



Maurício de Souza at home and on the road (below)

# JAZZ JOURNEY



## Baião

## Chorinho



by TCN editor Steven Froias

## Maurício de Souza is bringing a Brazilian beat to the triCities

He lives in West Orange, does most of his playing in New York City, and was born in Brazil. But we're staking our claim to Maurício de Souza anyway.

That's because the jazz drummer and guiding force behind Bossa Brazil – not to mention the Maurício de Souza Quartet – is a regular on the Jersey Shore journeyman jazz circuit. You may have caught him in the act at venues like Langosta Lounge in Asbury, Giamano's in Bradley Beach and the Molly Pitcher Inn in Red Bank as well as appearances at both the Red Bank and Long Branch Jazz and Blues Festivals. And on Tuesday, February 23rd, he'll be a guest mentor for the Jersey Shore Jazz and Blues Foundation's Youth Project.

Sure, that's only a few notes in a vast catalog of live performances throughout New Jersey. But we're singling de Souza out for future greatness so we get to claim the credit for spotting his talent early on. Not that he's done badly for himself so far.

Maurício only washed up on our shores in 2004. He began his journey in Brasilia, Brazil but came to the U.S. to study with the world renowned jazz drummer and master teacher Joe Morello. But his first teacher was his own father, also a jazz drummer. Maurício tells triCity that while he and dad feel the music in their bones, his mother and brother most definitely do not. Which may be why two drummers in one household was one too many, and the younger de Souza beat it out of Brazil!

Ironically, he himself didn't feel that beat at first. Heavy Metal and then a world fusion sound informed the playing of this self-professed Rush fan until the Bossa Nova muse hit him.

Since 2004, in New Jersey, Maurício's certainly laid fast tracks in the jazz world. He began attending jam sessions in North Jersey and New York, and played as both a side man and then a bandleader. He also picked up a Bachelor's Degree in Jazz Studies from Rowan University, and a Teaching Certification in Music Education from William Paterson University. In addition to playing, he makes his living by putting that certification to good use.

He tells us he formed Bossa Brazil and

the Maurício de Souza Quartet after performing in those jam sessions. That's where he met the musicians who make up each, in addition to referrals.

The Maurício de Souza Quartet concentrates on jazz standards and refined modern jazz. It tackles challenging arrangements, with the songs performed in 3/4, 5/4 and 7/4 time as well as modal tunes.

Bossa Brazil focuses on Brazilian music, naturally, in looser 2/4 time. It plays compositions from that country's masters – Tom Jobim, Egberto Gismonti, Roberto Menescal, et al. The trio also explores the exotic rhythms of Baião, a northeast Brazilian rhythmic formula that became the basis of a wide range of music, and Chorinho, which originated in 19th century Rio and features a fast and happy rhythm, utilizing virtuosity and improvisation.

Maurício says that the Brazilian sound of jazz is back in style – neglecting to mention that ace purveyors like him might be one of the reasons for that renaissance. His sound with the quartet is tight and brisk; it makes your senses unconsciously tingle without ever being overwhelming. While Bossa Brazil is alive and sexy, and like the country it's named after somewhat romantic.

Unfortunately for triCity romantics, de Souza and crew won't be around for Valentine's weekend. The quartet is booked at Hawaiian Tropic Zone in New York City (729 7th Avenue at 49th Street from 9pm until midnight, Saturday in case you're in the neighborhood). New York is where you're very likely to find him whenever he's not in these parts; he's also a regular at the jazz lounge Garage in the West Village.

But at only 30 years of age, we expect Maurício de Souza to be a part of the soundtrack of all our lives – in the triCity region and beyond – for quite some time. He's currently looking for a label in order to record his own jazz compositions, and is always available for bookings – private parties included.

Log onto [mauriciodesouzajazz.com](http://mauriciodesouzajazz.com) for information about doing just that. Maurício is also a member of the Jersey Shore Jazz and Blues Foundation ([jsjbf.org](http://jsjbf.org)) where you can also find booking info.

And of course, look for all his future triCity gigs to be listed in these pages.