

# LUÍSA MAITA

## LERO-LERO









Since the moment she was born on April 27, 1982 in the Bela Vista neighborhood of São Paulo, Luísa Taubkin Maita has been surrounded by music. In fact, it was a love of music that brought her parents together, helping them cross the divide of their different family backgrounds. Luísa's father, Amado Maita, was a working class musician of Syrian Muslim roots and her mother, Myriam Taubkin, came from a wealthy family of European Jewish heritage, and has been an important concert producer and cultural advocate for over thirty years.

The diversity at home was reflected in the ethnically mixed neighborhood where Luísa spent her early childhood. Affectionately known as Bexiga, the area is home to Italian

and Arab immigrants living alongside migrants from Brazil's musically rich northeast. A microcosm of Brazil's history of cultural fusion, Bexiga is famous for its bustling energy, food and music, and it is home to Vai-Vai, São Paulo's most traditional samba school.

Luísa's father owned a parking lot in the neighborhood, and he spent his days in the lot office strumming on the guitar, writing songs, playing cards, smoking, drinking and receiving his many friends. A beloved and gregarious character, Amado had released an album in 1971 that is now considered a coveted holy grail for European and Japanese vinyl collectors. His passion for Brazilian music is reflected in the decision to name his three daughters after songs composed by bossa nova legend Antonio Carlos Jobim (Luísa is named after the classic song "Ana Luísa").

Even after the family moved to a small ranch on the southeastern part of São Paulo in search of a more peaceful place to raise their kids, Luísa's home was constantly filled with visiting musicians, who came to hang out and jam with her parents. "My father had a lot of musician friends who liked him a lot," remembers Luísa. "He was very good at uniting people. They'd visit him, fall in love with the ranch, and then they'd move in. Soon the place was filled with my father's friends, among them some great musicians."

Luísa sang a lot as a child. "My father liked to play for us, he loved the fact that my sister Teresa and I could sing in tune, and I've been singing all his songs and samba and bossa nova standards since I was very little." They even recorded advertising jingles professionally starting at the age of seven, including some political campaign songs that became quite famous across Brazil at the time.





Luísa was exposed at a very young age to the greats of Brazilian samba, bossa nova and jazz, and the music of legends such as João Gilberto, Tom Jobim, Nana Caymmi, Vinicius de Moraes, Milton Nascimento, Edu Lobo and Baden Powell provided a constant life soundtrack. As with so many Brazilian artists before her, the rhythms and energy of samba provides an essential underpinning. "The dance, the instruments, the tunes, the percussion, the body language, everything in samba influenced me a lot," notes Luísa. The more relaxed elegance of bossa nova is also a clear inspiration to Luísa's sound. "I love bossa nova, its silence, its sensuality, its vocal expression and aesthetics. It has a certain aura of peace that's very clear in my music."

Luísa was also enamored with American music, especially the laid back jazz of Billie Holiday and Chet Baker and the funky soul and pop of Ray Charles, Michael Jackson, Prince and Stevie Wonder. "Because of my schoolmates, I began to listen to the music that played on the radio. I also loved to go out to dance. So I heard a lot of music from the 80's and 90's, Brazilian music and foreign music."

Another aspect of her childhood that was very important to Luísa was her mother's Jewish family. "My grandfather was a religious man; he used to organize Jewish celebrations, and I remember my grandmother singing traditional Jewish songs for me. My mother's family lived in Jardim Europa, a wealthy neighborhood in São Paulo. I went to upper-class Jewish schools until I was 13. And that experience marked me too."

Luísa's parents divorced when she was a teenager. Her mother married a farmer and moved with the children to a rural area in the state of Minas Gerais. Surrounded by nature, Luísa

developed an appreciation for the natural world and was exposed to a completely different lifestyle from the sprawling urbanity of São Paulo. By the time she was seventeen, however, the city life was calling to her again, and Luísa moved back to São Paulo.

