much Project 88 for this opportunity that you bring to our community children. — *Adriana B.*

From Faculty

"Working with Project 88, I've never failed to be impressed by the level of excellence shown by students and faculty alike. These students push themselves to improve every time I see them and have progressed faster than any group of students I've ever worked with. The dedication and support I've received from my colleagues, combined with the passion I witness from students, has moved me to be better as a teacher and in my everyday life. I joined the Project 88 team on a whim during its beginning and I'm so thankful I've been able to stay part of it since." — *Nayelii Duran*



OUR HISTORY

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

It started as an audacious proposal: How about we start a year-long concert series spotlighting artists from all over the globe? And a music academy where young, beginning musicians can learn music theory, performance and history? And an annual week-long festival and a second concert series specifically aimed at bringing young people fully into the thrall of the musical world? It would all be accessible, according to Élider DiPaula's vision for Project 88, a 501(c)(3) non-profit named for the 88 keys on the piano keyboard

and dedicated to providing top-tier concerts and music instruction to anyone, regardless of income.

A concert pianist who grew up in Brazil, DiPaula flourished as a young, aspiring musician thanks to scholarships and programs similar to those he planned to bring to the Berwyn-based, international endeavor. He arrived in Chicagoland by way of Berwyn's Unity Lutheran Church, where he has served as music director since 2017.





Élizer DiPaula

With instant support from Julie Boleyn, then Pastor at Unity Lutheran Church, DiPaula received approval to turn the church sanctuary into a concert hall on Saturday nights. DiPaula & Boleyn formed a board for the fledgling non-profit, negotiated the use of a state-of-the-art Steinway Grand and launched the True Unity Concert Series in September, 2018. At the debut event, German pianist Henning Vauth performed for a full house. Tickets were by donation, setting the template for all the concerts to follow.

In November, 2018, Project 88 amped up by its offerings with the first Lucile Evans Music Festival. Named for one of Project 88's most ardent, early supporters, the festival included seven nights of concerts culminating in a performance by Edward Auer, the first American to win a prize in Warsaw's prestigious International Chopin Piano Competition.



Lucile Evans Music Festival

Project 88 was just getting started. With Desirae Diehl joining as operations manager, Project 88's second season began in March, 2019 with a multi-media concert of Igor Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," a seven-piece chamber orchestra performing the score, accompanied by the 16th Street Theater actor Eddie Dzialo as the multifaceted narrator and a series of illustrations by Berwyn's Julie Freeney. The production was directed by Élizer DiPaula, conducted by Kyle Dickson, and the scenery by Mike Garon, which the Chicago Tribune praised as "whimsical and fanged."



Junghwa Moon Auer and Edward Auer



The Soldier's Tale

In October, Project 88 hosted Turkish pianist Eren Yahsi. In November, violinist Lúcia Barrenechea and cellist Hugo Pilger traveled from Brazil to open the Second Annual Lucile Evans Music Festival. And in December, a joyous brass concert celebrated the holidays with Project 88's program of ecumenical hits. In all, Project 88 hosted 20 events in its first 18 months of existence, including concerts, masterclasses and youth programs.

All three prongs of Project 88 were up and running in 2019: The True Unity Concert Series, Lucile Evans Music Festival, and the Into the Musical World concert series aimed at bringing young people into, yes, the musical world. By January 2020, Patricia Gill was onboard to serve as Program Coordinator for the Music Academy. In February, a series of open house meetings for interested parents and students yielded a wealth of applications. In March 2020, everything changed.

As COVID-19 ravaged the entire performing arts sector and sent countless musicians into a devastating time-out, Project 88's core staff rolled with the punches. Concerts went online, starting with an August performance of American composers and continuing with a celebration of Beethoven's 250th birthday.

Generous donations and a fiscally prudent board kept the lights on. DiPaula garnered a generous anonymous matching grant. Academy curricula was fine-tuned. Artists for 2021 were lined up.

As the world slowly reopened in the Fall of 2021, Project 88's core values had been untouched by COVID. Its leadership continues to make music accessible, through galvanizing performances and top-tier music education.

Whether you're an artist or in the audience, Project 88 invites you to join in as it embarks again into the musical world.



Holiday Concert



Masterclass



Harp Septet



Lúcia Barrenechea and Hugo Pilger

200 YEARS OF BRAZIL

PEDRO ROGÉRIO AGUIAR, guitar

APRIL 9

SATURDAY 6:30 P.M.

