

AMICA International

Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

Honor Roll

GUIOMAR NOVAES - BY EMMETT M. FORD

From THE AMICA, August 1977

Guiomar Novaes, pianist, phonograph and piano roll artist and composer was born in Sao Joao da Boa Vista, Brazil, February 28, 1895. She showed musical talent at an early age. Piano study was in Sao Paulo with Chiafarelli and in 1904 she appeared as a child prodigy in a public appearance. In 1909 the Brazilian Government sponsored her entry into the Paris International Contest where she won first prize from among about 380 contestants.

A two-year study was with the well-known French teacher and pianist, Isidor Phillip and his assistant, Helen Chaumont at the Paris Conservatory where she graduated with highest honors in 1911, receiving the Premier Prix du Conservatoire. At the final examination of a contest dedicated to the improvement of music in France, Claude Achille Debussy was one of the judges. Debussy was exhausted from the numerous hearings during the examinations but mentioned one of the most artistic was a youthful Brazilian pianist of the age of thirteen, Guiomar Novaes. Debussy further stated, in a letter to the conductor, Andre Capler, "she had all the qualities for a great artist, eyes that are transported by the music and the power of complete inner concentration which is the characteristic so rare in artists." She received first prize by playing Chopin's "Ballade" (3d) and

Schumann's "Carnaval." Her performance of the "Carnaval" resulted in the judges, Debussy, Faure, and Moszkowski asking for a repeat performance.

Isidor Phillip had told his student the piano music of Mendelssohn was unjustly neglected and the "Songs Without Words" should be on her programs. (An excellent recording of this composition on Turnabout LP TV34345 by Mme. Novaes shows she took her teacher's recommendation.)

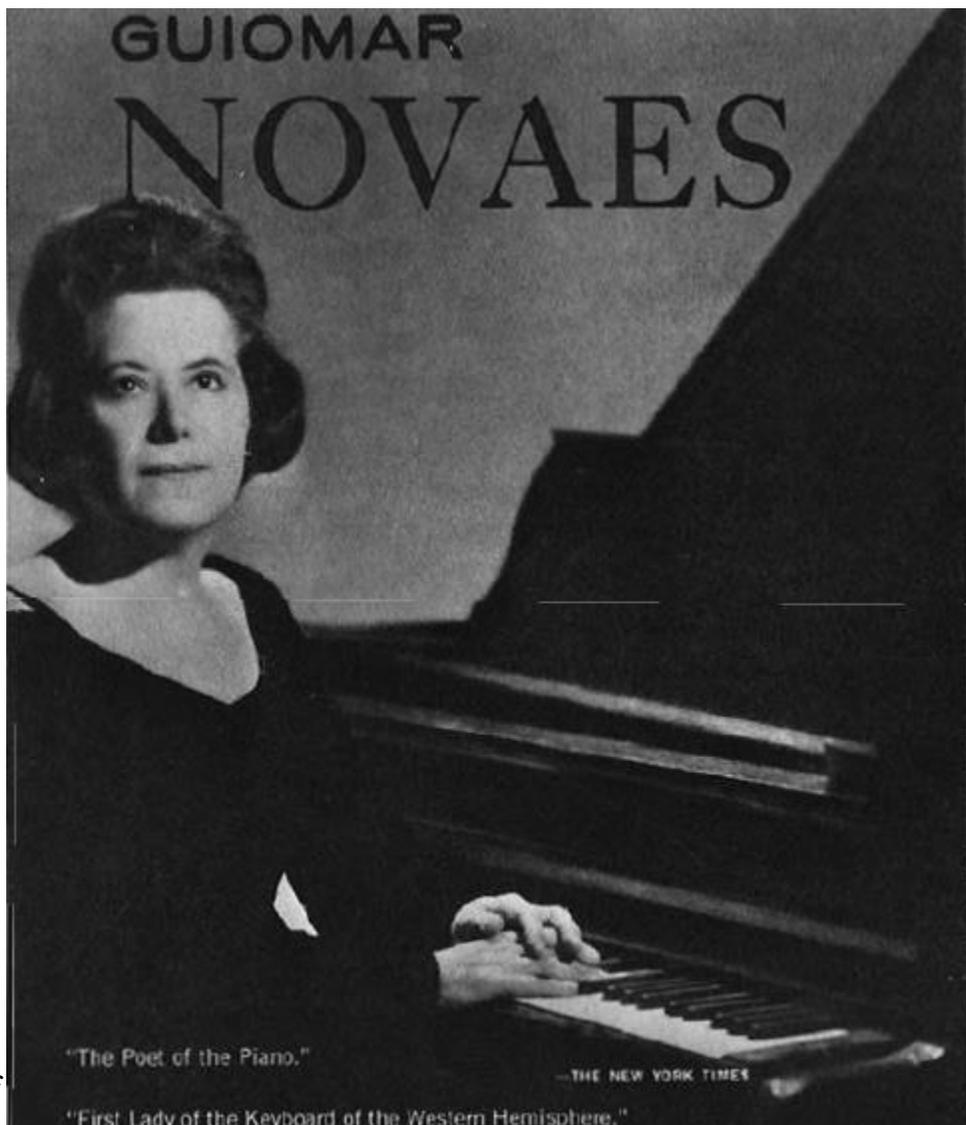
Her Paris debut was in 1911 and tours began in England, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. Returning to Brazil in 1911, she made tours in the principal cities.

