

# Leila Maria

The Urban Diva of Rio



Owner of an exquisite voice, *Leila Maria* beautifully blends together sophisticated improvisational skills and an innate rhythmic sense rooted in a childhood spent in a working-class suburb of Rio de Janeiro where two of the major samba community clubs are based.

A genuine Carioca, the vocalist has built a long career in her native Brazil due to her versatility and her impressive stage presence. A winner of the Brazilian Music Award, she became a household name thanks to the Globo TV show “The Voice Plus Brazil,” earning her the reputation of the Urban Diva of Rio. Her ability to sound perfectly at home in Brazilian classics, jazz standards, bossa nova, samba, and pop attracts audiences of all ages and demographics.

After holding varied jobs in the early 1980s, Leila caught the attention of a producer who brought her to jazz club stages around the country. She began to earn a reputation as an accomplished Brazilian-styled improviser, recreating hit songs and making them her own. Since then, she has performed at music clubs, festivals, and theaters, toured music clubs along the USA's East Coast, and visited Japan, where she spent three months singing her extensive Brazilian repertoire in clubs.

She worked for several years as a singer with the big band of **Paulo Moura**, the Brazilian conductor, composer, sax, and clarinet player who was arranger and music director on hundreds of Brazilian records, including those of Milton Nascimento, Eumir Deodato, Azymuth and jazz legend Cannonball Adderley. Her time with Moura helped Leila consolidate her unique phrasing.

Influenced by the records her late father, a merchant navy officer, used to bring home from his transatlantic travels, she has also successfully explored the iconic songs of the American songbook with a fluent command of English.





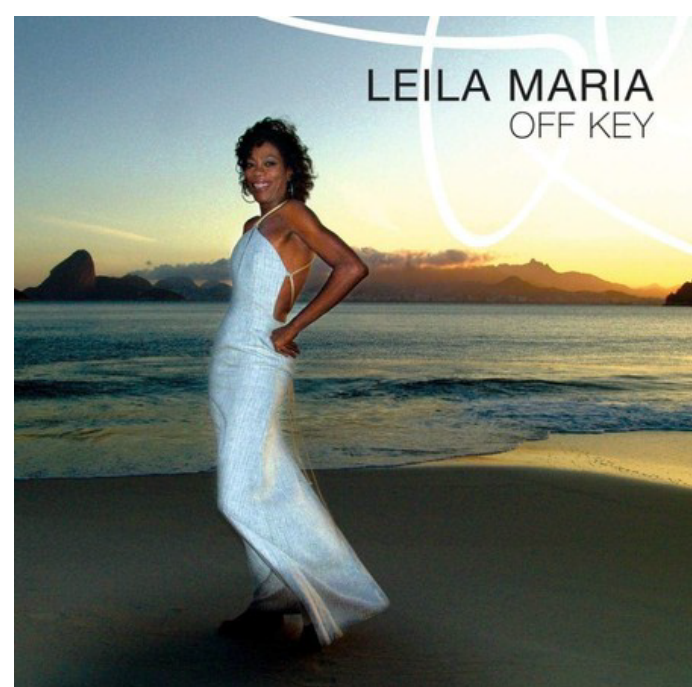
Among her accomplishments: collaborating with singer/songwriter **Ed Motta** in his album *Dwitza*; contributing two vocals to the collection, *comPasso Samba & Choro*, vol.6., released by Biscoito Fino, the prestigious Brazilian label; appearing in the movie *Como Esquecer (How to Forget)*, released in 2010, in which she sings Cole Porter's "Get Out of Town" in her own Afro-jazzy style. Her 2015 album ***Holiday in Rio: Leila Maria canta Billie (Holiday in Rio: Leila Maria sings Billie)***, featuring songs from the Lady Day songbook rearranged Rio-style, earned her the Brazilian Music Award.

Her recording career started in 1997 with ***Von Kopf Bis Fuss***; continued in 2004 with *Off Key*, with an elegant Bossa Nova repertoire sung entirely in English; then 2007 with pop Brazilian songs about love entitled ***Canções de Amor Entre Iguais (Love Songs Among Equals)***; the award-winning Billie Holiday album in 2015; and ***Tempo*** in 2018, including five of her originals.