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959)

CHÔROS NO. 1

SUÍTE POPULAR BRASILEIRA:

1. MAZURKA-CHÔRO
3. VALSA-CHÔRO
4. GAVOTA-CHÔRO

ÉTUDES FOR GUITAR:

1. ALLEGRO NON TROPPO
4. POCO MODERATO
3. ALLEGRO MODERATO
6. POCO ALLEGRO
7. TRÈS ANIMÉ
11. LENT
12. ANIMÉ

RADAMÉS GNATTALI (1906-1988)

TOCCATA EM RITMO DE SAMBA NO. 1

DILERMANDO REIS (1916-1977)

XODÓ DA BAIANA

NOITE DE LUA

SE ELA PERGUNTAR

ANÍBAL AUGUSTO SARDINHA "GAROTO"

(1915-1955)

ENIGMA

JORGE DO FUSA

MARCO PEREIRA (1950-)

CHÔRO DE JULIANA

BATE-COXA

INTERMISSION



This concert is sponsored by the
Consulate General of Brazil in Chicago.



PEDRO ROGÉRIO AGUIAR, GUITAR

Pedro Rogério Aguiar is one of the most awarded Brazilian guitarists of his generation, winner of 15 international prizes, including the prestigious Alhambra Guitar Competition. Specialized critics describe his playing as “full of energy, colorful and precise”. His Début-CD is an homage to Brazilian guitar music, from Villa-Lobos to contemporary composers, which was released in 2020 by Naxos.

Pedro Aguiar was born in Brasília in 1990. He has studied in Brazil, the USA, France, and Germany, under the guidance of Eduardo Meirinhos, Julio Alves, Judicaël Perroy, and Franz Halasz; he was granted scholarships from Orlandus Lassus Stiftung, DAAD, and CAPES/FIPSE. Between 2013 and 2018 he was an Assistant Professor at the University of Music and Fine Arts Munich.

He has been invited to international festivals which allows him to play with renowned musicians from orchestras such as Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian State Opera, Munich Philharmonie Orchestra, Opera Garnier, and NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra.

Working in cooperation with the Kammeroper München, he has been playing operas by Mozart, Haydn, and Rossini in important halls such as Cuvillies-Theatre, Nymphenburg Castle, Allerheiligen-Hofkirche (Munich).

pedroaguiarguitar.com

ABOUT THE MUSIC

200 Years of Brazil

BY DAVID POWERS

Two hundred years after it declared independence as a nation, Brazil has developed into a significant center for international culture. Not only is it home to beloved forms of popular music, such as samba, bossa nova, and Tropicália, but it is also recognized as a major center for artistic modernism in fields such as literature, painting, sculpture, and photography. In the realm of concert music, modernist composer Heitor Villa-Lobos has achieved renown as the most important South American composer of the twentieth century. In the domain of architecture, the capital city of Brasilia continues to fascinate architecture lovers from around the world, who are drawn to the bold and unique modernist buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer, which Norman Foster described as “hauntingly beautiful.”

Brazil became a European colony in 1500, when the explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral arrived in South America and claimed Portuguese sovereignty over indigenous lands. Brazil's colonial economy was based around sugarcane, cattle, gold, and diamonds, and employed many slaves, who were mostly of African origin. During the era of slavery, escaped slaves joined army deserters, mulattos, and Native Americans to form colonies known as Quilombos in the regions of Bahia, Minas Gerais and Alagoas. Quilombo communities were crucial to the later development of Brazil's uniquely syncretic culture, as they enabled the continuation of traditions brought by slaves from Africa, while also giving rise to new cultural forms as these traditions came

into contact with native Brazilian and European traditions. Key early cultural developments associated with the quilombos include the religion Candomblé, and the hybrid martial arts dance form called Capoeira.

Beginning in the 1790's, under the influence of the American, French, and Haitian revolutions, revolutionary activity aimed at Brazilian emancipation began to appear. Finally, in 1822, Brazil declared independence from Portugal and became a constitutional monarchy. It continued in this form until the end of the nineteenth century, when two major changes occurred. In 1888, slavery was finally abolished, and in 1889, Brazil became a constitutional republic. This led to new opportunities for cultural exchange, as emancipated slaves and their descendants migrated into urban centers in search of work, and mingled with Brazil's urban populations, which now included many recent immigrants from Europe.

In the early twentieth century, the continuing process of economic and social modernization was reflected by changes within the cultural sphere. At this time, some Brazilian intellectuals and artists began to turn away from traditional European aesthetic ideas promoted by institutions such as the Brazilian Academy of Letters. Inspired by avant garde European movements including Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism, but also drawing from colloquial Brazilian speech and native folklore, artists of the Modernismo movement attempted to create new aesthetic forms that were authentically Brazilian. One

hundred years after Brazil became an independent nation, their initial experiments culminated in the first great event of Brazilian modern art, the “Week of 22,” or Modern Art Week.