Her New York debut in 1915 was a sensation resulting in constant acclaim for her as one of the leading female pianists of that time and in the future. She continued tours as a recitalist and soloist with orchestras all over the world.

She married the Brazilian pianist, composer and architect, Octavio Pinto, who had also studied with Isidor Phillip. There were two children of this marriage, a daughter, Ann Maria and a son, Octavio. Mr. Pinto wrote a suite "Prol e de Bebe," songs, piano pieces and a symphony which is a set in miniatures entitled "Children's Suite." Mme. Novaes plays his composition in many of her recitals.

On February of 1941, she gave a New York concert in which she featured a group of six Brazilian folk songs and the composition of her husband and her fellow countryman, Villa-Lobos. A country-wide concert tour followed this New York appearance.

In 1940 she received the decoration of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor from the French Government.





Octavio Pinto—B. Brazil. A South American composer whose piano works have appeared on New York recital programs, played by Guiomar Novaes and other well known artists.

In 1941 her husband established the Guiomar Novaes prize which provided for an exchange scholarship and tour for winners. The pianist would be chosen at a contest to be held under the supervision of Arthur Judson, President of Columbia Concerts Corporation. The contest was open to American citizens under 30 years of age. The winning pianist would be sent to Brazil for recitals at Mme. Novaes' expense and the award also included transportation to Rio de Janeiro and a tour of four concerts throughout Brazil.

Mme. Novaes made many phonograph recordings, both 78 rpm and long play. In the Columbia disc 17229-0 she gives a charming 18th century recital and her playing is a model in clarity and phrasing. The recording includes "La Tendre Nanette" by Couperin, "L'Hirondelle" by Daquin and "Sonatas Longo No. 333" (mislabeled 8) by Scarlatti. A two-ten inch disc (Columbia CMX 298) was of her playing the "Fantasia and Fugue in D Major" (Peters Vol. IX, No. 31).

Recent recordings were done for Vox. Mr. George H.

Mendlessohn, President of Vox Productions, Inc., regards Mme.

Novaes as one of the incomparable Chopin players of today and he deems it a privilege that Vox can perpetuate her eloquent interpretations on records. He also feels Mme. Novaes had never before been given the recording opportunities her splendid artistry deserves. Mr. Mendlessohn proudly points out that her first two LP discs, containing the Chopin 24 "Preludes" (PL 6170), and the "Sonata in B Flat Minor OP. 25," combined with "Fantasie in F Minor OP. 49" (PL 6230), have been widely praised as some of the finest Chopin performances ever recorded. Mr. Mendlessohn also refers to the locations for the two recordings. Two halls in Paris were the recording places. For piano and small ensembles, the Salle Chopin with seating of 500 people is used. The Salle Playel which is larger than Carnegie Hall is also used. In the latter, three microphones are used and in the Salle Chopin, one or two. If an additional microphone is needed it is always used.

