



*Five Roads*  
Maurício de Souza's Bossa Brasil (Pulsa Music)  
by Tom Greenland

Originally from Brasília, Brazil, drummer Mauricio de Souza has been leading straightahead and Brazilian jazz bands in New Jersey since 2004. *Five Roads*, his fourth release as a leader, is a mostly original set showing his growth as a composer. The quartet consists of alto saxophonist Andrew Beals, pianist Bob Rodriguez and bassist Gary Mazzaroppi. Most of the tracks are original bossa novas, plus a cover of Roberto Menescal's classic "O Barquinho", all played at various tempos, with enough finesse to keep things interesting. For variety, "Bebeto" is played as a *maracatú*, "Paisagens" as a *baião*. The most unusual cover is of Franz Schubert's "Ave Maria", played with impeccable taste by Rodriguez, whose laidback delivery belies the tensile logic of his melodic ideas. Beals plays most of the tunes and solos in a similar fashion, with smooth contours and legato phrasing. De Souza's active right-hand cymbal work and chatty snare drum are omnipresent but he doesn't feature himself much until the closing track, "Valsinha Para Elvira" (recorded live, with Charlie Dougherty replacing Mazzaroppi), where he builds a strong solo and then trades ideas with the bassist during the outro blowing section.

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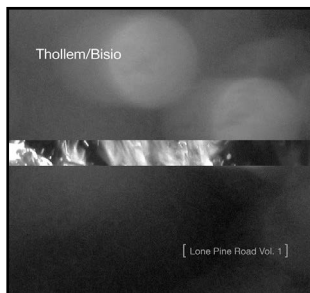
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Last month de Souza launched his CD at The DiMenna Center. With only himself (his distinctive setup comprised seven different cymbals, including two hi-hats, plus two snare drums), Rodriguez and David Kingsnorth on bass, the pared-down lineup made for interesting comparison with the album, much of which was revisited—"Estações", "Valsinha Para Elvira", "Folclórica", "Ave Maria", "Bebeto", "Bate Papo"—with the addition of "A Felicidade" and "Garota de Ipanema" (both by Antônio Carlos Jobim) and "Vera Cruz" (by Milton Nascimento). De Souza's originals, though typically played in bossa nova style, often include nonstandard chord changes, lending them a distinctive, slightly unpredictable quality. From the first few beats the band slipped quickly and easily into an entrancing groove, maintaining it over the course of the evening. Live, Rodriguez had plenty of room to stretch out during solos and so he did, showing admirable ability to sustain interest over these longer hauls. Kingsnorth countered these solos with shorter, motive-based improvisations. As he had done on the album, de Souza kept the sauces simmering with busy but unobtrusive stick- and brushwork. Highlights were "Vera Cruz", which featured an inventive piano solo and an extended drum soliloquy, and "Ave Maria", enlivened by Rodriguez' elegant touch.

For more information, visit [mauriciodesouzajazz.com](http://mauriciodesouzajazz.com)



*Lone Pine Road Vol. 1*  
Thollem/Bisio (Setola di Maiale)  
by Elliott Simon

Thollem McDonas is a dynamic pianist accomplished in the art of lengthy improvisational duets and he is exceedingly adaptable operating within bluesy, free jazz, contemporary classical and more blurred environs. Here he is paired with Michael Bisio, one of creative music's preeminent bassists, whose approach is muscular yet surprisingly expressive. *Lone Pine Road Vol. 1*, so named for the studio where it was recorded, pairs these two outstanding conversationalists in equal partnership.

There are no song titles or presumptions and the musicians are at liberty within the approximate 45-minute encounter to explore, react and trade off. Although there are no precise labels, the session organically develops from an introduction through three discrete segments and an epilogue. After an initial opening characterized by a bit of bass noodling and chordal piano searching, McDonas playfully challenges Bisio and he responds in kind as they find a preliminary piano-driven groove.

The players then strikingly merge for a protracted spiraling section, which impresses for its unity and is defined by stamina and control. Bisio shows his leadership skills by seamlessly changing the mood and pace with exquisite runs that morph into an extended arco passage, reaching for registers that amazingly test both piano and bass to realize his vision of extremely brittle pathos. A repetitive whirlpool then sucks piano and bass back together for a final joint excursion. A touching epilogue marked by Bisio's gorgeous tone ends this rare meeting of two master improvisers in which they travel across various grooves and rarely work at cross purposes.

For more information, visit [setoladimaiale.net](http://setoladimaiale.net). Bisio is at *Happy Lucky no.1* Jul. 6th. See Calendar.



MICHAEL LEONHART ORCHESTRA  
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Following their 2018 debut album *The Painted Lady Suite*, MLO will release their second full length, *Suite Extracts Vol. 1* on August 30.

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Jobim's legacy has lived on through his admirers, followers and apprentices. Bossa Nova and the Brazilian jazz tradition continue to flourish, led by the likes of drummer Duduka Da Fonseca and pianist Helio Alves. With the addition of the great vocalist Maucha Adnet, the friends have assembled a program of music highlighting the beauty of the Brazilian Jazz music that they have performed all over the world. Their new recording, *Samba Jazz & Tom Jobim*, was recorded to spread their passion even further.



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