Five prominent modernists known as the Group of Five organized the event, which was held in São Paulo’s Municipal Theatre from February 11th to 18th, 1922. Besides presenting around 100 modernist artworks to the public, Modern Art Week also featured three nights of dance, music, and poetry readings. Showcased works included poetry by Mario de Andrade, art nouveau paintings by Di Cavalcanti, sculptures by Victor Brecheret, and the composition *Quarteto simbólico* by Heitor Villa-Lobos. Although the event was extremely controversial and shocked audiences in its time, it had a lasting impact on the Brazilian art world, and served as a major catalyst for the development of distinctly Brazilian approaches to modernist art.

One of the most significant of these approaches was Anthropophagy, an aesthetic position articulated by Modern Art Week participant Oswald de Andrade in the *Manifesto Antropófago* (“Cannibal Manifesto”) of 1928. Andrade deployed the concept of “cultural cannibalism” to suggest that Brazilian artists should self-consciously consume and digest influences from around the world, including Europe, while transforming them and merging them with native Brazilian traditions. Andrade’s concept of cultural cannibalism was important to many later Brazilian artistic movements, including the Neo-Concretist and Tropicalismo movements of the 1960’s.

It was the composer Heitor Villa-Lobos who brought modern Brazilian music onto the international world stage. Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1887, Villa-Lobos was mostly self taught, and gained much of his understanding of music through direct experience and observation of Brazilian musical culture. His formative musical experiences included work as a street musician in

Rio de Janeiro, and travel through the rural regions of Brazil, which allowed him to observe indigenous musical performances.

In 1923, after receiving encouragement from pianist Artur Rubinstein, Villa-Lobos set out for Paris, boldly proclaiming, “I have not come to learn, I have come to show what I have done up to now.” In Europe, Villa-Lobos had the chance to meet important European modernists including Edgard Varèse and Pablo Picasso, and to be recognized by the international community as an important modernist composer with a distinctive voice. During the 1920’s, Villa-Lobos also met the virtuoso classical guitarist Andrés Segovia, whose commission led to a set of twelve etudes based on figures played by itinerant Brazilian street musicians.

Altogether, Villa-Lobos went on to compose over 2000 works by the time of his death in 1959. In his compositions, Villa-Lobos successfully combined Brazilian folk influences with elements of the European classical tradition. Like other great Brazilian modernists, Villa-Lobos created a body of work that reflects the emancipated spirit of modern Brazil, which received political expression in the declaration of independence of 1822, and was expressed artistically in the Modern Art Week event of 1922. Like Brazil itself, his rich work reflects the vibrant and complex multicultural history and democratic aspirations of Brazilian society, and ultimately, the universal aspiration for freedom shared by all human beings.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

PEDRO ROGÉRIO AGUIAR

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Listen to **Pedro Rogério Aguiar** perform the bagatelles, and the need for spoken language melts away. There are only six strings on his acoustic guitar, but between the bronze thrum of the low “E” and the silvery ripples of the high “E,” Aguiar’s music encompasses the emotional spectrum. There’s an old song about a guitar gently weeping. Aguiar’s guitar doesn’t weep. It does all the emotions.

“You hold it near your heart when you play, so it’s very intimate. That’s always been something I loved about the guitar,” he said from his home in Munich, Germany.

Aguiar rose to international prominence in 2018, when at 28, he became the first Brazilian guitarist ever to win the fiercely, globally-competitive Alhambra Prize. Since, he’s let the music lead, performing across the globe while making his own home, for now, in Germany.

Growing up in Brazil, he says, the guitar was ubiquitous.

“Actually in Brazil, it’s a really common instrument,” he said. “Everybody plays one or has one at home or knows somebody who plays. For me, I had a cousin who just showed me some chords when I was around 12 and I was totally impressed with the sound. There were so many colors.”

He found an escape in the intricate chords and precise fingering acoustic guitar demands. “When you’re 12 or 13, you want to be alone a lot, and develop your own thoughts. So for me, being alone in my room with my guitar—not disturbed by anything else—was a way to do that. There could be chaos outside, but I’d go inside my bedroom and just play.”



Neither of his parents was particularly musical, he said, but even so, growing up in Brazil meant growing up with a built-in soundtrack.