In 2021 she was invited to the Brazilian version of ***The Voice Plus*** on *Globo TV*, during which she displayed her versatile singing of many Brazilian styles. The same year she returned to recreating standards, releasing the well-received album ***Ubuntu***, dedicated to songs by iconic Brazilian singer songwriter Djavan. The record was produced by percussionist Guilherme Kastrup, who had produced the Latin Grammy-winning album *A Mulher Do Fim do Mundo (Woman of the End of The World)* by late singer Elza Soares. *Ubuntu* was nominated Best Album of The Year in Brazil by at least four lists and was hailed as instant masterpiece by the most influential music critic of Brazil, Mauro Ferreira of *O Globo*. She then toured with the show which includes songs written by Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Milton Nascimento and Jorge Ben, exploring the Afro-Brazilian diaspora, in venues such as the Blue Note and SESC.

Leila Maria is now embarking on the production of a new album in collaboration with young Brazilian singer/songwriter **Ana Frango Eletrico**, to be released in late 2024.

# Discography



Off Key

2004 - Deck / ZYX Records Germany



Von Kopf Bis Fuss

1997 - GPA



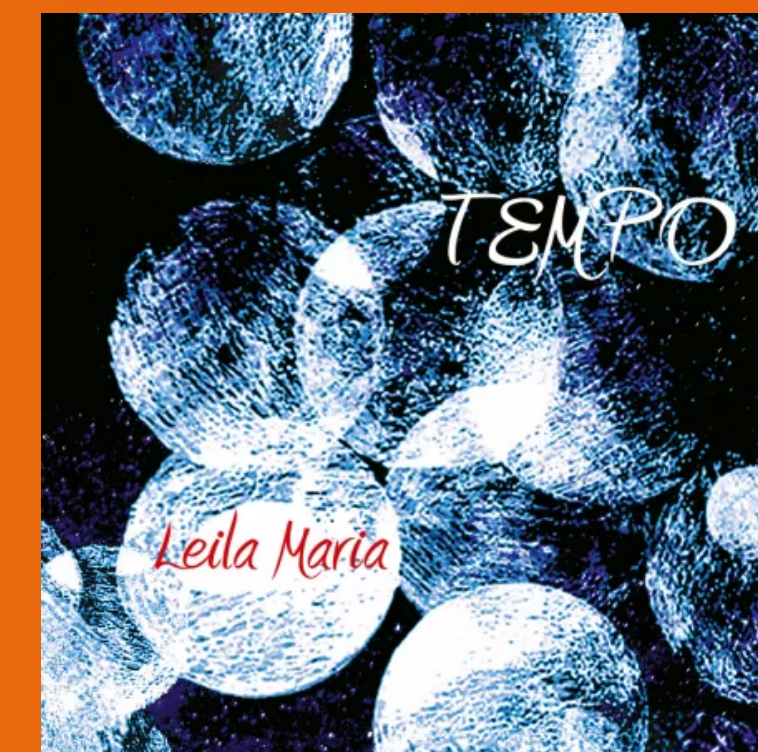
Leila Maria (single)

