

# *Where are you,* **JOÃO GILBERTO?**



**A documentary film by Georges Gachot**

**Switzerland, Germany and France, 2018 | Duration: 107 minutes**

## **Press Kit**

[www.hobalala-film.com](http://www.hobalala-film.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/JoaoGilbertoFilm/](https://www.facebook.com/JoaoGilbertoFilm/)

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Languages:	Original languages: German, Portuguese, French, English Subtitles options: French/German/English
Duration:	107 minutes
Format:	1.85:1
Camera:	Amira (ARRI)
Countries of production:	Switzerland (principal producer)/Germany/France
Year of production:	2018

## SYNOPSIS

“Girl from Ipanema”, “Chega de Saudade”, “Corcovado”: these classic Bossa Nova songs will forever remain international successes of Latin American music. This original music was invented by a man known the world over for his guitar and voice, a man who no one has heard from for a very long time. João Gilberto has been living in hiding in a hotel room in Rio de Janeiro for more than a decade. Who then is this man?

***Where are you, João Gilberto?*** Is a full-length documentary film adapted from the book *Hobalala*, by Marc Fischer, a German reporter and writer. In his book, Fischer recounts the story of his obsessional search for the last greatest music legend of our time, the Brazilian musician João Gilberto, the founding father of Bossa Nova. A man who has not been seen in public for a decade.

Even though Marc Fischer never succeeded in finding and meeting João Gilberto, despite his tumultuous and determined search, he has written a vibrant book on Brazil, its music and culture and specifically on Bossa Nova, its most exhilarating music tradition. *Hobalala* is extremely well documented, lively and funny, and full of savory anecdotes. It was published in Germany in 2011 by Rogner & Bernhard in hardcover and later on by Suhrkamp in paperback. It has also been translated into Portuguese and published in Brazil.

Marc Fischer committed suicide a week before publication of his book.

This film takes up the search for João Gilberto in the footsteps of Marc Fischer, and is filled with the same passion and love for Brazilian music. With Marc Fischer, it asks the question “who is João Gilberto?” “where and why is he hiding?”, “what is the essence of Bossa Nova?”, this musical movement that he created with others.

More than his book, Marc Fischer has left us with hundreds of photographs, selfies, video clips, e-mails, blogs, Facebook pages, sound recordings and his journal, all of which were entrusted to us by his parents for the film.



We have picked up Marc’s quest, following the traces step by step that he has left us, and by means of film and a greater familiarity with the local context, have pushed the search even farther, pursuing Bossa Nova and João Gilberto in turn to discover the story, the essence, the spirit of both the man and the music.

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The film is a detective story lying somewhere between film and literature and follows a double intrigue: Marc Fischer, the author of the book, is looking for the mysterious João Gilberto, and I, the filmmaker, take up the quest in Fischer's footsteps looking for João.

I read Marc Fischer's book three years after his death. I was very moved by its honesty and immediately understood that Marc Fischer was motivated by his love of João Gilberto's music, by the search for absolute beauty that he recognized in his music.

An astonishing analogy exists between Marc's quest to unveil the essence of Brazilian music and my own search. I write and direct musical films, and have since 2003 focused on Brazilian music and culture. I have made three feature-length films on this subject.

So Marc's story concerns me directly, our paths have crossed in a surprising manner: in 2010 we were both in Rio and walked the same streets at the same time. Marc was looking for Brazilian musicians who had played with Gilberto, most of whom I've known personally for many years and some of who are even in my films.

I myself tried many times during my stays in Brazil to meet João Gilberto, to no avail.

So it could be said that I recognize myself in Marc Fischer. We're both from northern Europe: I was born in Paris and have lived in Zurich since 1981; Marc was born in Hamburg and lived in Berlin. We share a passion for Brazilian music and the optic from which we view Brazil is that of a stranger.

I think that the deepest motivation for both his book and my film is "saudade" (Portuguese), or "die Sehnsucht" (German).

This expression in German, which constantly comes back in Marc Fischer's book, is untranslatable in English or French. But strangely enough, it corresponds rather perfectly to the Brazilian "saudade". (The first Bossa Nova song that João Gilberto recorded is called *Chega de Saudade/Pour en finir avec la saudade*—roughly in English: "to bring an end to longing/yearning").

He/She who languishes wants to obtain or possess someone or something that he/she knows from the very start is very probably unattainable. But sometimes the seeker finds something entirely different in the end. For Marc Fischer, the Bossa Nova rhythm is the "saudade" and its magical performer is João Gilberto.

Fischer was a romantic, his desire carries him to the music of an exotic country and in that he

joins the long list of Germans nostalgic for a faraway country, “that of flowering lemon trees”.