“In Brazil, we have the idea that everywhere there is music around, not just the culture of formal concerts or bars, but everywhere else too. It’s outside, in the street, just a part of your everyday life. So even if your parents aren’t musical, you’re still immersed in it.”

Aguiar can now lay claim to being the most decorated guitarist of his generation, Alhambra being one of some 14 international competitions that he’s collected prizes in. He’s performed with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian State Opera, Munich Philharmonie Orchestra, Opera Garnier, and NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. He’s played some of the great operas—Mozart, Haydn, Rossini—in the Great Halls, Munich’s Cuvilliés-Theatre, Nymphenburg Castle and Allerheiligen-Hofkirche.

Aguiar had already studied extensively in Europe and, through a maze of scholarships, invitations and exchange programs, the U.S. He approached the Alhambra Festival prepared, but with low expectations.

“I saw the list of competitors and thought ‘oh, no chance for me. But (entering) it’s an opportunity for me to improve and develop technique and musicianship, And I just really enjoyed playing the music, the beauty of it,” he said.

Winning wasn’t just a important moment in Aguiar’s life. He made history as the first Brazilian artist to claim the prize, giving the win a national as well as a personal significance. With his Latin Independence programme, Aguiar returns to some of the pieces that dazzled the international judgement through the rigorous three-round contest. Some of his pieces for Project 88 are in celebration of Brazil, which celebrates its Bicentennial this year.

Being able to travel and perform live again is something he’s really looking forward to, he said. He spent parts of his involuntary COVID-hiatus like many musicians, recording alone in his apartment and playing out the window for the neighborhood.

“I was sad, of course. Where I was, the musicians were playing outside all the time. In Out the windows. So that was good but it’s different performing a live concert. It was difficult. But we’re still here.”

Read Pedro Rogério Aguiar’s thoughts on the program he brings to Project 88:

The idea for this program is to showcase the bridge Villa-Lobos made between popular and classical music for the Brazilian guitar. He was the first to write for guitar with the specific notation of the instrument. Previously, guitar music was written using piano notation because it was uncommon for guitar musicians to have musical training.

In the first part of the program, we’ll hear different compositional aspects of Villa-Lobos’ work. Chôros No. 1 is the first piece of the 17 cycles of Chôros, one of his most important works from the 1920s. Chôro became a genre of Brazilian music that translates into “crying” and the famous Chôros No.1 requires the guitarist to achieve that lamenting quality of the sound. Next, we’ll hear three pieces from the Brazilian Popular Suite, in which Villa-Lobos follows the tradition of European dance music, such as Mazurka, Gavota, and Waltz. Concluding the first half of this program, I will play a selection of Villa-Lobos’ Études that he composed in Paris and were revolutionary for guitar literature, both technically and musically. The famous guitarist Andrés Segovia, to whom the etudes were dedicated, said that these études were impossible to play, to which Villa-Lobos countered by taking the guitar from Segovia’s hands and playing them.

The second half of the program is dedicated to the composers who influenced or were influenced by Villa-Lobos. João Pernambuco played together with Villa-Lobos in Rodas de Chôro in Rio de Janeiro, which are gatherings of musicians playing leisurely. Pernambuco, like the vast majority of guitarists at the time, had no musical training. It is worth remembering that playing the guitar at this time was seen as vagrancy, which could even lead to arrest. Next, we’ll hear three works by Dilermando Reis who was undoubtedly the most successful guitarist in Brazil. He was the former president of Brazil Juscelino Kubitscheck’s guitar teacher and had a radio show. It’s important to me, because he was the first guitarist in the new capital and my grandparents, as candangos — people from northeastern Brazil who migrated to the capital as workers in the construction of Brasília — had a very strong relationship with Dilermando’s music.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with Consul General of Brazil Benoni Belli

BY CATEY SULLIVAN



It's been 200 years since Brazil shucked off the Portuguese colonial government and became an independent, sovereign nation. But the Bicentennial of 1822 isn't the only major anniversary going on right now for the South American country that gave the world Pelé, Gisele Bündchen, and Heitor Villa Lobos. A century ago, an elite group of what we would today call "influencers," created a week-long art festival that would shape generations of painters, sculptors, writers, and dancers through the 20th century and straight on into the 21st.

The São Paulo Modern Art Week—often called simply The Week—featured seven days of concerts, lectures, exhibits, poetry readings, and architectural installations on a scale similar to the Chicago Humanities Festival. The Week was never repeated, but its influence—and its celebration of Brazilian art and culture—is still felt today.

