

**Interview by Veladimir Romano da Cruz (son of B. Leza)
Lisbon, June 2012**

Veladimir Romano: *Titina, you have been carrying a legacy of B. Leza's music with you for 53 years, how does that responsibility feel after all this time?*

Titina: It felt like a mission to me. Since my first memories I have had a very strong feeling about his music and B. Leza himself was like a second father to me. We were neighbours in Mindelo and his door was always open, he was attentive and as generous as he could afford to anybody who knocked on it. He even gave schooling to children whose parents could not afford the tuition. But best of all there was the music. I used to sit and watch, mesmerised, until one day when I was just four years old, he picked me up, sat me in his lap and started teaching me how to sing his songs. I was so thrilled, my career began with just that moment! This recording is part of a legacy I feel very privileged to have dedicated myself to.

VR: *When was your first public appearance?*

T: At the Castillo Theatre in Mindelo back in 1958. I was 12 years old. From that moment until today I have never stopped.

VR: *1958....sadly also the year of B. Leza's death?*

T: Yes, unfortunately by June of that year he was no longer with us. It was a tragic moment for Cape Verdean music and a real shock. Every artist from the whole archipelago came over to Sao Vicente to mourn B. Leza's death and there we gave him a spectacular funeral march. Much left with him but luckily much of him remained with me through his songs.

VR: *How old was he?*

T: 52 years old. Too young. For me as a teenager at the time it was a terrible burden, I remember that day still now like a dark cloud in my mind.

VR: *At what point did you feel that Cape Verde was too small and isolated to fulfil your dreams, when did you decide to travel abroad?*

T: Well in 1962 things were not at all easy. We were still a Portuguese colony and their minister of colonies paid us an official visit during which I was asked

to perform for him. He was very impressed and invited me with my group of musicians to Portugal to do some shows. So we went and performed across Portugal with great success, on the back of which we recorded a hit single.

VR: *After that you returned to Cape Verde? Or given the opportunity did you stay in Lisbon?*

T: No, I was far too young for that! My father would never have let me. I returned to my homeland and only after I married did I come to Lisbon.

VR: *How did you manage your marriage and music at the same time?*

T: My decisions were based on being a mother first and foremost and as much time as I could devote after that to my music. That time and process gave me two beautiful boys and allowed me a great deal of travelling in order to perform – to Argentina, USA, Angola, Canada, Senegal, Holland, France, Italy, Hungary, Luxemburg, Brazil. Taking the music of Cape Verde and especially B. Leza to those places gave me great pleasure.

VR: *A few years ago you recorded another album 'Cruel Destino' with Astral Music. Now again you have gone into partnership together to re-send 'Titina Canta B. Leza' to the marketplace. How do you feel after so many years to breathe new life into this recording?*

T: For me, like so many Cape Verdeans, all the time and effort I can afford will be in tribute to B. Leza – the man who made such wonderful music and has been such an important influence and inspiration. I consider it a privilege and honour to have had the opportunity to learn my trade with him and it has always been a dream of mine to make a world tribute to one of its greatest composers.

VR: *This recording was completed in 1988, well before the music of Cape Verde began enjoying any success or fame. How did you feel about the recording then?*

T: Paulinho Veiria who produced the album and who then went on to produce Cesaria's Miss Perfumado, prepared, organised and arranged the music beautifully. It was a project of great passion for him too and all of our work combined made me feel a great happiness for the result, something I still feel to this day.

VR: *53 years in music, a family, now grandchildren....is this the end of the line?*

T: Never! I am always looking forward, always ready to sing every day and anywhere so long as my health allows me the chance.