



Friday, May 15, 2015, 8pm  
First Congregational Church

## Sérgio and Odair Assad, *guitars*

### PROGRAM

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909) “Córdoba,” from *Cantos de España*,  
Op. 232 (1896)

Enrique Granados (1867–1916) Ocho Valses Poéticos (1886–1887)

- I. Vivace molto Melodico
- II. Tempo de Vals noble
- III. Tempo de Vals lento
- IV. Allegro humoristico
- V. Allegretto elegante
- VI. Quasi ad libitum
- VII. Vivo
- VIII. Presto

Ástor Piazzolla (1921–1992) Selections from *Suite Troileana* (1975)

- I. Bandoneón
- II. Zita

Sérgio Assad (b. 1952) Tahhiyya Li Ossoulina (2007)

### INTERMISSION

## PROGRAM

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João Pernambuco (1883–1947)    Interrogando (1929)

Américo Jacomino (1889–1928)    Abismo de Rosas (1905)

Aníbal Augusto Sardinha (1915–1955)    Medley:  
Jorge do Fusa (1952)  
Gente Humilde (1945)  
Lamentos do Morro (1950)

Dilermando Reis (1916–1977)    Dois Destinos (1948)

Baden Powell (1937–2000)    Tempo Feliz (1966)

Egberto Gismonti (b. 1947)    Palhaço (1987)

Gismonti    Baião Malandro (1987)

Paulo Bellinati (b. 1950)    Jongo (1978)

*Cal Performances' 2014–2015 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909)  
 “Córdoba,” from *Cantos de España*, Op. 232

*Composed in 1896.*

Isaac Albéniz, a seminal figure in the musical life of his native Spain, was born in 1860 in Camprodón, in the northeast corner of the country, very near the French border. He learned the piano from his older sister when he was still an infant, and gave his first concert at the remarkable age of four. (Some accused him of being a dwarf.) In 1867, his mother took him to Paris, where he studied for nine months with the noted pedagogue Antoine-François Marmontel, but he was refused admittance to the Conservatoire because of his age. Back in Spain, Albéniz toured Catalonia with his father and sister before the family moved in 1869 to Madrid, where he was enrolled at the Conservatory and appeared frequently in concert. At age ten, the precocious Isaac ran away from home to northern Spain, living by his wits and his talent and astounding his auditors by playing with the backs of his fingers while facing away from the piano. The death of his sister brought him home temporarily, but he again fled, heading this time for Cádiz, where the local governor threatened to return him to his family. Panicked by the thought, he stowed away on a steamer bound for Cuba. The passengers learned of his plight and took up a collection to pay his fare, but only enough money was raised to get him to the ship's first stop, Buenos Aires. There he lived hand-to-mouth for a while, but he soon found work playing in cafés and eventually undertook a serendipitous concert tour through Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the United States, traveling as far as San Francisco, before saving enough money to sail to England for more appearances. He ended up in Leipzig for some study at the city's conservatory with Jadassohn and Reinecke.

Albéniz returned to Madrid in 1877 just long enough to secure a royal scholarship for study at the Brussels Conservatory. After

winning the school's first prize for piano in 1878, he took a few lessons with Franz Liszt and began another long tour of South America and the United States in 1880. In 1883, he returned to Barcelona to play and teach, and there met Felipe Pedrell, the composer and pioneering scholar of Spanish music, who inspired him to use native songs and dances as the basis of his original compositions. Albéniz married one of Pedrell's students in 1883, and he moved to Madrid two years later, but found life as a pianist in Spain difficult, and again went abroad to further his career. He gave a concert of his own compositions in Paris in 1889 to much acclaim, and there met such prominent musicians as d'Indy, Dukas, Fauré, and Chausson.

From 1890 to 1893, Albéniz lived in London, where he abandoned piano playing in favor of composition. He settled in Paris in 1893, composing, renewing friendships, and teaching piano at the Schola Cantorum. The death of his mother in 1900 brought him back to Barcelona, but his own ill health (he suffered for years from kidney disease) and his failure to arrange performances of his works sent him again to Paris in 1902. A year later he moved to Nice, and there wrote his masterpiece, *Iberia*. Just one week before his death on May 18, 1909, at Cambô-les-Bains in the French Pyrenees, he was awarded the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor by the French government. Enrique Granados brought the news to his bedside.