My close scrutiny of the book and its adaptation into a film has brought to light a few questions about my own work, especially that of the past few years, focused on Brazilian music. Why does one do something? What is it one does? – these are questions that can never be answered in any comprehensive fashion.

Almost incidentally, the film tells the story of Bossa Nova; it evokes that extraordinary time at the beginning of the 60s when everything seemed possible in Brazil. The national soccer team had just won its second World Cup, the revolutionary architect, Niemeyer, was building Brazil’s new capital in the middle of the desert and Bossa Nova had jumped to the top of the world’s hit-parade charts, thanks to, among others, the voice of an international star, Frank Sinatra, and the saxophone of Stan Getz.

This film is also, indirectly, a portrait of João Gilberto, and is also the first portrait of him ever made.

The objective is not to succeed where Marc Fischer failed, i.e., to bring João Gilberto in front of the camera. The physical presence of João Gilberto is not a precondition for the film’s success. The incertitude when it comes to the success of the endeavor, which was truly experienced by the film crew, gives substance and veracity to the quest.

In 2004, Caetano Veloso spoke of the importance of João Gilberto to the neophyte Georges Gachot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuKmTQvqgBY>



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## FILM CREW

Director	Georges Gachot
Film script	Georges Gachot, Paolo Poloni
Photographer	Stéphane Kuthy
Sound mixer	Balthasar Jucker
Editor	Julie Pelat (graduate of <i>La Femis</i> , France's school of cinema)
Music	João Donato
Sound editor	Michael Krantz (Arri München)
Color grading	Traudi Nicholson (Arri München)
Producers	Georges Gachot, Pierre-Olivier Bardet, Christoph Menardi, Andreas Atzwanger
Production	Gachot Films, Idéale Audience, NEOS Film
Co-produced with	SRF Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen, RTS Radio Télévision Suisse Bayerischer Rundfunk in collaboration with ARTE
Commissioning Editors	Urs Augstburger (SRF), Irène Challand (RTS) Matthias Leybrand (BR), Monika Lobkowicz (ARTE)
Funding entities	OFFICE FÉDÉRALE DE LA CULTURE, SUCCÈS PASSAGE ANTENNE, FONDS CULTUREL SUISSIMAGE, ZÜRCHER FILMSTIFTUNG, SRG SSR IDÉES SUISSE, FONDS CULTUREL DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES AUTEURS (SSA), MEDIA DESK SUISSE, DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRDERFONDS, FILMFERNSEHFONDS BAYERN, CNC, DESJARDIN SA and EURIMAGES

## LEADING FIGURES IN THE FILM

- MAX SIMONISCHECK, voice of Marc Fischer, author of book *Hobalala*
- RACHEL, Fischer's assistant, nicknamed "Watson" in the book
- MIÚCHA, singer, ex-wife and confidant of João Gilberto
- JOÃO DONATO, musician, old friend of João Gilberto
- GARRINCHA, João Gilberto's cook
- ROBERTO MENESCAL, composer of several Bossa Nova hits, acquaintance of João Gilberto, who he hasn't seen since 1962
- MARCO VALLE, composer and musician, Brazilian Bossa Nova legend
- GERALDO MIRANDA, acquaintance of João Gilberto who met with Fischer at Diamantina

- OTAVIO TERCEIRO, João Gilberto's friend and manager
- ANSELMO ROCHAT, musician, imitator of João Gilberto
- GEORGES GACHOT, the author/director of the film in both voice off and synchronous sound

## JOÃO GILBERTO – THE INVENTOR OF BOSSA NOVA



*Girl from Ipanema, Chega de Saudade, Desafinando* – these extremely popular Bossa Nova classics have enchanted half the planet since the end of the 50s. They can be heard in bars, nightclubs and on radio stations around the world.

The original sound and complex rhythms of Bossa Nova were invented by João Gilberto, a genre that didn't exist before he created it. His influence

on popular Brazilian music can still be heard today. Gilberto created this musical genre practically all by himself, not as a composer but as an interpreter. He is the man with the desperately sweet voice and guitar rhythms never heard before, the man whose songs can break your heart, without even understanding the words.

João Gilberto has been in hiding for the past thirty years in an apartment in Rio de Janeiro. He has left his retreat to give a few exceptional concerts, for example in Italy, Japan, New York and Montreux in 1985, 1989, 2001 and 2003. He gave his last concert in Brazil in 2008 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bossa Nova.

In recent decades, mysteries and legends have literally usurped his person. The more he retreats from the world, the more anecdotes and stories proliferate about him. He is today an old man of 87 who lives in Rio, who never leaves his home, who refuses to be interviewed and who doesn't care about what others think. It's been said that he spends his nights playing the guitar non-stop for ten or twelve hours, driven by his determination for perfection. Gilberto has become, as time goes on, a kind of phantom.