1983 - Discogs



Ubuntu

2022 - Biscoito Fino



Tempo

2018 - Biscoito Fino



Leila Maria Canta  
Billie Holiday in Rio

2015 - Biscoito Fino



Canções do  
Amor de Iguais

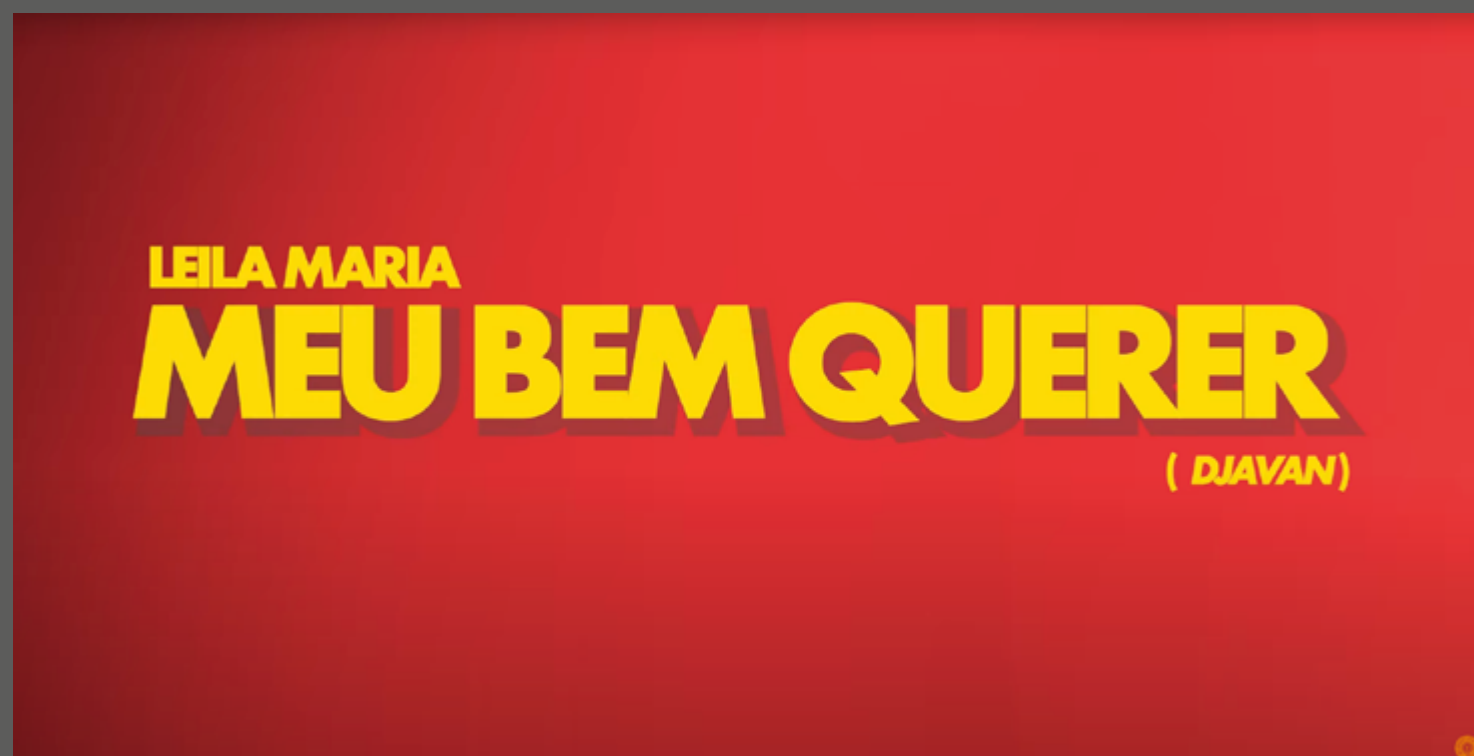
2007 - Deck

# Selected Videos



*Seca*

Oficial Videoclip



*Meu Bem Querer*

Oficial Videoclip



*Miss Celie's Blues*

Live on Globo TV - The Voice Plus



*Eu sou o samba*

Live at Teatro Rival, Rio de Janeiro

# The Urban Diva of Rio



# Streaming



Spotify



Apple Music



DEEZER



amazon music



TIDAL



pandora

# Social Media



@leilamariaoficial



@realleilamaria

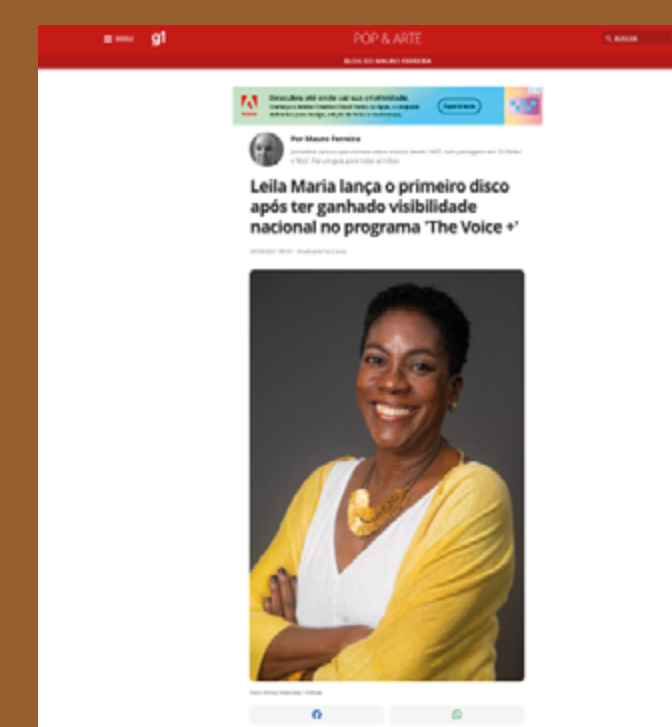
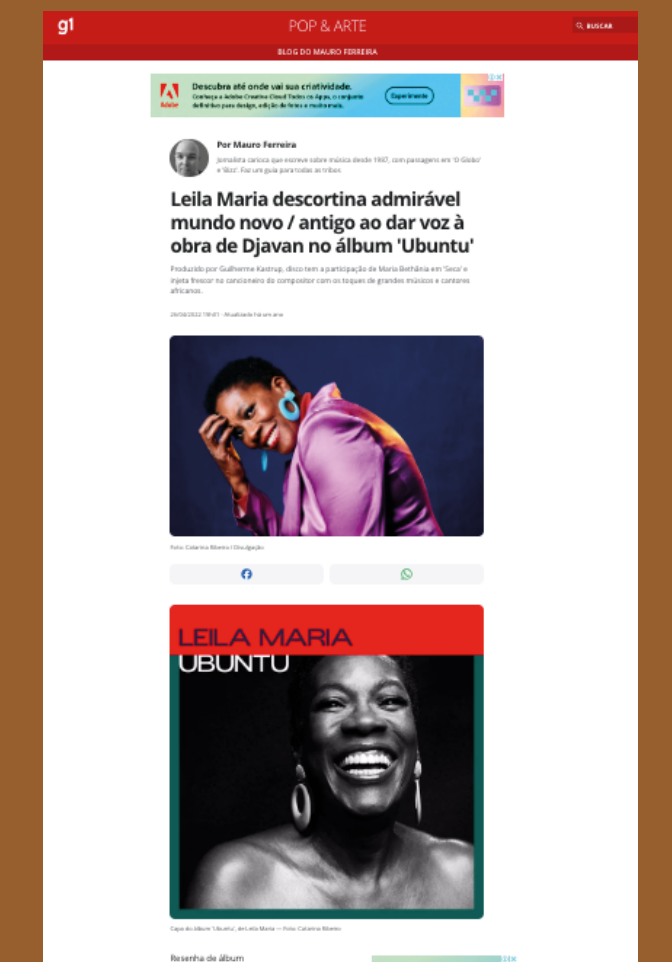
