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Rio Sonata

(Documentary -- Switzerland) A Georges Gachot Films presentation of a Schweizer Fernsehen, SRG SSR Idee Suisse production. (International sales: Doc & Film Intl., Paris.) Produced by Georges Gachot. Executive producer, Gachot. Directed, written by Georges Gachot.

With: Nana Caymmi, Dori Caymmi, Gilberto Gil, Milton Nascimento, Joao Donato, Mart'nalina, Erasmo Carlos, Sueli Costa, Maria Bethania, Miucha, Dorival Caymmi. (Portuguese dialogue)

By [JAY WEISSBERG](#)

Singer Nana Caymmi may not be well known outside Brazil, but with any luck, Georges Gachot's "Rio Sonata" will change that. Now pushing 70 but with a voice possibly smoother than when she started, Caymmi effortlessly moves from bossa nova to a laid-back jazz style that's left a mark on Brazilian music for the past two generations. Shooting over six years, Gachot, whose previous docus include films on Martha Argerich and Maria Bethania, crafts a silky, soft-spoken love poem to both Caymmi and Rio that's sure to beguile fests, Euro cable and ancillary.

As the daughter of noted songwriter Dorival Caymmi, Nana was born in the business but waited until her mid-20s before beginning a singing career. Gachot isn't interested in documenting the highs and lows of her professional or personal life (her second husband was Gilberto Gil), but rather films her in recording studios and onstage, basking in the warmth of her voice and the kinds of songs that lead to latenight reveries. He's matched the music with unusual images of Rio, showing the city in gray-blue twilights and rain, or via lovely helicopter shots. Tech credits are pro.

Camera (color, HD-to-35mm), Matthias Kaelin, Pio Corradi; editor, Ruth Schlaepfer. Reviewed at Rio de Janeiro Film Festival (Another Brazil), Sept. 27, 2010. (Also in Vancouver Film Festival -- Nonfiction Features: Arts & Letters.) Running time: 88 MIN.

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