Luísa's started working at her uncle Benjamin Taubkin's record label, helping to sell CDs at concerts and generally learning the ropes of the music business. It was at her uncle's office that she met producer and musician Morris Picciotto (who now goes by the name Dr. Morris) and after taking some guitar lessons with him they began to perform together in local bars. Another uncle, Daniel Taubkin, invited Luísa to sing with his group, and Luísa was also making an impression as the vocalist for the group Urbanda, who released an album in 2003.

In 2006, the Brazilian singer Virginia Rosa recorded two of Luísa's compositions, and in 2009 popular singer Mariana Aydar's version of a song co-written by Luísa and frequent



collaborator Rodrigo Campos was selected as “Song of the Year” by *Rolling Stone Brazil* magazine. Luísa was also the featured vocalist on a widely-viewed promotional video directed by acclaimed filmmaker Fernando Meirelles (*City of God*) that was used in Rio’s successful bid for the 2016 Olympics. While these projects kept her active and greatly expanded her profile on the national scene, Luísa was still seeking her own voice.

She assembled a new band to perform songs by songwriters whose work had played an important part in her life. After a series of six gigs, she still wasn’t totally content with the musical direction. “At this point, I wasn’t certain if I should go on singing, if that was my thing or not. I went through weeks and weeks of questioning and doubt. It was then that I decided to stop, try to answer these questions, and begin to develop my own new approach. It took a lot of courage to understand what was going on and where I wanted to go. I began to write new songs, songs that expressed my feelings, what I wanted to say, to whom I wanted to say it -- a new sound, with my personality, with my look.”

Thus began the process of recording her first solo album. Working with frequent collaborator Rodrigo Campos and producer Paulo Lepetit, the album took two years to complete and was recorded with limited resources and lots of volunteer hours by the musicians involved. Using the off hours when Lepetit’s studio was not being contracted, they focused on perfection, recording songs over and over again until they were happy with them. “That was an important learning process, not to be satisfied with something that doesn’t really express what I wanted to say through my art,” states Luísa. “That’s why this album is so precious to me. It really represents my thoughts about music and the struggle to find this expression.”

Luísa’s demos were given to head of the independent record label Cumbancha by Béco Dranoff, a respected Brazilian producer who was the driving force behind a legendary series of albums for the Red Hot Organization, and who helped popularize the work of artists such as Bebel Gilberto and Bossacucanova through Ziguiriboom, the label he co-founded in 1998. As it happens, Cumbancha president Jacob Edgar was a longtime friend of Luísa’s uncle, Benjamin Taubkin, but he had no idea his old friend’s niece was such an amazing talent. From the moment he heard the first notes of *Lero-Lero*, Edgar knew Luísa was the perfect fit for the label’s Cumbancha Discovery line, which seeks to introduce exceptional new artists to a wider global audience.

The result of these efforts is *Lero-Lero*, an album with a relaxed yet energizing spirit that reflects Luísa’s personal artistic expression and outlook. With obvious allegiances to Brazilian samba and bossa nova, the songs on *Lero-Lero* also capture the influences of jazz, pop, soul and electronica that have captivated Luísa on her life’s journey so far. Luísa credits the inspiration for the album to her native city, its neighborhoods and its people. “The lyrics and the aura of the album focus on the peculiarities of Brazilian daily life, culture and human condition. That really inspires, fascinates, interests and moves me. And I think the album transmits these feelings. The album travels through themes that encourage Brazilians to wake up to a new life: dreams; passion; labor; the struggle for peace; interior acceptance.”

In a country overflowing with musical accomplishment, Luísa Maita demonstrates with *Lero-Lero* that she has the talent to rise above the fray and make a mark as one of Brazil’s most promising new singers. ■



# 01. Lero-Lero

*(Hey, What's Up)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00001

"Lero-Lero" is a slang term that translates as an informal, aimless conversation. A deconstructed samba about two friends from a ghetto on the outskirts of São Paulo who have each other's backs whenever trouble arises.