Read the thoughts about the 200th celebration of Brazil's Independence and the 100th anniversary of Modern Art Week shared by the Consul General of Brazil in Chicago Benoni Belli in this exclusive interview below:

Q: *Modern Art Week happened in 1922, in tandem with Brazil's Centennial celebrations of its independence from Portugal. Were those two events related?*

A: The year of 1922 was a landmark in Brazil when the Brazilian people celebrated a full century

of independence from Portugal. The year 1922 also put Brazilian art on the international map. The idea grew from the art galleries of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Artists dedicated a week to modern art, to run alongside the celebrations of Brazil's Centennial.

The Modern Art Week aimed at transforming this moment of celebration into one of artistic emancipation. A series of concerts, readings, lectures, dances, and exhibitions of art sought to claim independence from traditional forms and styles while announcing the arrival of Brazilian modernism. This was the first collective manifestation in favor of a new and modern spirit in the arts.

Q: *What political impact did The Modern Art Week have in Brazil? How did Modern Art Week help Brazil proclaim its independence from European Art?*

A: The organizers didn't actually have an agreed artistic proposal, but took a bold step. They were united by the desire of going beyond traditional art with a sense of artistic freedom. They searched for a new language not only for visual arts, but also for literature, music, architecture, and dance.

Artists created some of the most avant-garde works ever seen in Brazil. Among the works showcased at the Modern Art Week was poetry by Mario de Andrade, art nouveau

paintings by Di Cavalcanti, and sculptures by Victor Brecheret.

The event was broadly recognized as a pivotal moment in the development of modern art, emphasizing the need for modern Brazil to become aware of its own heritage.

Q: *In the last 200 years, Brazil has emancipated itself from other countries and traditions, establishing itself as the center for arts and culture in South America. It seems that Modern Art Week has had a lasting effect throughout history, and influenced other art forms such as architecture and civil engineering. For example, the capital Brasilia was constructed in the shape of an airplane, but, most remarkably, it was done in less than 5 years. What is this urgency for rapid growth in Brazilian culture?*

A: The Modern Art Week's influence on the development of contemporary Brazilian art is remarkable. Brazilian art has acquired its own roots and definitions, hugely marked by its own stylistic innovations and emphasis on folklore and native themes.

Over the last two centuries, Brazil has displayed an impressive number of innovative contemporary artists working in painting, sculpture, and photography, to name a few. In the architecture field, there are few cities in the world that fascinate architecture lovers as much as Brasília. The Brazilian capital was built within an impressively short five-year span in the mid-20th century.

It's hard to pick the best contemporary art museums and galleries that Brazil has to offer, cementing the country as an art and culture destination. With largely acclaimed cultural institutions and smaller art studios, there is a great mix of galleries to explore with world-class exhibitions and collections celebrating both homegrown and international artistry, from modern masters to newly emerging talents.

Throughout Brazil, a great way to learn about the broader or local culture is to explore the artwork. The art of Brazil represents the contemporary movement, feelings, and ideas of the time and place. It is a deeper way to gain an understanding of the country and its people.

Q: *What are the impacts that all of these events have had on Brazil's international relations in establishing itself as an independent country?*

A: The ideas that emerged during the Week of 22 unfolded into various movements that carried its legacy forward. An event that not only brought immediate impact but also kept reverberating over the years.

The Week of Modern Art of 1922 was a milestone for the new Brazil that emerged in the face of so many transformations. After two centuries, it's now the occasion to celebrate not only the Independence Proclamation back in 1822 but also the Independence as a continuous process of building a generous, open, tolerant, and multicultural society in Brazil. It is time to celebrate the strength and richness of Brazilian culture, music, and civil society.

In this context, Brazil has a special relationship with the United States, as the American Revolution inspired our ideas of freedom and sovereignty. We are happy to rekindle these traditional ties of friendship based on the shared values of democracy and human rights, which are the bedrocks of our countries and the best guarantees of a better life for our people.

The General Consulate of Brazil in Chicago is sponsoring performances that highlight Brazilian music at Project 88 during this calendar year. Stay tuned for more.

SAUDADES DO BRASIL

JESSICA SPAFFORD, soprano

ÉLIDER DIPAULA, piano

MAY 14

SATURDAY 6:30 P.M.