Miúcha, who participates in the film, is one of the rare persons who regularly visit him at his home. Miúcha died from cancer on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018.



## MARC FISCHER – REPORTER AND AUTHOR

Marc Fischer ended his life in 2011 at the age of 40, three months after his last trip to Brazil and one week before the publication of his book.

Fischer was not known in Germany for writing books and reviewing music. He wrote articles for *Stern*, *der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit*. Inspired by the American New Journalism genre of the mid-90s, the young Fischer became a star of the monthly review, *Tempo*. He could have chosen a secure job in a recognized publication, but instead continued to explore the four corners of the earth. Always in search of a good story, he was motivated by his nostalgia for a lost, somehow broken, beauty, which meant far more to him than a regular monthly salary.



As a result of his articles in *Tempo*, he was considered a precursor of the journalism that was popular in the 90s, where the reporter is also an active subject in the article he writes. For a while, Fischer became a pop star – or at least the incarnation of popular journalism. He also sang in a new wave band, *Torpedo Boyz*.

While Fischer was making inquiries about Gilberto, contacting all those who could possibly help him, while he tightened the net around the subject of his research, the legendary musician became more and more mysterious, evanescent.

Marc Fischer's book stands out by the seriousness with which the author approaches his own "saudade". Although he mixed genres, intertwining fiction and non-fiction, the underlying thread is always existential.

(Photo: Marc Fischer and Björk)

Marc Fischer thus intersperses his work with his own opinions and perspicacious analysis of music and art in general. Imperceptibly, the book strays from its subject to become pure literature.

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Fischer's suicide throws a strange shadow on his book and his quest. Could it be that he could not reconcile himself with the fact that he had failed to attain his goal, i.e., to meet João Gilberto?

Fischer recounts the journey he started again and again to find João Gilberto; it reads like a detective story. But the journey was also a way to flee his country of origin, Germany, where he had to put a lost love behind him. He wants to reveal the truth about Gilberto, but in the end he comes face to face with a truth about himself.

## THE DIRECTOR - GEORGES GACHOT

Born in Neuilly-sur-Seine near Paris, Georges Gachot is a French and Swiss dual national. He started his career working in film production for commercials as actor and as sound assistant, most notably in the Oscar winning film "Journey of hope" by Xavier Koller in 1990.

Subsequently he was commissioned by the music label *Naxos* and by various European TV channels (ZDF, BR...) and producers to direct music films like portray of musicians, composers and interpreters.

In 1996 he began producing and directing his own films - in coproduction with international partners like Idéale Audience (France), Arte, Swiss television SRF, RTS - that enjoyed worldwide success, distributed by Doc & Films (France). Gachot received the prestigious "Prix Italia" in 2002 for his portrait of the Argentinean pianist *Martha Argerich, Evening Talks* and created the first of a trilogy of films about Brazilian music in 2005, "*Maria Bethânia 'Musica É Perfume'*". This portrait of Maria Bethânia was distributed in 10 countries worldwide. Gachot became a true enthusiast and specialist of Brazilian music and went on to film two more feature length documentaries there, *Rio Sonata (2010)* and *O Samba (2014)*.

Between 1996 and 2012 he also directed five feature length documentaries about Cambodia.

**Filmography selected**

2017 Boîtes à musique (*short*)

2014 O Samba

2012 L'ombrello di Beatocello

2010 Rio Sonata, Nana Caymmi

2005 Maria Bethânia, *Música é Perfume*

2004 Money or Blood

2002 Martha Argerich, *Evening Talks*

2000 And The Beat Goes On

1997 Bach at the Pagoda

[http://www.gachot.ch/gachot\\_filmography.html](http://www.gachot.ch/gachot_filmography.html)



## INTERNATIONAL PRESS EXCERPTS

*"by being beautifully simple and light within its own melancholia, WHERE ARE YOU JOAO GILBERTO embraces the spirit of the Bossa Nova (..) and becomes, with no doubts, a film about and beyond Brazil itself."*

**WELT**

*"An appealing, touching film that reveals the love a stranger has for aspects of Brazil that no longer exist today."*

**O ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO, Luiz Zanin Oricchio**

➔ [LINK](#)



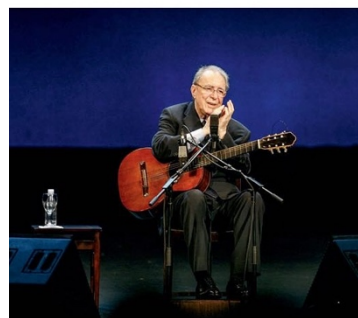
*"In this film, the director uses absence to explore emptiness (....) In a way, WHERE ARE YOU, JOÃO GILBERTO? speaks of the impossibility of filling that emptiness."*

