

## **Interview: Reinaldo Brahn (with Caio Maciel)**

**May 2016**

### **What do you consider your greatest success?**

This is a tough question, but I think on a professional level it would have to be coming to the United States and finding people here who enjoy my music and want to see me play.

### **Where were you born?**

Belo Horizonte - This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in Brazil.

### **What was life like there?**

Life was good, but hard. My family went through very difficult times financially – the economy in Brazil was not great during my childhood and many families had similar struggles with finding work. As kids, we mostly played outside – we didn't have many toys, so we had to be creative.

### **What was your family like? Big? Small?**

Big – I am one of 5 children. I have 1 older brother and 3 older sisters. I also have a large extended family – lots of aunts/uncles/cousins.

### **What did your parents do for a living?**

My father did many different types of jobs, many involved sales, but the most interesting was his work as a professional wrestler in Brazil. Similar to the WWF here, he worked in 'Luta Libre'. My mother stayed at home to raise us.

### **What was school like etc.?**

I know it's often talked about in the USA in more of a joking way, but for us growing up in Brazil, many did have to walk to school many miles every day, myself included. I walked about 3 miles to school every morning and 3 miles every afternoon to get home. School was not a full day there, it was 4 hours in the morning and we were done in the early afternoon, by lunch time.

### **What kind of education do you have?**

I did not graduate from school; I left when I was 12 years old to help support my family. I started working at a very early age.

### **What did you study?**

I guess you could say that I only studied guitar. I picked up the guitar when I was 14 and I never stopped playing.

**Why did you leave your home town? Where did you go first?**

I left to find more work and to break-out on my own. Be independent. I moved to Uberlandia, Brazil.

**How did you get there? What made you decide to go there?**

I got there by bus at first, but I had friends there, so I was able to find help through them to start off.

**What kind of work do you do? Or do you principally work as an musician?**

I only work as a musician, though I am a very active father and enjoy working in carpentry. I've built many things at my home and find this type of work very rewarding.

**What was your parents' reaction to your career choice?**

I think they were happy to see that I was able to support myself and not get into too much trouble.

**Who had the most impact on you and your life/career choices?**

I don't think it's a 'who', but more of a 'what.' For me, I believe in following your instincts and intuition. I am led by my feelings ... I believe that you should do what your gut tells you to do. It's your best chance at doing the right thing.

**Why did you choose your career? How long have you been and artist/musician?**

Being a musician, I think it's something that just bites you. You can't be anything else...I've been playing since the day I picked up the guitar, when I was 14.

**What is your favorite work?**

I think any work that I can be proud of, whether it's a good song that people sing to or a piece of furniture that I made by hand... anything that is done well and is maybe a little unexpected. That's my favorite.

**What inspires your work?**

Many different things – it's hard to say specifically. I'm inspired by life, anything around me, and my feelings on any given day.

**Which piece was the most challenging?**

I think writing lyrics in English has been my biggest challenge. It's hard to convey the right meaning in another language because a phrase can mean one thing in Portuguese and mean something entirely different in English. My wife helps me a lot.

**Why did you pick Charlotte? What experiences have you had here?**

I met my wife in Brazil – she was there for work, a project that lasted about 5 weeks. She lived here in Charlotte. We became engaged shortly after we met – upon her 2<sup>nd</sup> trip back to Brazil, and when she returned, we started the immigration process. I came to Charlotte, NC on a Fiancé Visa. We've been married for 9 years this October.

**How is it different from your country/hometown?**

It's very different from Brazil – everything from the style of the houses (we use concrete and stucco for our houses), to the grass (not much green in Brazilian cities), to the traffic (the traffic is much better here and a lot safer). And the weather – the first winter here I thought was pretty cold, but now I've become used to it. Culturally, I would say that Brazilian culture is more social and open – we always pop over to our friend's houses uninvited – this is normal for us. But here I think it's more expected to have an invitation to a friend's house and not just drop in.

**What have been the best experiences here?**

On a personal level, the best would be having my 2 children here – Sam & Isabella. On a professional level, the best would be just finding places to play music here in Charlotte and really finding people who enjoy what I do.

**What problems have you encountered here?**

My initial problem was the language barrier. When I arrived in Charlotte, I did not speak any English. It was very hard for me to interact and understand people.

**How could they be solved?**

Thankfully, my wife found a free course at CPCC that's offered to those who are learning English as a second language. It was a huge help to me.

**What is your current life like?**

Oh I'm very busy – 2 kids who are both in school, a wife who works full-time, and myself who works many nights. We stay busy! Plus I've learned that with owning a home in this country, you are constantly working on it!

**What projects do you have for the future?**

I'm working on an all-English album with original songs, and I've pulled in many great musicians who I've met here in Charlotte. I'm really excited about it and hope to release it by the end of 2016.

**What do you do in your free time?**

I like to socialize with friends, do carpentry work around the house – and, of course, make Brazilian barbeque!

**Any hobbies?**

I enjoy hiking - there are many nice spots near Charlotte, which is great. We hope to hike some more this fall. We also like to travel – we'll be returning to Brazil this summer with my kids, so we can't wait for that!

**What advice would you give to others who would like to come here?**

Just do it! It's a great city, great weather, and – of course – has some great music (come see me play!).