WALDEMAR HENRIQUE (1905-1995)

UIRAPURÚ

FIZ DA VIDA UMA CANÇÃO

TAMBA TAJÁ

CLÁUDIO SANTORO (1919-1989)

CANÇÕES DE AMOR, SÉRIE 1:

OUVE O SILÊNCIO

ACALANTO DA ROSA

AMOR QUE PARTIU

JAYME OVALLE (1894-1955)

AZULÃO

INTERMISSION

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959)

CANÇÕES TÍPICAS BRASILEIRAS:

MÔKÔCÊ CÊ-MAKÁ

XANGÔ

ESTRELA É LUA NOVA

FLORESTA DO AMAZONAS:

CANÇÃO DE AMOR

MELODIA SENTIMENTAL

BACHIANAS BRASILEIRAS NO. 5:

ÁRIA "CANTILENA"



JESSICA SPAFFORD Soprano

Coloratura soprano **Jessica Spafford** has had success both nationally and abroad as a performer and pedagogue and currently serves as Visiting Assistant Professor of Music in Voice and Theory at Emory & Henry College. Additionally, along with her colleague Joshua Boggs, she is a founding Associate Artistic Director of AppOpera, a new opera company the duo started in the Tri-Cities region.

Jessica earned her doctorate in music performance, pedagogy, and literature from James Madison University in 2017. Since then, she has taught courses at James Madison University, Mary Baldwin University, Bridgewater College, Eastern Mennonite University, and the University of Alabama. In August 2018, she joined the faculty at Judson College as an Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Study Abroad and later became the Head of the Music Department in 2019. While there, she taught voice lessons, vocal pedagogy, music history, music appreciation, vocal literature, choir, music theory, sight-singing, and ran the opera workshop program.

In addition to her teaching career, Dr. Spafford also maintains an active performing schedule. Aside from being an avid recitalist and master class clinician, in 2018 she presented and sang the U.S. premiere of Lauren Spavelko's song cycle *Baby Book* at the Music by Women Festival, the world premiere of songs by Larry Taylor at the Bridgewater Poetry Festival, was a featured soloist for songs by Bernstein and excerpts from *Candide* with the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival, collaborated on an operatic concert project with the Bronx opera, and was a Guest Artist for the 38th Annual Contemporary Music Festival honoring Libby Larsen at James Madison University. Dr. Spafford has served as the soprano soloist on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Schubert's Mass in G with the Shenandoah Chamber Society, and on songs by Elizabeth Raum and Stephen Hartke—both with the composers in residence—and as Gretel in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* with Luray Opera. In June 2016, she performed in Dresden, Germany, having been recruited to sing the Queen of the Night with the Radebeul Landesbühnen Sachsen Theater in their production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. While abroad, she also performed the role of Lucy in Menotti's *The Telephone* with the Mittelsächsisches Theater and spent time giving recitals in various cities in Germany and Austria.

Previously, she won the Columbus Opera's young singer competition while at Ohio Wesleyan University and performed with the Central

JESSICA SPAFFORD Soprano, continued

Ohio Symphony Orchestra. She earned her Master of Music degree from Duquesne University, where she studied with Sari Gruber.

Other prominent teachers include Anne Kopta, Marilyn Nims, and Dorothy Maddison. Spafford has performed numerous leading roles in her career, such as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Soeur Constance in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Madame Herz in *Der Schauspieldirektor*, and Cunegonde in *Candide*.

**ÉLIDER DIPAULA** piano

Praised by the Chicago Tribune as a “highly personable, exceptionally talented pianist,” **Élider DiPaula** is a Brazilian classical musician, composer and pedagogue. Since winning the Orestes Farinello National Piano Competition at the age of seven, he has received numerous accolades, including as guest soloist of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Goiás, and the award of a commission by the Brazilian concert series Goiânia Música Hoje.

DiPaula earned his conservatory diploma at Escola de Música de Anápolis, and was subsequently invited to join their music faculty at the age of seventeen. Concurrently, DiPaula studied piano at the Universidade Federal de Goiás in the studio of Dr. Ana Flávia Frazão. In his undergraduate experience at Universidade Federal de Goiás, DiPaula was awarded by the CAPES/FIPSE program to be part of a student exchange program at Marshall University. Upon receiving his undergraduate degree, DiPaula joined the faculty of the Instituto Basileu França, the largest conservatory in central Brazil, serving as piano professor, lecturer, and as coordinator of both the Chamber Music Department and the International Artist Exchange program.

In addition to his artistic and pedagogical accomplishments, DiPaula established the Catartístico Society, founded the Escola de Músicos, coordinated the 8th National Composers Conference at Federal University of Goiás, and was the co-creator of the Contemporary Music Exhibition *Som de Minuto*. While still performing actively, he premiered and recorded works by several Brazilian and American composers. In recent years, DiPaula dedicated a few of his solo performances to the works of Debussy, Villa-Lobos, and Ronaldo Miranda. In 2022, DiPaula

will present several performances in celebration of the 200 years of the Independence of Brazil as well as a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Modern Art Week that revolutionized art culture in South America.