Quem vem ali agora:  
É lero-lero olho no olho e nada mais

Look who's coming now:  
Just, "Hey, What's up?"  
And a glance eye to eye

Esse é do mesmo time  
Não tem pressa e nem atraso  
Tudo é em paz

He's on our side  
No hurry, no delay  
Everything's all right

Parece o mesmo sangue  
Quando um pensa o outro sabe  
Nem fala não

He's of the same blood  
Our flow is telepathic  
Beyond words

E quando a vida aperta  
É lero-lero olho no olho e me volta a paz

And when life gets tough  
It's just, "Hey, What's up?"  
And a glance eye to eye  
And I'm back to all right

Quero dizer valeu irmão  
Quero dizer valeu irmão  
É nada mais

This is for you, my brother  
This is for you, my brother  
Everything's all right

## 02. Alento

*(Encouragement)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00002

Sung from the point of view of a “motoboy”, who zips through the city making deliveries, “Alento” is a celebration of São Paulo’s energy and industriousness. The basic rhythm of the song is a capoeira rhythm called *maculelê*.

Acordo cedo com o pé no freio  
E o mundo inteiro começa a girar  
No banheiro, olho no espelho  
Crio coragem e ponho pra andar

I get up early with my foot on the brake  
And the whole world begins to turn  
In the bathroom, I look in the mirror  
I take in the courage to get on the move

A carteira, a chave no bolso  
Tá carregando o meu celular  
Acredita, ninguém apita  
Quem vai querer hoje me segurar  
É, eu tô na vida e é pra virar  
Que a felicidade vem  
Eu tô sonhando mais além

Wallet and keys in my pocket  
my cell phone is charging  
Listen up, better let me be  
Nobody’s going to hold me back  
Yeah, I’m in control of my life  
So happiness will come  
So my dreams can fly

Não nem vem aqui me atazanar  
Se eu tô rindo é pra você  
Olha pro céu meu bem

Don’t mess with me  
If I’m laughing, I’m laughing for you  
Look up at the sky, honey

É eu não fui feita pra fingir  
Eu tô ligada é no amor  
Que se tem pra viver

I wasn’t born to fake it  
I’m tuned in to the love  
We have for life



## 03. Aí Vem Ele

*(There He Comes)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00003

A song about all the feelings and anxiety that an upcoming date provokes in two young people who are in love. This song features another capoeira rhythm, *São Bento Pequeno*, which Baden Powell used a lot.

Tava tão frio, quem chegou  
Quem se aproxima é o amor  
Sua certeza me olhou  
Segue a risca já vem

O que é que eu faço  
Agora pára olha o clima  
Como eu pensei  
Ai meu deus ave maria  
Ai o que é que eu falo  
Tá na hora vem chegando  
Ai aí vem ele  
Deixo vir e beijo e pronto

It was so cold, but look who's here  
Getting closer: it's love  
Your certainty gazed at me  
Follow its line, bringing you in

What do I do?  
Stop now, don't make a scene  
Just as I thought  
Oh, my God, Mother Mary  
What should I say  
The time has come  
And look who's here  
I take him in, I kiss him, and that's that







## 04. Desencabulada

(*Wanton*) (Luiz Felipe Gama and Rodrigo Campos) BR-LKT-08-00004

A made up word, desencabulada means the opposite of shy, being bold and at ease, a woman in a sensual state. A tribute to Brazilian women, the song tells of girl from the Rio de Janeiro hills losing herself in the music at a *baile funk* dance. It's a traditional samba with a funk beat.

Foi num baile funk  
E chegou de madrugada  
Desencabulada, quase tava nua  
Inda assoviava um refrão

It happened at a *Baile funk*\*  
She got home late at night  
Wanton, almost nude  
Still whistling the refrain

Isabel, morena  
Do cabelo cacheado  
Uma poesia de cintura e boca  
De olhar atento e sudutor

Isabel, brunette,  
Curly hair  
A poem of waist and mouth  
With a bright, seductive gaze

Foi num baile funk,  
Dançou, desesperada  
Seu suor banhava os parceiros muitos  
O refrão cantava sem pudor...

