



Caetano Veloso & Gilberto Gil

Two Friends, One Century of Music

Apr 20 & 21, 2016 at 8pm | BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

CAETANO VELOSO, dubbed “one of the greatest songwriters of the century” (*The New York Times*), is among the most influential and beloved artists to emerge from Brazil. Since the 1960s, Veloso has made more than 30 recordings and has developed a strong international following. Born in Santo Amaro, Bahia in 1942, Veloso began his professional musical career in 1965 in São Paulo. In his first compositions he drew on the bossa novas of João Gilberto, but rapidly began to develop his own distinctive style. Absorbing diverse musical and aesthetic ideas, Veloso, with Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, his sister Maria Bethânia, and other poets and intellectuals, founded a movement called Tropicália. By experimenting with new sounds and words, adding electric guitars, and utilizing the imagery of modern poetry, Veloso became a musical revolutionary.

This short-lived movement, founded in 1968, ended when Veloso and Gil were sent into exile and lived in London. Now universally

credited with redefining what is known as Brazilian music, it laid the groundwork for a renaissance of Brazilian popular music. Veloso and Gil returned to Brazil in 1972 and found that Tropicália had remained intact and their audience had continued to grow.

Although Tropicália set the tone for Veloso’s career, his music has evolved greatly over the years. Incorporating elements of rock, reggae, fado, tango, samba canção, baião, and rap—with lyrics containing some of the best poetry in a musical tradition rich in verse—Caetano’s music is sometimes traditional, sometimes contemporary, often hybrid.

Veloso followed his 1999 Grammy Award-winning Nonesuch release, *Livro*, which garnered critical acclaim in the US and his first-ever US tour, with a soundtrack for the Carlos Diegues film *Orfeu*. In spring 2001, Nonesuch released *Noites do Norte* (Nights of the North), a meditation on themes of race, slavery, and Brazil’s quest for a national identity. Later that

year came *Omaggio a Federico e Giulietta*, a live recording made in 1997 in Rimini. In 1998 another live album, a double disc recorded in Caetano’s home state, called *Live in Bahia*, was released in conjunction with the publication by Knopf of Caetano’s memoir, *Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil*.

In 2003, Nonesuch released *The Best of Caetano Veloso*, a retrospective of Veloso’s work from 1989 to 2001, including a live rendition of the haunting “Cucurrucucú Paloma.” *A Foreign Sound* (2004), his first all-English set, paid tribute to 20th-century American pop composers. And in 2007, Veloso, backed by a young Brazilian trio, created a surprisingly brash rock sound for the album *Cê*, about which *The Boston Globe* notes, “The man’s voice is as richly seductive and thoughtful as ever.”

GILBERTO GIL, a Grammy-winning Brazilian singer, songwriter, guitarist, and activist, is recognized for his far-reaching musical influence both at home and the world over.

Gil was born in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, in 1942 and was infatuated with music from

a very early age. His musical studies began with the drums and trumpet, but then soon shifted to the accordion, which was his primary instrument for a number of years. Upon hearing João Gilberto, Gil made the switch to guitar.

Since that time Gil’s impact on the music of Brazil has been enormous. He, along with Caetano Veloso, helped to found the musical movement Tropicália, which combined the broad interests of young Brazilian musicians in the 1960s—both musical and political. The music that Veloso and Gil made was deemed threatening to the authoritarian Brazilian regime in power at the time, and, in 1969, the two were arrested and then forced to leave the country.

Gil has long since returned to his homeland and even served in several political offices, including as Brazil’s Minister of Culture from 2003 to 2008. In 1994, Nonesuch released *Tropicália 2*, a 25th-anniversary musical celebration of Gil and Veloso’s artistic and personal friendship, that represented, as *Rolling Stone* put it, “Brazil’s two 50-something songwriting giants at the peak of their powers.”

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