DiPaula earned his Master of Music degree in piano performance at James Madison University, where he studied with Dr. Paulo Steinberg and Dr. Gabriel Dobner. Under the tutelage of Dr. Ludmila Lazar, DiPaula received the Artist Diploma in Piano Performance from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

In 2018, DiPaula launched the non-profit organization Project 88 Music Academy, for which he continues to serve as the executive director. Additionally, as artistic director, he currently leads the fourth season of Project 88's Concert Series.

In recognition for his work for Project 88, DiPaula was awarded the Center for Arts Leadership Seed Grant from Chicago College of Performing Arts in 2019 and the Social Justice Alumni Award from Roosevelt University during its 75th Anniversary Celebration in 2020. He is also currently on faculty at Project 88 Music Academy and Oak Park School of Music, and runs his own private studio in Uptown Chicago.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Saudades Do Brasil

BY DAVID POWERS

The term “*saudades*” refers to feelings of deep melancholy and nostalgia which are said to characterize the Brazilian temperament. *Saudades Do Brasil* includes songs by Brazilian composers that evoke this feeling perfectly, as they combine elements of the European classical tradition with aspects of Brazilian folk music. The first half of the program features Waldemar Henrique, Cláudio Santoro, and Jayme Ovalle, composers who followed in the footsteps of pioneer Heitor Villa-Lobos, while the second half focuses on works by Villa-Lobos himself.

Waldemar Henrique was a pianist and composer who spent many years traveling through the Amazonian rainforest and learning about its folklore. His music is full of references to indigenous tales and regional folklore, and many regard him to be the greatest lyric composer from the North of Brazil. Cláudio Santoro was a composer, conductor, and violinist who studied with Nadia Boulanger and co-founded the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra. Jayme Ovalle was a self-taught composer and poet who was part of Brazil’s “Second Nationalist Generation.” He is especially known for his *canção Azulão* (“Bluebird”), a setting of lyrics by Manuel Bandeira, which has been recorded by many legendary sopranos including Conchita Badia, Montserrat Caballé, Kathleen Battle.

Composer Heitor Villa-Lobos was born in Rio de Janeiro on March 5, 1887, and grew up amid a nation undergoing profound transformations. A year after his birth, slavery was abolished, and the following year, Brazil banished the emperor and became a constitutional republic. Following the abolition of slavery, former slaves began to move south from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro, where

they mingled with newly arrived immigrants from Portugal, Spain, and Italy. In this atmosphere, new forms of urban Brazilian popular music such as the *maxixe*, *choro*, and *samba* were born.

Heitor Villa-Lobos grew up in a musical family; his father Raul regularly attended the opera and hosted frequent nights of chamber music at home. Heitor’s parents taught him to play the cello and clarinet, and he spent many evenings stealthily observing his father’s musical gatherings. Heitor was also fascinated with Brazilian popular music, and the “disreputable” guitar, which he learned to play in secret. Later, after traveling around Brazil, Villa-Lobos returned to Rio de Janeiro, where he played cello in city orchestras at symphony halls, cinemas, and cafés, while also spending time with the *chorões*, street musicians who performed *choros* at birthdays and weddings.

A crucial event in Villa-Lobos’ career as a composer was the Week of Modern Art of 1922. As Brazil celebrated one hundred years of independence from Portugal, Brazilian artists gathered in São Paulo to celebrate their independence from traditional European forms. Up to this point, Villa-Lobos had been rejected by the academic musical establishment of Brazil, who accused him of vulgarity and “Debussyanism.” Now, his outsider status was vindicated as Villa-Lobos was the only Brazilian composer represented at Modern Art Week, where his works were played alongside those of leading European modernists, including Eric Satie, Francis Poulenc, and Claude Debussy. From this point on, Villa-Lobos became a leading force in Brazil’s musical culture.

The Canções Típicas Brasileiras, or “Typical Brazilian songs”, are based on Brazilian popular melodies collected by Villa-Lobos from a variety of sources. “Môkôcê Cê-Maká” is based on a lullaby sung by the indigenous Paresi from the state of Mato Grosso. It pairs a dramatic melody with a playfully chromatic rhythmic accompaniment. “Xangô” is based on a traditional *ponto cantado*, that is, a song in honor of an *orixá* in the Afro-Brazilian religion *candomblé*. “Xangô” honors the king of thunder, lightning, and fire, reflecting its theme in the piano accompaniment, which features driving ostinatos, rolling bass tremolos, and wild glissandi. “Estrela é Lua Nova” honors a good spirit in the Afro-Brazilian religion *umbanda*. It features a lively melody accompanied by percussive tone clusters in the piano which outline a traditional Brazilian rhythm.