H. C. Schonberg, a reviewer for the American Record Guide, states in a 1951 review of the two Beethoven Sonatas OP. 31 and 81 recorded on Vox PL6270 "I have yet to hear a poor Novaes disc in her current series of Vox. Here she plays two of the more romantic of the Beethoven sonatas, one known as the Tempest and the other, Le Dieu. Again there is little to do but marvel at the flexibility of this great pianist's keyboard approach, her instinctive solutions of the musical problems and her marvelous sense of color. There is nothing scholarly about Novaes' Beethoven, but she comes closer to a realization of what I think Beethoven intended than almost any pianist I have heard. Part of this is due to her sense of rhythm, but most, I suspect, to her ability to keep a musical line in perpetual tension." Mme. Novaes has recorded the sonata 81a on Duo-Art.

An interesting Welte roll by Mme. Novaes is C 2881 of Rubinstein's arrangement of Beethoven's "Turkish March" from "Ruins of Athens."

In 1970 a small group of Louis Gottschalk enthusiasts, guided by Robert Pritchard's organizational genius, held the Gottschalk Centennial organized under the aegis of the Pan American Association, the North & Latin American Observance of the Gottschalk Centenary. An impressive array of major concerts and celebrations were held and the important Gottschalk Competition for Pianists and Composers began and was held June, 1970 at Dillard University in New Orleans. There were contestants from twenty-six nations and Mme. Novaes presided over the Piano Jury. A memorial recording was made and the proceeds from the recording sales were contributed to the Peruvian Disaster Relief Fund. This recording included Mme. Novaes' playing Gottschalk's "Fantasy of the Brazilian National Anthem," composed in 1865 (refer to my Louis ~l. / Gottschalk article in THE AMICA News Bulletin, June and July, 1976). Mme. Novaes has recorded the Fantasy on a Duo-Art revealing her amazing technique, phrasing, and rhythm.

A Town Hall recital on November 26, 1949 was a success. Then another recital was scheduled for November 25, 1950 but was cancelled due to the illness of her husband. His death was from a heart attack, October 31, 1950.

Though Mme. Novaes continued to give recitals into 1966, appearing in California, it seems she is now in retirement but leaves a wealth of music in recordings and piano rolls. The late James Hunecker termed her "The Paderewska of the Pampas."

The AMICA, April 1973



Guiomar Novaes Pinto, Honorary member of AMICA, now lives in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and is listed in the AMICA membership list as a former Duo-Art and Welte Mignon recording artist.

From THE AMICA, January 1965

GUIOMAR NOVAES. Considered by many fellow musicians as well as piano enthusiasts to be the foremost woman pianist today, Novaes is Brazil's greatest pianist. She was born in Sao Joao da Boa Vista, in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Feb. 28, 1895 into a family of 19 children. She was a prodigy and at 4 played the piano by ear. At 6 she gave a concert and a tour developed from it. She was always equally interested in writing, which she hoped to do as a vocation. Her government recognized her brilliant talent and arranged for her study in Europe. She played in Paris with 387 other contestants in a competition held for the 12 available student places for the Conservatory. At the second examination, her performance was so extraordinary, that the jury - which included Faure, Debussy and Moszkowski - asked her to repeat a selection. She was unanimously given first place in the competition. For two years she studied with Isidor Philipp and won first prize at the end of the second year. Her Paris debut was in 1911. She toured Europe and came to America for her debut, which was on Nov. 15, 1915 in New York. She was a sensation. She is still regarded as one of the leading women pianists of our time, and she is still active as ever on the concert stage. In 1922 she married a wealthy Brazilian architect, Octavio Pinto. Mme Novaes has played recently in San Francisco, and with the S.F. Symphony she substituted at short notice for the ailing Dame Myra Hess, playing the Schumann Concerto. She made rolls for the Duo-Art and these rarities are true gems. At that time she made records for Victor Red Seal, and now she records for Vox. Many of these are stereo. Her recording for Vox of the Schumann "Carnival" is considered to be one of the very finest ever made.

