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## Perelman mixes jazz with the sounds of Bahia



By Flávia Smith

Ivo Perelman, hailed by the critics as one of the most unique voices to have appeared on the jazz scene recently, will be in Boston on June 13 to showcase "Children of Ibeji" - jazz with a touch of Bahia's African sounds

Innovation and exploration isn't new to this Brazilian tenor saxophonist. By age nine, he was already studying classical guitar; his mother is a pianist and teacher. At fifteen, he was exploring the piano, violin, cello and trombone. "Classical piano and guitar wasn't my option, that was my formation. I ended up in jazz- it was a more creative option, it fulfilled an inner creative need for me."

Perelman explored various instruments until a gradual transition into wind instruments, such as the clarinet and the trombone, led him to his final choice. Did he like to hear the saxophone or play the saxophone, or was it both? "To listen is good. But the day I played it...it's like love, when you suspect there's something between a man and a woman, when that fusion happens it's nirvana. Music and love are the same thing," he says.

This love for the saxophone has taken him all over: studies at Berklee in Boston, a year of playing Bossa Nova and MPB on the guitar in Canadian bars, composition studies in

California, tours in Europe and New York City, where he has been based for four years

Even though he doesn't consider his to be music purely Brazilian, Perelman says that "the Brazilian elements that I bring into it elicit an immediate interest from the public." Maybe it was this creative need that led him to mix such contrasting sounds as *candomblé* and jazz on his latest release. "In terms of the *candomblé*, it was melodically and harmonically attractive for me. In Brazil we grow up with these sounds. I spent two months in Bahia (researching *candomblé*, a blend of African and Christian religions), where I was in touch with a *mãe de santo*, I learned a lot... I began to see the music with other eyes. The melodic construction is simple, direct, it has a minimal structure that permits manipulation, a more personal interpretation." This approach was even applied to a Suzanne Vega tune, "Tom's Diner", with the saxophone substituting for Vega's cyclic, simple voice.

The idea for "Children of Ibeji" started in a previous recording, which had Brazilian children's songs. In the Afro-Brazilian *candomblé* religion, the Ibeji are the twin gods of children". It (first recording) was from the

European legacy, like *escravos de jó*. On this recording I wanted to deal more with the African legacy, of the abandoned children, for example," says Perelman. A specific case last year stimulated him further. "It was the case of the assassination of some children. One of the girls was shot, but the bullet didn't penetrate her head. She pretended that she was dead, and

was able to run away. Millions of kids are shot in Brazil everyday, but she ran away and told it to the media. So it received a lot of attention," says Perelman.

Asked if he has become more sensitive to Brazil's social problems after having left the country, Perelman says that is part of it. "The numbers (of poor kids) have grown. Also, it's been more than a decade," says the artist who left São Paulo 13 years ago. "for the conscience to be deadened.

...People who live there see it (violence and poverty) so much that in a way they defend themselves by ignoring it, they become tougher. It's very hard to be passionate about this everyday... it seems as if everytime I return to Brazil, the colors are more alive."

And it is this sense of vibrancy that makes the cries of Perelman's saxophone so unique. He'll be at the Nightstage on June 13, at 8:30 p.m. Δ