

## Brazil's Singing Diva Maria Rita Opens New York's Brazilian Film Festival

Contributed by Ernest Barteldes  
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One does not need to understand Brazilian culture in order to appreciate this annual festival that once again comes to New York city, beginning with a concert from one of the country's greatest divas, Maria Rita Mariano, who is currently on tour to promote her most recent release, *Samba Meu* (Warner Latina)

Mariano has become one of the biggest stars in that country's contemporary music scene since the release of her self-titled debut in 2003, when she made her mark by singing pop-flavored songs with a jazzy feel, being backed simply by piano, acoustic bass and drums. On the new disc, she shifted gears a bit by recording a selection of sambas written by various songwriters of different generations.

She told us in an e-mail interview that the choice to make a disc of sambas came "from the fact that I was embraced by the samba crowd." She also explained that she had always "flirted with the genre on my previous discs - it is a real love affair."

Before plunging into a professional career in music, Mariano lived in New York with her father, keyboardist and arranger Cesar Camargo Mariano (her mother, famed singer Elis Regina, passed away in 1981), and she spent various summers attending concerts in Central Park, where she will be performing for the first time.

"I have butterflies in my stomach, specially because of the memories I have of the time I lived in New York," she said. "I remember the excitement that my friends and I had whenever we went to a concert in Central Park, and now I am playing there. I feel like a child - my friends will all be there, it will be crazy... I am not ashamed to say that I am extremely excited about it."

Though she concentrates mostly on material from the new release on the current tour, crowd pleasers like Marcelo Camelo's "Cara Valente" and Milton Nascimento's "Encontros e Despedidas" will surely be on the setlist. Backed by the Branco & Preto Quintet (who have played with her throughout the tour), Rita's samba repertoire will surely turn Rumsey Field into a bona-fide samba school.

Also on the menu is Walter Lima Jr's *Os Desafinados*, a film about a fictional bossa-nova era band that comes to the US to try to make it big in the music business once the movement loses ground in Brazil. The film stars Rodrigo Santoro, who American audiences know through last year's *300*.

The Brazilian Film Festival then moves to the Tribeca Cinemas, where they will be screening a competitive selection of films, which go from documentaries, short films and other features, including Ana Jobim's *The House of Tom*, which is a tribute to her late husband, maestro Antonio Carlos Jobim.

## From the Press Release

The opening of the event will take place on August 10th, at Central Park, with a concert by Maria Rita in homage to the 50 years of Bossa Nova. Followed by the outdoor movie screening of Out of Tune, by Walter Lima Jr.

The tribute continues on August 12th at the United Nations Building with the screening of The House of Tom, during which Ana Jobim, director of the film and widow of the great composer will receive the Crystal Lens.

From August 11th to the 16th the films will be screened during several sessions at the Tribeca Cinemas, as part of the competitive screenings. Every night after the screenings, the audience and guests of the festival, including actors, producers and directors, will be welcomed to the Lounge Petrobras, designed especially for the occasion and with music by DJ Luluta.

The programming also includes the daily exhibition of a short-film from the Revealing the Brasil program. The project, presented in partnership with the Ministry of Culture's Audiovisual Secretariat and sponsored by Petrobras, was created with the intention to bring worldwide attention to an uncharted Brazil.

The stories are told from the perspective of the average Brazilian, from a small village, and that otherwise would have never had the opportunity to see their talent reach the big screen.

Presented for the first time in the Inffinito Circuit of Festivals, DOC.TV, is a groundbreaking program that fosters the partnership between public TV and independent productions. Implemented in 2003 the program's objective are to promote the regionalization of documentaries' production, establish a national circuit for broadcasting through Public Television Networks and to propose a business model that encompasses the existence of regional markets for Brazilian documentaries.

## Official Selection

### 5 Pieces of Almost a Story

By Armando Mendz, Cris Azzi, Cristiano Abud, Guilherme Fiúza, Lucas Gontijo and Thales Bahia

The World in two Round Trips

By David Schurmann

The House of Tom - Mundo, Monde, Mondo

By Ana Jobim

Out of Tune

By Walter Lima Jr

Paper Wedding

By André Sturm

What Ever Happened to Dulce Veiga

By Guilherme de Almeida Prado

L.A.P.A.

By Cavi Borges and Emilio Domingos

No Control

By Cris D'Amato

Not by Chance

By Philippe Barcinski

The Magnate

By Johnny Araújo

Bellini and the Devil

By Marcelo Galvão

Panair do Brasil

By Marco Altberg

Paulo Gracindo, the Wellbeloved

By Gracindo Jr.

Youth

By Domingos Oliveira

Service

Brazilian Film Festival

August 10-16, 2008

Central Park Summerstage

Tribeca Cinemas

<http://www.brazilianfilmfestival.com/2008/ny/index.asp?lang=ing>