



## Caetano Veloso

(Pasadena Civic Auditorium; 3,000 seats; \$88 top) Presented by Brazilian Nights.  
Reviewed Nov. 14, 2007.

**Band:** Caetano Veloso, Pedro Sá, Ricardo Dias Gomez, Marcello Collado.

By STEVEN MIRKIN

**At 65, an age when classic rockers move into retrospective mode, looking back and slowing down, Brazilian superstar singer/songwriter/author Caetano Veloso remains a restless, mercurial artist. For his show at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium Wednesday night, Veloso, accompanied by a rock trio whose total age perhaps equaled his, sounded effortlessly contemporary. Even more impressively, he did it without compromise.**

Guitarist Pedro Sá might play lean angular riffs early Talking Heads, the bass intro to "Não Me Arrependo (I Don't Regret)" recalls Lou Reed's "Walk On The Wild Side" and "Odeio (I Hate)" could be a Strokes tune. But the music remains fully Veloso's. His sweet, expressive voice keeps the songs buoyant; there's never a sense of despair. He fuses the youthful sound with a poetic mature sensibility.

Stranded in London in 1971, "with no one to here to say hello," would usually be the cue for a mournful rock ballad, but Veloso will not be denied joy. "My eyes look for flying saucers in the sky," he sings, sounding sure he will see them. Even growing old doesn't faze him "I am a man," he sings, "loose skin over muscle ... thick hair in my nose." In his hands, even "I hate you," isn't bitter or angry. As he explained, when that line is sung, the music turns tender, making the words, "the deepest way of saying I love you."

His longtime fans are already acquainted with his mental acuity (he's one of the few performers who make you feel smarter just listening to him) and the suppleness of his voice. What's surprising is how physically spry he is -- it's tempting to call him frisky. There's little pomp or ceremony about his perf -- with his halo of gray hair and glasses, outfitted in distressed denim, sneakers and a faded Lacoste shirt, he looks like a literature professor out to meet some students at the campus pub. He's not even fazed when he trips while running around the lip of the stage, slapping hands and occasionally giving one of the many adoring women in the aud a quick kiss. He smiled, and just picked himself back

up. He may be old enough to retire, but right now, Veloso can match any indie rocker in energy and verve.

Veloso plays New York's Nokia Theater Nov. 19 and 20

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