Among the most characteristic of Albéniz's compositions are the five *Cantos de España* (“Airs of Spain”) for solo piano (1896). In his study of Spanish music, Gilbert Chase wrote of *Córdoba*, the fourth of the *Cantos*, “Albéniz takes the guitar as his instrumental model, and drawing his inspiration largely from the peculiar traits of Andalusian folk music—without using actual folk tunes—he achieves a stylization of Spanish traditional idioms that, while thoroughly artistic, gives a captivating impression of spontaneous improvisation.... *Córdoba* is the piece that best represents Albéniz in this period, with its hauntingly

beautiful melody, set against the acrid dissonances of the plucked accompaniment imitating the notes of the Moorish *guzlas*. Here is the heady scent of jasmines amid the swaying palm trees, the dream fantasy of an Andalusian *Arabian Nights* in which Albéniz loved to let his imagination dwell.”

**Enrique Granados (1867–1916)**  
**Ocho Valses Poéticos**

*Composed in 1886–1887.*

Enrique Granados, born into the family of an army officer in Lérida, near Barcelona, in 1867, and as a boy studied piano at the Barcelona Conservatory (he gave his first public concert at age ten) and Spanish music with the noted folklorist Felipe Pedrell. He went to Paris in 1887 to apply for admission to the Conservatoire, but fell ill during the entrance examinations and instead became a private student of Charles Wilfride de Bériot, son of the celebrated contralto Maria Malibran and one of the Conservatoire’s most distinguished faculty members. Granados remained in Paris for two years before returning to Barcelona in 1889, where his mature début the following year created a sensation and led to a successful performing career that took him throughout Europe as a recitalist, concerto soloist, and chamber music player. The première in 1892 of orchestrations of three of his *Spanish Dances*, among the earliest works in the Spanish idiom written by a native musician, was well received and brought Granados his first acclaim as a composer. Such encouragement prompted him to carry on with the series, and by 1900, he had completed and published a full dozen *Spanish Dances*.

Granados continued to concertize and compose during the first decade of the new century, concentrating on piano pieces and songs. In 1911, he wrote the music considered by many to be his masterpiece—a piano cycle titled *Goyescas*, inspired by the paintings and tapestry cartoons of Goya. Granados premièred his *Goyescas* in Barcelona on March 9,

and created enormous enthusiasm when he performed it at the Salle Pleyel in Paris on April 4, 1914. He was awarded the *Légion d’honneur* and given a contract by the Paris Opéra to create an operatic version of the keyboard suite for the coming season. The outbreak of World War I in August stymied the promised production in Paris, however, so the Metropolitan Opera in New York premièred the work in January 1916. On the voyage home from America, on March 24, 1916, Granados’s boat was torpedoed by a German submarine. He was picked up by a lifeboat, but dived back into the frigid water to try to save his struggling wife. Both drowned. His death at age 48 robbed Spain of one of its greatest and most promising artists.

The *Valses Poéticos* (“Poetic Waltzes”) composed in 1886–1887, is among the earliest of Granados’s works for piano and reflects the northern European models for the form more than the Spanish national styles that would characterize his later compositions. The *Valses Poéticos*, as was typical of the classic Viennese waltzes of the Strauss family, comprise a chain of complementary dance melodies preceded by an introduction in duple meter.

**Ástor Piazzolla (1921–1992)**  
**Selections from *Suite Troileana***

*Composed in 1975.*

The greatest master of the modern tango was Ástor Piazzolla, born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, a resort town south of Buenos Aires, on March 11, 1921, and raised in New York City, where he lived with his father from 1924 to 1937. Before Ástor was ten years old, his musical talents had been discovered by Carlos Gardel, then the most famous of all performers and composers of tangos and a cultural hero in Argentina. At Gardel’s urging, the young Ástor moved to Buenos Aires in 1937, and joined the popular tango orchestra of Anibal Troilo as arranger and *bandoneón* player. Piazzolla studied classical composition with Alberto Ginastera in Buenos Aires, and in 1954

he wrote a symphony for the Buenos Aires Philharmonic that earned him a scholarship to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. When Piazzolla returned to Buenos Aires in 1956, he founded his own performing group, and began to create a modern style for the tango that combined elements of traditional tango, Argentinean folk music, and contemporary classical, jazz, and popular techniques into a “*nuevo tango*” that was as suitable for the concert hall as for the dance floor. In 1974, Piazzolla settled again in Paris, winning innumerable enthusiasts for both his *nuevo tango* and for the traditional tango with his many appearances, recordings, and compositions. By the time that he returned to Buenos Aires in 1985, he was regarded as the musician who had revitalized one of the quintessential genres of Latin music. Piazzolla continued to tour widely, record frequently, and compose incessantly until he suffered a stroke in Paris in August 1990. He died in Buenos Aires on July 5, 1992.