**O'GLOBO, Leonardo Lichote**

*"This is a film about a mad man – directed by a mad man who is looking for another mad man."*

**GLAMURAMA, Miucha Buarque**

➔ [LINK](#)



## UM GÊNIO DA AUSÊNCIA

Onde Está Você, João Gilberto?, de Georges Gachot, reconstrói o esforço de um jornalista alemão para se encontrar com o personagem mais recluso da MPB. **SÉRGIO MARTINS**

JOÃO GILBERTO é a ausência mais famosa do showbiz brasileiro. Sua carreira tem sido pontuada por apresentações canceladas em cima da hora e projetos de discos abortados devido a uma ou outra imperfeição sonora — que só os ouvidos finos do cantor baiano conseguem captar. Ermitão que quase nunca deixa seu aparta-

mento carílico, nos últimos anos ele se viu envolvido em tristes disputas familiares. Essa grande ausência é o tema de *Onde Está Você, João Gilberto?* (Suíça/França/Alemanha, 2018), de Georges Gachot, que será exibido na quarta-feira 6 no In-Edit, festival paulistano de documentários musicais — o qual, aliás, dedica boa parte de sua

**ERMITÃO** João Gilberto no show em que brigou com o público, em 1999: a balada branca do Marc Fischer

programação a Gachot, o diretor francês que já se debruçou sobre outros figuras da música brasileira, como Martinho da Vila e Maria Bethânia.

O ponto de partida do documentário é o livro *Ho-ba-lá-lá* — *A Procura de João Gilberto*, de Marc Fischer. O jornalista alemão encantou-se tanto com a música de João que viajou até o Rio para conhecer o pai da bossa nova. Conversei com amigos do compositor de *Bim Bom*, mas nunca o encontrou. Fischer perseguiu o músico com a obsessão de um Alah atrás de sua baleia branca — e, tal como aconteceu com o personagem de *Moby Dick*, a busca acabou por consumi-lo: o jornalista suicidou-se em 2011, pouco antes do lançamento de *Ho-ba-lá-lá*.

Também apaixonado por João Gilberto, Gachot recita os passos do alemão, falando com os mesmos entrevistados — nem sempre personagens famosos: então lá o garçom que anotou o pedido de jantar do cantor e o seu barbeiro. Tal como Fischer, Gachot sonha com um encontro com João Gilberto — para "conversar sobre Bach e Mozart", confessa o francês a VEJA. Seria um encontro maravilhoso: Gachot é especialista em arrancar momentos tocantes de seus personagens. Ele capta a tristeza na voz de João Donato, quando este diz que não conversa com João Gilberto há quinze anos, e o estado de Roberto Menescal, que admite ter desistido do amigo que o chamava até para trocar as cordas do violão. Gachot vai à casa da irmã de João Gilberto, em Diamantina, conferir a acústica do banheiro no qual, conta a lenda, ele aperfeiçoou sua maneira de cantar. Até sua tentativa frustrada de afinal encontrar João Gilberto — com a ajuda do empresário do cantor — rende um momento de melancólica beleza no documentário. ■

## A Genius of absence

*"Gachot is still the master when it comes to creating palpating moments with the film's participants."*

**VEJA, Sérgio Martins**

➔ [LINK](#)



## INTERNATIONAL SALES

The film has been purchased in  
Germany, Austria, Japan, China, Poland, Brazil and the Czech Republic

### Film releases:

Brazil: 23 August 2018

Switzerland: 13 September 2018

Germany: 22 November 2018

Japan: 2019



Joao Donato / Miucha / Marcos Valle / Roberto Menescal  
@ theatrical Premiere in Rio de Janeiro August 2018



Actor Max Simoniscek and Georges Gachot  
Zürich 20. January 2019,

## FESTIVALS (A SELECTION)

Art Fifa 2019, Montreal International competition  
ZagrebDox 2019  
F.A.M.E. Paris 2019 "Prize of the Student Jury"  
Visions du Réel 2018, *Competition*  
DOK Fest München 2018, *International Competition*  
In-Edit Brasill 2018, *Opening Film & Retrospectiv*  
Locarno Filmfestival 2018  
Taipe Golden Horse Filmfestival 2018  
Solothurner Filmtage 2019  
In-Edit Barcelona 2018  
Two River Side - Polen 2018  
Sound Track Cologne  
See you sound 2019 - Turin

## CONTACTS

**DISTRIBUTION GERMANY:** Farbfilm

**DISTRIBUTION BRAZIL:** Imovision

**DISTRIBUTION SWITZERLAND:** Gachot Films

**DISTRIBUTION CHINA:** Lemon Tree Media Company Limited

### PRODUCTION

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