It happened at a Baile funk,  
She danced, madly  
Her sweat bathed her many partners  
She sang the refrain with no shame...

\**baile funk* – a party featuring Rio funk music (a genre with origins in Miami Bass)

## 05. Fulaninha

*(Jane Doe)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00012

A slang word that means “what’s-her-name,” “Fulaninha” talks about the fear and desire that comes with choosing which road to follow in life and the struggle to realize your dreams. It’s a *baião*, a northeastern rhythm, synchronized with a basic dancehall rhythm.

Fulaninha se foi na toada do amor  
Embarcou sem medo de cair  
Sem render nenhum passo de todo trajeto  
Dali iria até o fim

Onde é que aquilo ia dar  
E o medo vinha devagar  
Mas um desejo de sonhar  
Tomava conta do lugar

Arretada na meta o relógio rodando  
E a vida longe de existir  
Quando o mundo se abrindo,  
Fulana entendendo  
Era a ponte para se cumprir

Onde é que ponte ia dar  
E o medo vinha devagar  
Mas um desejo de sonhar  
Tomava conta do lugar

Jane Doe left town to the rhythm of love  
Set sail without fear  
She won’t miss a step along the way  
She’s gonna make it

Where would it all get her?  
And fear crept in slowly  
But her desire to dream  
Just took over

Fixed on her goal, the clock ticking  
A life still to be made  
The world opening itself up  
She’s understanding  
It was a bridge to be crossed

Where would the bridge get her?  
And fear crept in slowly  
But her desire to dream  
Just took over



## 08. Mire e Veja

*(Look and See)* (Rodrigo Campos and Dr. Morris) BR-LKT-08-00007

“Mira e Veja” describes a person riding his bike around and observing the colorful scenes of daily life in the city. A portrait and tribute to São Paulo, which is known for being gray and urban. The song suggests that if you change the way you look at it, you’ll see that it’s full of energy, life and beauty.

Sigo o meu caminho  
Vago pelo caos

I take my road  
I wander through chaos

Pedalando minha bicicleta  
Na cidade grande a vadiar  
Revirando cada canto esquina  
Deus, é todo cinza meu lugar

I ride my bike idly  
Around my big city  
I turn every corner  
God, this place is all gray

Paro rente a um muro  
Vejo uma janela

I stop by a wall  
I see a window

Nela vejo um vaso, vejo a rosa,  
Vejo um vulto, um corpo de mulher  
Magnético arrepio vivo e  
Logo viro rumo outro lugar