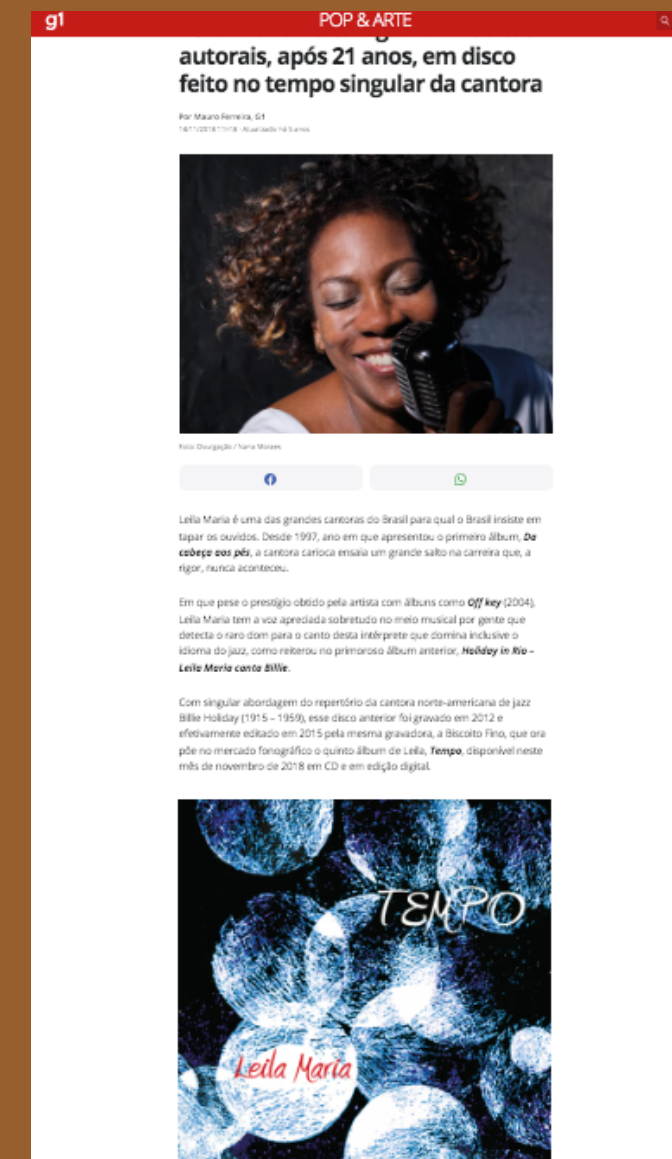


@leilamariacantoraoficial





# Selected Clipping



“The biggest surprise (or at least to me) was the interpretation of Brazilian vocalist Leila Maria. This sounds like straight African-American mainstream jazz with a steady blues walk on the bass line. Stylistically Leila sounds like a younger Sassy, which is to say swinging, swinging, swinging. It’s almost like there’s no Brazilian influence anywhere around this version; it’s an oddity but one that works. Contained on her oddly named album *Off Key*, which is anything but.”

Kalamu ya Salaam, music critic, USA. April 2008





# Management

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