The Girl From Ipanema (Garota de Ipanema)

It's a song of sensuality that entices men everywhere to dream. It evokes the fantasy of an exotic beach where warm waves kiss the shore, where breezes whisper through the palms, and where there is a woman, a dream woman, an ideal woman who embodies the elusive essence of everything that is desirable.

The song was composed for a musical comedy entitled Dirigível (Blimp), then a work-in-progress of Vinícius de Moraes. The original title was Menina que Passa (The Girl Who Passes By); the famous first verse was different. Tom Jobim composed the melody on his piano in his new house in Rua Barão da Torre, in Ipanema.

In 1962 Jobim saw the girl.

The Girl From Ipanema

Ipanema is a trendy, rather artsy neighborhood in south Rio de Janeiro. To the west is the upscale area of Leblon and to the east is Aproador and Copacabana.
A block off Ipanema Beach, on the northwest corner of Rua Montenegro and Rua Prudente de Moraes was Tom Jobim's favorite hang-out, the Bar Veloso.

Every day a certain girl passed by the Veloso. She was lovely with long brown hair and green eyes. Bar Veloso

The girl, however, never responded to the men. Never did she stop to talk; indeed never did she even make eye contact with bar's patrons. Each day when she walked to the sea, she looked straight ahead, not at anyone else. And Jobim was in love.

Eneida Menezes Pinto - Girl from Ipanema

Jobim convinced his old lyricist buddy Vinicius de Moraes to come by the Veloso to see this girl. After several days of waiting the girl finally walked past. Jobim remarked "Nao a coisa mais linda?" (Isn't she the prettiest thing?), to which de Moraes replied, "E a coisa cheia de gracia." (She's full of grace.) This sparked the creativity in de Moraes who wrote those two lines on a napkin. The lines provided the basis for the opening two lines of the original, Portuguese version of A Garota de Ipanema (The Girl from Ipanema).

Her name was Heloísa Eneida Menezes Paes Pinto (now Helô Pinheiro). Moraes wrote she was: "the paradigm of the young Carioca: a golden teenage girl, a mixture of flower and mermaid, full of light and grace, the sight of whom is also sad, in that she carries with her, on her route to the sea, the feeling of youth that fades, of the beauty that is not ours alone — it is a gift of life in its beautiful and melancholic constant ebb and flow."

In March, 1963, Tom Jobim and Joao Gilberto flew up to New York to record the album. When the album was released in 1964 under the title "Getz/Gilberto" by Verve Records the first cut on the album was The Girl from Ipanema. It featured Joao Gilberto strumming his guitar and singing the original Portuguese lyrics followed by Astrid Gilberto with the English lyrics. English lyrics were written by Norman Gimbel. Back home in Rio, the song was an instant success in Brazil and a worldwide hit in the mid-1960s. The 45 rpm release of The Girl from Ipanema was, according to Billboard, the fifth best selling song in the world in 1964 (the other four were Beatle songs) and was awarded the Grammy as best song of the year 1965. According to a 1996 United Kingdom Channel 4 production "Without Walls: The Girl from Ipanema" that recording is the fifth most played record in the history of the world.

The Getz / Gilberto album released by Verve Records stayed on the pop charts for 96 weeks and won four Grammys.

When sung by female artists the song has often been rendered as The Boy from Ipanema.