*Bandoneón* opens the *Suite Troileana*, written in 1975 in memory of bandoneónist, composer, and bandleader Anibal Troilo, Piazzolla's mentor, who died in May of that year. The sultry *Zita* was composed in honor of Troilo's wife.

**Sérgio Assad (b. 1952)**  
**Tahhiyya Li Ossoulina**

*Composed in 2007.*

Sérgio Assad, one of the world's preeminent guitar performers and composers, was born in 1952 into a musical family in Mococa, São Paulo, Brazil. With his brother Odair, with whom he has performed in concert since 1979 around the world and in collaboration with such celebrated artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Paquito D'Rivera, Gidon Kremer, and Dawn Upshaw, he studied with Monina Távora, a disciple of Andrés Segovia, and began composing and arranging works for his instrument when he was 14. He subsequently studied conducting and composition at the Escola Nacional de Música in Rio

de Janeiro and took private lessons from the noted Brazilian composition teacher Esther Scliar. In 2008, he joined the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In addition to transcriptions and adaptations of music by Bach, Couperin, Rameau, Scarlatti, Gershwin, Ginastera, Milhaud, and others, Assad has composed many original works, including *Aquarelle* for Solo Guitar (which was chosen as the required contemporary composition for the 2002 Guitar Federation of America Competition in Miami), the ballets *Scarecrow* and *Espantahlo*, *Fantasia Carioca* for two guitars and orchestra, *Concerto Originis* for violin, two guitars, and chamber orchestra, and music for the Japanese film *Natsu No Niwa* (“The Summer Garden”), directed by Shinji Soumai.

Assad wrote, “*Tahhiyya Li Ossoulina*, which translates from the Arabic as ‘Homage to Our Roots,’ is based on Middle Eastern modes. This piece was conceived as a tribute to the composer's grandparents, who immigrated to Brazil from Lebanon in 1895. The descendants of the first Lebanese immigrants today number as many as six million people in Brazil and have contributed greatly to the country's development in many areas. *Tahhiyya Li Ossoulina* was recorded on our album *Jardim Abandonado* on Nonesuch Records in 2007 and received a nomination for a Latin Grammy Award as Best Musical Composition of the Year.”

**João Pernambuco (1883–1947)**  
**Interrogando**

*Composed in 1929.*

Brazilian guitarist and composer João Pernambuco, born in Jatobá in 1883, was of Indian and Portuguese descent. He started teaching himself to play guitar when he was twelve, and drifted to the coastal city of Recife after the death of his parents before settling in Rio de Janeiro in 1902. He performed with the local musicians and established groups that recorded and toured throughout the country

playing music in the traditional Brazilian styles. He died in Rio in 1947. *Interrogando* ("Questioning"), like all of Pernambuco's original compositions—*chôros*, tangos, waltzes, descriptive pieces, and songs—were deeply influenced by the folk and popular music that he discovered at home and on his travels.

**Américo Jacomino (1889–1928)**  
**Abismo de Rosas**

*Composed in 1905.*

Américo Jacomino was one of the pioneers in establishing the guitar as an instrument of serious musical expression in Brazil. When Jacomino was born, in São Paulo in 1889 into a family of Neapolitan immigrants, the guitar was regarded as a marginal instrument best suited to informal music-making rather than to formal concerts. He developed his unusual technique early in life—he was nicknamed "Canhoto" or "The Left-Handed One" after his method of reversing the hands to play the instrument but without changing the positions of the strings—and began composing as a teenager. (He wrote the theme of *Abismo de Rosas* ["Abyss of Roses"], one of his best-known works, when he was 16.) He started performing publicly when he was 18, began recording in 1913, and three years later gave a path-breaking recital at the São Paulo Conservatory, the first by a guitarist at a major Brazilian concert hall. Jacomino thereafter had a significant effect on Brazilian music with his recordings, broadcasts, compositions for guitar, piano, and orchestra, and concert appearances around the country. He died in 1928 in São Paulo at age 39 of a heart condition. Jacomino wrote the wistful waltz *Abismo de Rosas* in 1905 after he had broken up with a teenage girlfriend and made the piece a hit when he recorded it in 1925.

