Astrud Gilberto & The Walter Wanderley Trio – A Certain Smile, a Certain Sadness (1966)

01 - A Certain Smile (Fain / Paul Francis Webster) 02 - A Certain Sadness (Carlos Lyra / John Court) 03 - Nega do Cabelo Duro (David Nasser / Rubens Soares) 04 - So Nice (Summer Samba) (Marcos Valle / Paulo Sergio Valle / Vrs. Norman Gimbel) 05 - Você Já Foi a Bahia (Dorival Caymmi) 06 - Portuguese Washerwoman (Lucchesi / Popp) 07 - Tristeza (Goodbye Sadness) (Haroldo Lobo / Niltinho Tristeza / Vrs. Norman Gimbel) 08 - Call Me (Hatch) 09 - Here's That Rainy Day (Babcock / Burke / Van Heusen) 10 - Tu Mi Delirio (C. Portillo de La Luz) 11 - It's a Lovely Day Today (Irving Berlin) 12 – The Sadness Of After (bonus) 13 – Who Needs Forever)bonus) Musicians: Astrud Gilberto – vocals Walter Wanderley (piano, organ); Claudio Slon (drums); Jose Marino (bass).

It is striking how "dated" this record sounds. Even taking into consideration that this is a 1960s record, that is inevitably the first thing that any listener will notice. But ignoring the kitsch factor for a moment, one can recall that in 1966 when A Certain Smile, A Certain Sadness came out, the bossa nova craze was at a peak, and the album marked a collaboration between two of its biggest stars, vocalist Astrud Gilberto, brought to fame by her rendition of the classic "The Girl From Ipanema," and organist Walter Wanderley. Even though the album is good, it is not as exciting as one might hope. While the music is remarkably innocent and sweet, with just a little underlying touch of sadness beneath the joyous, even naïve, surface, Gilberto and Wanderley do not always seem to work together on these tracks — it often appears as if each is performing in a universe of his or her own. That being said, there are many bright sides to the album, too: Wanderley's organ playing is as enthusiastic and fluffy as ever, while Gilberto's singing (in both English and Portuguese) remains smile-inducing. Both manage to create an incredibly warm sound, and when Wanderley plays some piano (as on the beautiful "A Certain Sadness"), you can sense a spark between the two. So, while A Certain Smile, A Certain Sadness might not be the most successful album of all time, it is still a nice record that fans of either Gilberto or Wanderley will want to have. And — even though one tends to use the word "cocktail lounge music" — their rendition of "Tristeza" is simply irresistible, easy listening or not. --- Chris Genzel, AMG

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