Floresta do Amazonas began as the score for the Hollywood film *Green Mansions*. After most of his music for the film was replaced, Villa-Lobos went on to rearrange it. In 1959, the final year of his life, Villa-Lobos released a stereo version of *Floresta do Amazonas* with United Artists Records that featured legendary Brazilian soprano Bidu Sayão in her final recorded performance. The two songs highlighted for *Saudades Do Brasil*, “Canção de Amor” (“Love Song”) and “Melodia Sentimental” (“Sentimental Melody”), both showcase Villa-Lobos’ skill at crafting memorable melodies.

It is fitting that *Saudades do Brasil* should close with the beloved “Cantilena” from the *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*. The first movement perfectly evokes the feeling of melancholic yearning known as *saudade*. It opens with a haunting wordless

melody in the soprano, which is reminiscent of a Brazilian *modinha*, or popular love song. Then, in the middle section, the soprano intones a poem by Ruth Valadares Corrêa: “In the infinite the moon rises sweetly, beautifying the evening... The gentle light of the moon now awakens the cruel saudade that laughs and cries.” Over dark descending chromatic harmonies the melody drives to a dramatic climax until finally, the wordless melody returns. As the soprano hums a reprise of the initial melody, the memory of the stormy middle section now infuses the music with the deepest sense of longing and nostalgia.



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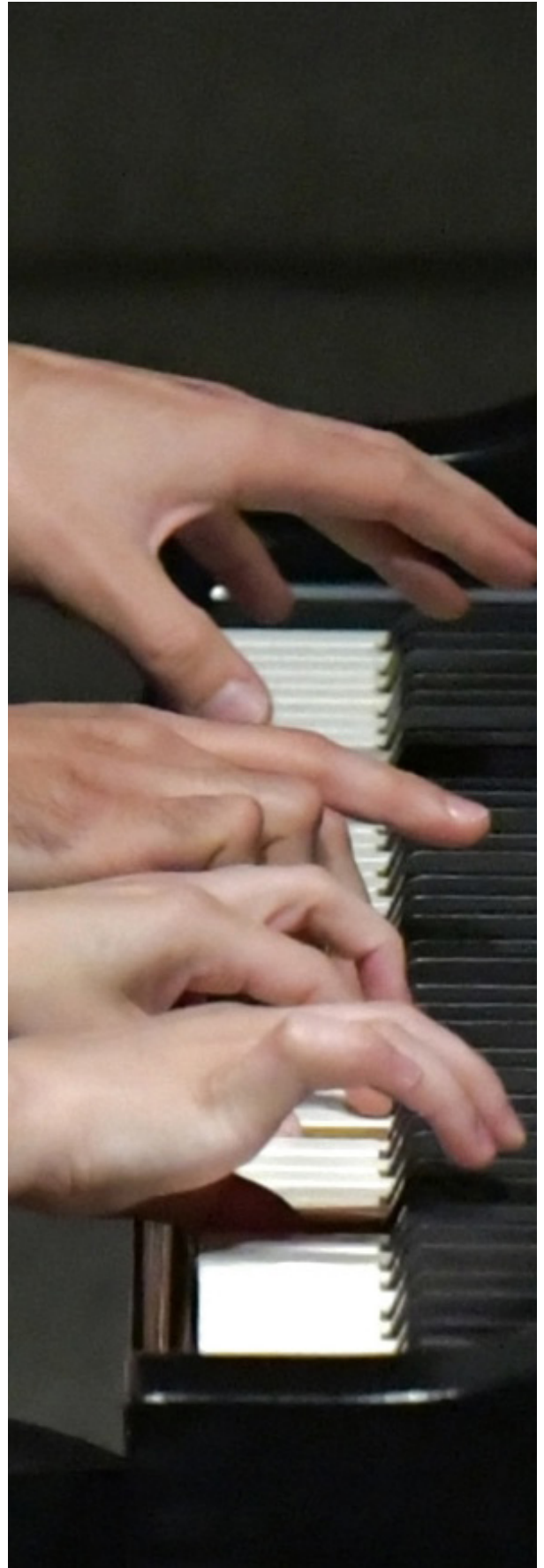
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MAY
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