**Aníbal Augusto Sardinha (1915–1955)**  
**Medley**

Aníbal Sardinha, born in 1915 in São Paulo to Portuguese immigrants, began playing guitar, mandolin, banjo, and ukulele as a youngster and started performing in public when he was eleven, earning for himself the nickname "Garoto"—the Banjo Kid. Sardinha made his first recording four years later, and by then he was playing with bands and as a soloist all around São Paulo province. In 1938 he moved to Rio de Janeiro, where he performed in concerts and broadcasts, recorded, composed, and collaborated with such leading Brazilian artists as guitarist Laurindo Almeida and singer, dancer, and film star Carmen Miranda, who invited him to tour the United States with her the following year. Sardinha became one of Brazil's most popular performers and composers, recording bestselling albums and confirming the reputation as "The Man with Golden Fingers" that he had earned on his American tour. He composed in the traditional Brazilian styles but brought to them a new sensibility influenced by jazz and popular music that presaged the *bossa nova* craze of the 1950s. "It was not a transformation," wrote the Brazilian pianist, composer, and folklorist Waldemar Henrique. "It was a long period of gestation when composers were looking for modernity, breaking rules. The guide who prepared the approach of the *bossa nova* was Garoto." Sardinha died in Rio in 1955 at age 39, as he was planning his first tour to Europe.

*Jorge do Fusa* (1952, "32nd-Note George"), titled in honor of the guitar-playing son of a friend, combines the influences of jazz harmonies and *chôro*, a term derived from the popular bands of Rio de Janeiro that originated in the mid-19th century and which freely mixed winds, guitars, and simple percussion instruments.

*Gente Humilde* (1945, "Common People") is a reflective number inspired by Sardinha's own modest beginnings that suggests his awareness of his childhood neighbors' modest circumstances as well as what a lyric later

added to the piece calls “the voice of humble people who are happy.”

*Lamentos do Morro* (1950, “Laments from the Hills,” though it may also refer more particularly to the Rio de Janeiro *favela* known as Morro da Providência) is a *samba* whose cheerful mood seems somewhat at odds (perhaps ironically so) with its title.

**Dilermando Reis (1916–1977)**  
**Dois Destinos**

*Composed in 1948.*

Dilermando Reis was born in São Paulo in 1916 but lived most of his life in Rio de Janeiro, where he established himself as one of Brazil’s best-known guitarists and composers. He first studied guitar with his father and had developed sufficiently by age 17 to join the well-known blind guitarist Levino da Conceição on a tour of Brazil. Reis settled in Rio, where he taught (his students included Juscelino Kubitschek, president of Brazil from 1956 to 1961 and founder of the country’s new capital city, Brasília), appeared regularly in concert and on radio, and recorded over 40 albums, playing not only popular Brazilian music but also compositions by Bach, Barrios, Tárrega, and Pernambuco as well as his own works, for which he employed a particularly adventurous harmonic style that he playfully said might well “confuse accompanists.” In 1953, he toured the United States and recorded for Columbia. Reis died in Rio in 1977.

The gentle waltz melody *Dois Destinos* (“Two Destinations”) has become a standard of the Latin American guitar literature.

**Baden Powell (1937–2000)**  
**Tempo Feliz**

*Composed in 1966.*

Baden Powell was one of the 20th century’s foremost composers and performers of Latin popular music. Born into a musical family in Rio de Janeiro in 1937, Powell started playing

guitar at age seven, won an amateur radio contest two years later, and was performing professionally by the time he was ten. He immersed himself in Brazilian classical and popular music traditions and began broadcasting as soloist and vocal accompanist on Radio Nacional in the late 1940s. He had his first hit as a composer in 1959 with *Samba Triste*, and three years later met the poet, lyricist, and composer Vinicius de Moraes, with whom he collaborated on some of the finest compositions of the emerging *bossa nova* movement. In 1963, Powell moved to Paris, where he became one of the leading exponents of Brazilian music by performing, recording, and contributing to the soundtracks of such major films as *A Man and a Woman* (1966), for which he wrote *Samba da Bênção*. He lived and worked for the next two decades primarily in Europe, but returned frequently to Brazil to perform and record before again settling permanently in 1989, in Rio de Janeiro, where he died in 2000.

