

The New York Times

April 23, 2015

THE Arts

Love Songs and a Smattering of Sinatra

The musical equivalent of Viagra: That was John Pizzarelli's description of "Amoroso," the Brazilian guitarist and singer João Gilberto's lush mid-1970s al-

STEPHEN HOLDEN

MUSIC REVIEW

bum of bossa nova love songs to which he paid tribute on Tuesday evening at Café Carlyle. Flanked by Daniel Jobim, the grandson of the genre's pioneer, Antonio Carlos Jobim, he recreated the mood of that album, minus its soaring strings, arranged by Claus Ogerman. Around me, couples were holding hands and fervently gazing into each other's eyes. Some cynics might relegate "Amoroso" to the category of make-out music, but even within that category it has singularly cosmic dimen-

John Pizzarelli is at Café Carlyle through May 2, 35 East 76th Street, Manhattan; 212-744-1600, thecarlyle.com.

John Pizzarelli
Café Carlyle

sion.

Although the beautiful concert had its lively moments, for the most part it found Mr. Pizzarelli in an uncharacteristically introspective mode as he and Mr. Jobim, wearing a Panama hat, murmured bossa nova classics by his grandfather that included "How Insensitive," "Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars" and the inevitable "Girl From Ipanema." The ensemble included Helio Alves on piano; Duduka DaFonseca on drums; and Martin Pizzarelli, Mr. Pizzarelli's younger brother, on bass.

The concert was a reminder of how much more feeling a singer can convey in a soft voice than when shouting, unless what's being expressed is rage. A section of the evening was devoted to ballads from the 1967 album

"Francis Albert Sinatra & Antonio Carlos Jobim" in which Sinatra adopted a tender, vulnerable tone that was a radical departure for him during his feisty, swinging years. It made for what many Sinatra-philes believe to be his last indisputable masterwork.

Mr. Pizzarelli and Mr. Jobim talked about the importance of that album in certifying the composer's reputation both in Brazil and internationally. It came into being with a surprise phone call from Sinatra, who reached Antonio Carlos Jobim in Brazil at a bar he frequented.

Some wonderful pairings included "If You Never Come to Me" and "Change Partners," and "I Remember" and "Waters of March," to which the composer wrote both the Portuguese and English lyrics. Mr. Pizzarelli's spicy original song, "Soares Samba," in which he scatted along with his own guitar, provided a thrilling change of pace at a perfect moment.