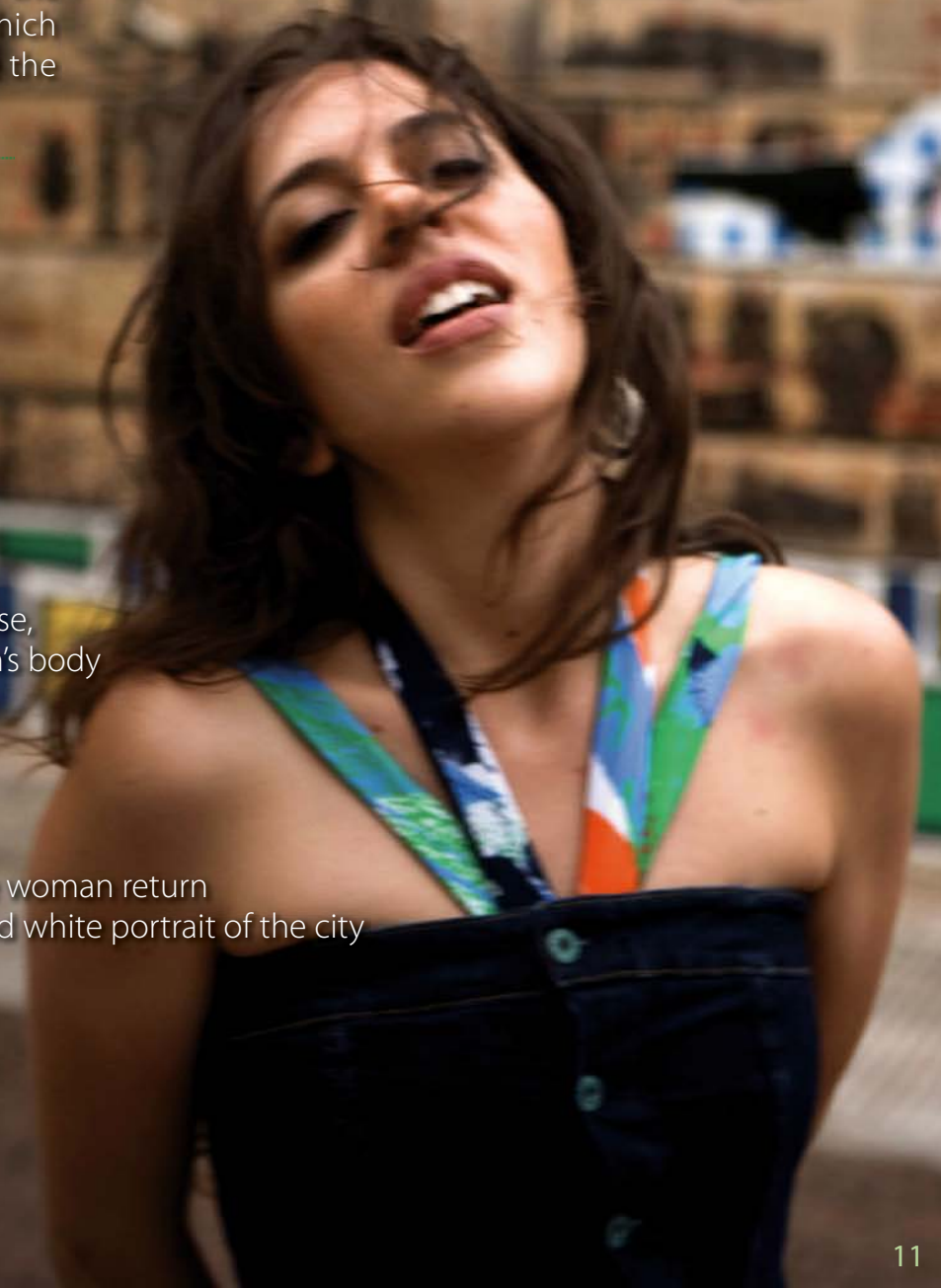
There, I see a vase, I see the rose,  
I see a shadow flash, a woman’s body  
Magnetic, quick chill and  
I move on to someplace else

Pedalando devagar  
Mesma ausência de cor  
Voltam janela, rosa e mulher  
Revelam cor no retrato PB da cidade  
Ao meu redor

Pedaling slowly  
Same absence of color  
The window, the rose and the woman return  
To reveal color in the black and white portrait of the city  
Around me

Vago meu caminho  
Sigo pelo caos

I go aimlessly  
I wander through chaos



## 07. Maria e Moleque

*(Maria and the Kid)* (Rodrigo Campos) BR-LKT-08-00006

“Maria e Moleque” tells the story of a young drug dealer from a ghetto on the outskirts of the city who falls in love with a married woman and wins her over. A samba with an Afro accent, it was inspired by the music of João Bosco and Brazilian films such as *City of God*.