The text that Brazilian poet and lyricist provided for Powell’s *Tempo Feliz* (“Happy Time,” 1966) captures the music’s buoyant mood: “Happy time, let bygones be bygones/Time so full of memories/So many songs he left/Bringing peace to so many hearts.”

**Egberto Gismonti (b. 1947)**  
**Palhaço**  
**Baião Malandro**

*Composed in 1987.*

Brazilian composer, guitarist, and pianist Egberto Gismonti draws a world of music into his compositions. Born in 1947 in Carmo, north of Rio de Janeiro, Gismonti began formal training in piano and classical music at age six and demonstrated exceptional talents for performance and composition as a teenager. In 1968, he went to Rio de Janeiro, where he participated successfully in the Third Rio International Song Festival, and then moved on to Paris to study orchestration and analysis with Nadia Boulanger

and composition with Jean Barraqué. After returning to Brazil, Gismonti taught himself to play guitar and developed a compositional style whose references ranged from jazz to the traditional music of his Sicilian and Lebanese ancestors, from the folk, dance, and popular idioms of his homeland to such European influences as Stravinsky and Ravel. Since making the first recording of his own music in 1969, Gismonti has become one of Brazil's best-known and most esteemed performers and composers, with some 50 albums as well as hundreds of compositions for orchestra, chamber ensembles, dance, theater, film, and television to his credit.

The wistful *Palhaço* ("Clown") dates from 1987. *Baião Malandro* (1978, "Trickster Baião") derives its exuberant style from music of the northern state of Pernambuco that incorporates indigenous, *mestizo*, African, and European influences and takes its title from the Portuguese slang for a slick neighborhood operator who cons unsuspecting victims. The work is subtitled *Forrobodó*, a rowdy, informal Brazilian party.

**Paulo Bellinati (b. 1950)**  
**Jongo**

*Composed in 1978.*

Paulo Bellinati, one of Brazil's most accomplished contemporary guitarists, was born in São Paulo in 1950 and studied at the city's Conservatório Dramático e Musical. From 1975 to 1980, he lived in Switzerland, where he studied at the Geneva Conservatory, taught at the Conservatory of Lausanne, and performed widely in solo concerts and jazz festivals. Since returning to Brazil, Bellinati has established an international career that includes tours throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas, collaborations with other leading artists, recordings, and numerous compositions and arrangements. Among his awards are a 1994 Prêmio Sharp (the Brazilian Grammy) and First Prize at the 1988 Carrefour Mondial de la Guitare in Martinique for his composition *Jongo*. Notable among Bellinati's recordings is *The Guitar Works of Garoto*, a landmark anthology of music by the eminent Brazilian guitarist and composer Aníbal Augusto Sardinha (known as "Garoto").

*Jongo* (1978) was inspired by a song and dance type thought to have magical powers that came to southeastern Brazil with slaves from Angola.

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Fadi Khair

**B**RAZILIAN-BORN brothers Sérgio and Odair Assad have set the benchmark for all other guitarists by creating new standards of guitar innovation, ingenuity, and expression. Their exceptional artistry and uncanny ensemble playing come from both a family rich in Brazilian musical tradition and from studies with the guitarist and lutenist Monina Távora (1921–2011), a disciple of Andrés Segovia. In addition to setting new performance standards, the Assads have played a major role in creating and introducing new music for two guitars. Their virtuosity has inspired a wide range of composers to write for them including Ástor Piazzolla, Terry Riley, Radamés Gnattali, Marlos Nobre, Nikita Koshkin, Roland Dyens, Jorge Morel, Edino Krieger, and Francisco Mignone. Now Sérgio Assad is adding to their repertoire by composing music for the duo and for various musical partners both with symphony orchestras and in recitals. They have worked extensively with such renowned artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Fernando Suárez Paz, Paquito D’Rivera, Gidon Kremer, and Dawn Upshaw.

The Assads began playing the guitar together at an early age and went on to study for seven years with Doña Monina. Their international career began with a major prize at the

1979 Young Artists Competition in Bratislava. Odair is based in Brussels, where he teaches at École Supérieure des Arts. Sérgio resides in San Francisco, where he is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory.