From THE AMICA, April 1966

GUIOMAR NOVAES, now 70 but still the same supreme pianist, will play in concert in San Francisco this November 13th. At her last appearance here she played the Schumann Concerto with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Her forthcoming appearance will be a recital. Duo-Art owners know of her marvelous recordings made for that instrument, and of course old record buffs know of her excellent series of Red Seals made for Victor in the early 1920s. They are acousticals. Recently, she has made LPs for Vox and for Decca. Her January 1966 concert at Philharmonic Hall, New York, brought raves from all the critics and the famous New York piano teachers were present. Though she plays often in New York, her concerts are always great events! A biographical sketch of Mme. Novaes will be found in the January 1965 Amica Bulletin. Mme. Novaes is one of a handful of roll artists still before the public. As far as I can make out, the others include among the famous ones - ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN, ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY, GEORGE COPELAND, ROBERT GOLDSAND, ELLY NEY (in Germany), SHURA CHERKASSKY and a few others. Many of them, though still alive,

are either retired or teaching. We understand that ALFRED MIROVITCH, before he died about ten years ago or less, entered the Knabe Piano Store in New York, quite upset because he hadn't received royalties due him for his Ampico 3-roll set (and an excellent one, I might add) of Chopin's B-flat Minor Sonata. Amazing considering this recording was released by Ampico in December, 1924! It remained in the catalog until reproducing piano rolls were discontinued, about the first year of World War II.

From THE AMICA, October 1969

NOVAËS RECITAL!

Bill Knorp writes: "Famed pianist Guiomar Novaës, who made such wonderful recordings for Duo-Art, and who plays magnificently today, will give a recital in Berkeley, at Zellerbach Auditorium Sunday evening, October 26th, 8:30 P.M. Tickets may be purchased (3.50 each, quite reasonable) by sending a check payable to Regents, University of California and sending same to Committee of Arts and Lectures, #101 Zellerbach Auditorium, U.C., Berkeley, with self-addressed envelope. Or they could go to the box office there in person. The program I received is as follows:

Organ Prelude	Bach (Siloti trans.)
Sonata "Les Adieux"	Beethoven
Ballade in A flat	Chopin
Polonaise in A flat Major, Op. 53	Chopin
12 Preludes	Chopin
Les Collines d'Anacapri	Debussy
Minstrels	Debussy
Prelude in B Minor	Villa-Lobos
The Porcelain Doll	Villa-Lobos
The Brunette Doll	Villa-Lobos

"I'm sure Duo-Art owners (and others!) will want to hear this great artist, on the stage over 50 years now. Duo-Art owners are lucky as they could bring their rolls to have them signed, and the rest will just have to listen and enjoy."

From THE AMICA, March 1971

MME. NOVAES, AMICA HONORARY, CURRENTLY IN CONCERT

by Jim Chadwick



--Courtesy of the Suburban and Wayne Times
Mme. Guiomar Novaes, who gave a brilliant concert last week, sponsored by the Tri-County Concerts, was pleasantly surprised when asked to autograph a piano roll which had been produced several years ago. James Chadwick of Broomall, who has a reproducing piano and a collection of piano rolls of famous artists was pleased to have this autograph. The audience clustered around Novaes after the concert. (Photo by Little.)

With my copy of Novaes' rendition of Largo (Duo-Art 66070) in hand, I attended and thoroughly enjoyed the performance. Her playing was precise. I found the 12 Chopin preludes to be the highlight of the program. They came across as being more a part of her than the other works...when I unfurled the roll before her to autograph, Mme. Novaes was taken by surprise but pleasantly so, as could easily be seen. She asked me a few questions along the line of "Where did you ever!" "How many do you have?" and the like...

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