Moleque tava dando um tempo na fogueira  
Puxando um “back” na ladeira da favela  
Quando passou Maria Rita do Anescar  
A mais cheirosa e mais bonita do lugar

Moleque se mandou atrás da rapariga  
Deixou Formiga no controle da favela  
Mas o diabo é que a donzela era do lar  
Já tinha dois barrigudinhos com o Anescar  
(O Cidimar e o Tom)

Moleque pegou pelo braço da menina  
Mal disse a sina de não ser seu namorado  
Menina estremeceu, correu, tropeçou  
Era o malandro da quebrada e a desejou  
Se emocionou, sorriu

E se amaram num opala de vidro fumê  
Em qualquer encruzilhada, Vila das Mercês  
Rita suspirava embevecida,  
Encharcada, o próprio prazer vertia

E se amaram num opala de vidro fumê  
Em qualquer encruzilhada, Vila das Mercês  
Rita cavalgava enfurecida  
Exalava um cheiro de maresia

The Kid was taking some time by the fire  
Smoking a joint in the alley up to the slums  
When Maria Rita do Anescar passed by  
The sweetest smelling, most beautiful girl in the hood

The Kid went after the girl  
He left Formiga in charge of the slums  
But the hard truth was that she was taken  
She already had two sons with Anescar  
(Cidimar and Tom)

The Kid grabbed her by the arm  
He cursed her for not being his,  
The girl shook him off, she ran, she tripped  
He was the boss of the hood and he wanted her  
She was touched, she smiled

And they made love in an Opala with tinted windows  
At a street corner, Vila das Mercês  
Rita sighed in total bliss  
All wet, her pleasure overflowed

And they made love in an Opala with tinted windows  
At a street corner, Vila das Mercês  
Rita rode him with fury  
Exuding the scent of the sea



## 08. Anunciou

*(Declared)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00008

"Anunciou" talks about crucial moments in life, when you suffer a great loss, or when you need extra strength, when you need to recover, make choices and give something up. It is also structured on the capoeira beat, *São Bento Pequeno* and is dedicated to musician and inspiration Fernando Falcão.

Ardeu, queimou  
Anunciou que a vida virou  
Doeu, comeu  
Mas quem chegou não renunciou  
Amou, entrou  
Não se perdeu na hora do adeus  
Se foi, voltou  
Imaginou o que quis...

It stung, it burned  
It declared that life had changed  
It hurt, it gnawed  
But the one who arrived didn't back off  
He loved, he came in  
Didn't get lost upon saying goodbye  
He left, he came back  
He imagined whatever he wanted...

Abalou, sofreu  
Encontrou, amou  
Arrancou, plantou  
Encantou, caiu

He was shaken, he suffered  
He found, he loved  
He uprooted, he planted  
He cast a spell, he fell



## 09. Um Vento Bom

*(A Good Wind)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00009

A positive song about those moments when you find harmony in life, when everything makes sense and is in its place. Sometimes in life, things connect as if they were a well-choreographed dance.

Um vento bom, eu descobri  
Agora é hora de viver

A good wind, I discovered  
Now is the time to live

Cê vai sacar, quando virar  
Que tudo encontra o seu lugar

When it happens, you'll know  
That everything will find its place

Um certo amor, a deslizar  
Nas entrelinhas pelo ar  
Vai sussurrar, quando chegar  
Agora é hora de viver

A certain love glides  
Between the lines through the air  
When it comes it will whisper  
Now is the time to live

Quero te ver dançar  
Dançar tão leve a flutuar  
Eu quero só sentir  
Que o clima agora vai se abrir

I want to see you dance  
Dance so light you float  
I just want to feel  
That the atmosphere is going to  
lighten up now.



# 10. Alívio

*(Relief)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00010

A song about the pleasures of Brazil: the sea, love, samba, nature, the sky, dance, and how all this can give you tools to transcend your troubles and find the meaning of life. A samba with Afro accents and a 6/8 rhythm on the refrain, "Alívio" is dedicated to singer Virginia Rosa.

Quem nunca pirou  
Ao mergulhar nesse mar

Who's never gone nuts  
Diving into this sea

Quem nunca sentiu  
Um samba cá de Candeia

Who's never felt  
A samba here by Candeia

Será que vai achar  
Será que vai achar  
Será...

Will he find  
Will he find  
Will he...