The Assads’ repertoire includes original music composed by Sérgio Assad and his re-workings of folk and jazz music, as well as Latin music of almost every style. Their standard classical repertoire includes transcriptions of the great Baroque keyboard literature of Bach, Rameau, and Scarlatti and adaptations of works by such diverse figures as Gershwin, Ginastera, and Debussy. Their touring programs are always a compelling blend of styles, periods, and cultures.

The Assads are also recognized as prolific recording artists, primarily for the Nonesuch and GHA labels. In 2001, Nonesuch released *Sérgio and Odair Assad Play Piazzolla*, which later won a Latin Grammy Award. Their seventh Nonesuch recording, released in fall 2007, was titled *Jardim Abandonado* after a piece by Antônio Carlos Jobim. It was nominated for Best Classical Album, and Sérgio went on to win the Latin Grammy for his composition, *Tahiiyya Li Oussilina*.

A Nonesuch collaboration with Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg in 2000 featured a collection of pieces based on traditional and Gypsy folk tunes from around the world. In 2003, Sérgio Assad wrote a triple concerto for this trio that has been performed with the orchestras of São Paulo, Seattle, and Saint Paul. In summer 2004, Sérgio and Odair arranged a very special tour featuring three generations of the Assad family. The family presented a wide variety of Brazilian music featuring their father, Jorge Assad [1924–2011] on the mandolin and the voice of their mother, Angelina Assad. GHA Records released a live recording and DVD of the Assad family live at Brussels’s Palais des Beaux-Arts. In the 2006–2007 season, the Assad brothers performed Joaquín Rodrigo’s *Concierto Madrigal* for two guitars and Sérgio’s arrangement of Piazzolla’s *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. The

Assads were also featured performers on James Newton Howard's soundtrack to the movie *Duplicity*, starring Julia Roberts and Clive Owen. In the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 seasons, the brothers toured a project entitled *De Volta as Raízes* (“Back to Our Roots”) featuring Lebanese-American singer Christiane Karam, percussionist Jamey Haddad, and composer-pianist Clarice Assad.

In February 2011, Odair Assad performed his first solo guitar concert tour in North America featuring concerts in New York and Montreal. Sérgio Assad has written another concerto for this duo, called *Phases*. It was premiered with the Seattle Symphony in February 2011. Since then, he has been nominated for yet two more Latin Classical Grammys in the Best Classical Composition Category for his piece for the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet and the Delaware Symphony entitled, *Interchange* and for *Maracaípe* for the Beijing Guitar Duo. In fall 2011, five members of the Assad family—Sérgio, Odair, Badi, Clarice, and Carolina—again joined together for another evening of new and favorite Brazilian works. Their tour included stops in Qatar, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands (to open the “Brazil Festival” at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw), and three concerts in Belgium, with a finale at the Palais des Beaux-Arts.

The Assad brothers' collaboration with cellist Yo-Yo Ma is ongoing. In 2003, the Mr. Ma's recording *Obrigado Brazil* was released, featuring Rosa Passos, Egberto Gismonti, and

Cyro Baptista. Sérgio arranged several of the works on the disc, which won a Grammy in 2004. In 2009, the brothers were featured on Mr. Ma's chart-topping release *Songs of Joy and Peace*, which features guest artists as diverse as James Taylor and Dave Brubeck. Mr. Ma plays Sérgio's composition “Familia,” featuring Sérgio's mother, Angelina Assad, sister Badi, and children Clarice, Rodrigo, and Carolina. The release topped both the classical and mainstream *Billboard* charts and won a Grammy for Best Classical Crossover. In April 2012, Sérgio and Odair toured North America with Mr. Ma and pianist Kathryn Stott, in a program featuring Latin American works arranged by Sérgio and some of his original compositions, highlighted by concerts at the new Smith Center in Las Vegas and Chicago's Symphony Hall.

Future plans include performances of a new duo guitar concerto written for Sérgio and Odair by Sérgio's daughter Clarice Assad, to be premiered at the Pro-Musica Chamber Orchestra in Columbus, Ohio. In fall 2012, the brothers returned to the University of Arizona in Tucson as visiting artists with support from the D'Addario Family Foundation. They headlined the Fourth International Tucson Guitar Festival with two performances at Holsclaw Hall and master classes for advanced guitar students. In spring 2013, Sérgio and Odair toured their much loved trio with the inimitable Paquito D'Rivera and released a recording of their project, *Dances from the New World*.