Quem nunca sonhou  
Ao ver o céu de estrelas

Who's never dreamed  
Looking at the starry sky

Quem nunca dançou  
Um samba nessa avenida

Who's never danced  
A samba on this street

Será que vai amar  
Será que vai achar  
Será...

Will he love  
Will he find  
Will he...

# 11. Amor e Paz

*(Love and Peace)* (Luísa Maita) BR-LKT-08-00011

The meeting of peace with silence, with the absence of conflict, with purest love, this song was inspired by the image of a father lulling his son to sleep, and is an homage to bossa nova pioneer João Gilberto.

O amor ficou  
Não vai, não vem  
A paz chegou  
Não dói, não quer

Love stayed  
It stopped it's coming and going  
Peace has come  
It doesn't hurt, it doesn't want

A maravilha que eu via, que eu via  
Só me fez chorar  
Cansei, achei

The wonders I saw  
Only made me cry  
I got tired, I found

Tô do teu lado tão perto, tão perto  
Pra te proteger  
É meu, é teu, é...

I'm by your side, so close, so close  
To protect you  
It's mine, it's yours, it's...





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**Acknowledgements:** This album is dedicated to Alexandre Scoz and Myriam Taubkin. Thank you...what would become of me without you?! This album is deeply influenced by the music and personalities of Amado Maita, Daniel Taubkin and Fernando Falcão. Rodrigo Campos and Paulo Lepetit – I was really lucky to find this musical chemistry and your great support. Thank you very much. This album is ours! Thank you, my family, Teresa, João, Marcelo and Tomas. What a beautiful family... Thank you, Benjamim, for direction. Without you, maybe I would never have found it. It's so good to have you around... And it's dedicated to the younger Maitas: Lígia, Martim and Marcela. To your beautiful future!

**To the supporters whose work, since the beginning, have helped in many ways:** Virginia Rosa, Rinaldo Martinucci, Sérgio Martins, Mariana Aydar, Heloisa Aidar, Béco Dranoff, Maurício Tagliari and Cacá, Marcos Sassa, Marcus Preto, Juliano Polimeno, Demetrio Portugal, Gerson Martins, Bocato, Hugo Hori, Magú, Pedro Dantas, Raphael Moreira, Marco Sarti, São Mateus Community, Nenê Campos, Sérgio Roizenblit, Emerson Villani, Emiliano Maita, Kika, Karina, Alessandra Vidotti, Phillippe Bertrand, Pedro Ianhez, Pricila Young, Daniel, Rafael and Tati – from Música de Bolso, Renato Canegusuco, Airton Junior, Homero Ferreira, Fernando Yazbek, Marcelo Pretto, Guigão, Ana Luiza, Maria Luiza Kfour, Luis Felipe Gama, Dr. Morris, Gal Oppido, Kuki Storlarski, Fabio Tagliaferri, Lenza, Théó da Cuíca, Jorge Neguinho, Tica Bertani, Alberto Ranelucci, Edu Ferreira, Aline Santini, César Cardoso, Arthur de Faria, Fernanda Takai, Vinicius Pereira, José Maria Carvalho, Urbanda, Zé Luiz and Rozana, Guilherme Kastrup, Marquinhos Villas Boas, Telume Ellen, Junio Barreto, Swami Jr, Beto Villares, Maya Shibo, Siba, Chico Neves, Erico Theobaldo, Felipe Arruda, Maneco Jr, Rodolfo Stroeter, Solange Jacinto, Eliane Verbena, Mauro Dias, Marcelo Maita, Sérgio Reze, Mariana Maita, Antonio Pinto and Ambulante Discos, Jacob Edgar, Simeon Chapin and the whole Cumbancha team.

1. Lero-Lero 4.43
2. Alento 3.54
3. Aí Vem Ele 4.13
4. Desencabulada 3.01
5. Fulaninha 3.36
6. Mire E Veja 4.37
7. Maria E Moleque 4.43
8. Anunciou 3.15
9. Um Vento Bom 3.49
10. Alívio 3.31
11. Amor e Paz 2.44

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