

BRIEF OVERVIEW of BRAZILIAN MUSIC

from

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS PLAYED IN BRAZIL – Renato Vasconcellos

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with additional material from

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Brazilian music is the result of the fusion of European music brought by the Portuguese, African music that came with the slaves in the 16th century, and native Indian music that was already an established form on the continent when the colonization process started.

The fusion of these three diverse elements began shortly after the discovery of Brazil in 1500. Slaves, brought to this land from Africa, came mainly from two diverse tribes, the Sudanese and the Bantos. These groups brought their different rhythms. Language also played an important role in the development of Brazilian Music. Brazil is unique in South America being the only country that speaks exclusively Portuguese. This language is highly melodic and rhythmic.

Although often confused with the Spanish influenced music from Central America like the calypso, rumba, salsa and other variations, Brazilian music is very different. The rhythms are far more subtle and developed from geographical regions within the country. In addition, the harmony is considerably more advanced and sophisticated. During the 1930's, Brazil's culture was first brought to North America in the person of Carmen Miranda, the singer, who made popular "Carnaval" tunes. She was noted for her flamboyant costumes and her use of hats with pineapples and bananas. "Yes, we have bananas!" was one of her greatest hits. Brazilian music at this time was viewed as a novelty.

During the 1960's, Brazilian-influenced music became well known all over the United States. The Bossa-Nova was popularized by jazz saxophonist Stan Getz. Through Getz, the music of Brazil's most famous composer Antonio Carlos Jobim (Tom Jobim) became an important influence on American music and music throughout the world. Carmen Miranda and her Carnaval costumes gave way to the intimate style based on the acoustic guitar and the soft voice, with lyrics telling about the beauty of Rio de Janeiro, its girls, its birds and beaches.

The music of Brazil is also influenced by diverse regional styles. For example the Bossa-Nova is from the southeastern, European influenced region, while *Baião*, *Partido-alto*, and *Afoxé* are the main rhythms from the north and northeastern regions which are rich in African culture and based on dance, percussion, and wind instruments.

Let's take a close look at the origins of these styles:

Samba is the most famous rhythmic style from Brazil. In the middle of the nineteenth century, right after the slaves emancipation, groups from different parts of the country moved to Rio de Janeiro and brought a wide variety of chant forms from the work-songs and Afro-Brazilian cults. The amalgamation of these elements led to the rise of the **samba**. In 1917, the recording of the first Carnaval hit, *Pelo Telefone*, consolidated the style as a Brazilian trademark. Names related to the style: Paulinho da Viola, João Bosco, Djavan and Dona Ivone Lara.

Bossa-Nova, or simply **bossa**, is a style derived from **samba**. In the 50s, Brazilian composers influenced by both Jazz and French harmonies brought over a fresh air to the old styles. It is especially slower and lighter than **samba** and features a very intimate way of singing and

playing. Jobim and other **bossa** players introduced the use of the drum set instead of the percussion ensemble. Names related to this style: Tom Jobim, João Gilberto, Elis Regina and Roberto Menescal.

Baião was a popular dance form in the Northeast during the nineteenth century. Historians trace it back to the instrumental interlude played by folksingers as a bridge between verses on a *desafio* (poetic contest). The accordion is the most important instrument on this style, accompanied by a triangle and a *zabumba* (a large drum carried by the player around his neck). Names related to this style: Luiz Gonzaga, Dominginhos and Hermeto Pascoal.

Afoxé is a very popular rhythm from Bahia. The **Afoxé** groups refer back to their African roots with their displays, especially to African gods like *Oxum*. They established themselves firmly as a part of the Carnival. Groups are made up exclusively of percussion instruments. The melody is carried alone by members of the group and by the crowd. Names related to this style: Caetano Veloso e Gilberto Gil.

Partido-alto is a variation on **samba** dating back to the turn of the twentieth century. The refrain of the partido-alto were sung by the participants in an improvised fashion while standing in a circle. The rhythm was simultaneously supported by hand-clapping or on a *pandeiro*, a percussion instrument used for all styles of Brazilian music. The *pandeiro* looks like a tamborine but is played in a different way. It is held in the left hand while the right hand beats the main rhythm. Names related to this style: Instrumental group Azymuth, Airto Moreira and samba singer Zeca Pagodinho.

Maracatu is the name of a style very similar to **baião**. The rhythm was part of a procession put on by slaves to celebrate and remember their African ancestors. It was played and danced around the church as a form of syncretism. The big drums, called *alfaias*, the snares, and the *agogo* (kind of a double cowbell) are the main core of the rhythm.

Choro is a popular Brazilian instrumental style that originated in Rio de Janeiro during the 19th century, considered the original urban music much like American Dixieland. Choro means cry or lament and traditionally called *Chorinho*, little lament or little cry. The style is happy with frequently a quick or fast rhythmic feel. Instrumentalist who perform the Choro are often virtuosos. Choros feature improvisations, modulations, syncopated rhythms and intricate counterpoint. The traditional Choro ensemble is a trio with flute or clarinet, guitar and cavaquinho (four stringed traditional instrument). A Choro is often expanded with pandeiro (tamborine-like percussion instrument), 7-string guitar, mandolin and other wind instruments.

Frevo is a musical style that originated in the northeastern Brazilian state of Pernambuco. A Frevo, roughly translated as 'boiling' or 'to boil', is a feverish rhythmic style usually performed by a brass band during Carnival in Recife and other cities in the region. Passistas, dancers in colorful outfits, parade in front of the band dancing complicated, elaborate steps somewhat based on the capoeira (fight-dance).

Forró is a dance from the northeastern region of Brazil. The Forró is used for a number of dance styles – fast, festive and highly rhythmic with sing-able melodies and syncopated rhythms. Forró is a mainstay of the Festa Junina (June Festival) which celebrates various Catholic saints.

Brazilian instrumentalists and vocalists of note:

Saxophone: Nivaldo Ornellas, Carlos Malta, Pixinguinha, Raul Mascarenhas, Mauro Senise, Teco Cardoso, Hermeto Pascoal, Roberto Sion, Vitor Assis Brasil, Leo Gandelman, Daniela Spielmann, Mario Seve, Zé Nogueira, Marcelo Coelho, Vitor Santiago, Ademir Junioh, Sérgio Galvão, Bruno Medina, Vadim Arsky, Proveta, e Marcelo Martins.

Clarinet: Paulo Moura, Proveta, Paulo Sergio Santos e Ademir Junioh.

Flute: Mauro Senise, Raul Mascarenhas, Altamiro Carrilho, Odete Ernest Dias, Pixinguinha, Nivaldo Ornellas, Teco Cardoso, Hermeto Pascoal, Beth Ernest Dias, Marcelo Martins, Andrea Ernest Dias, Roberto Sion, e Mario Seve.

Trumpet: Marcio Montarroyos, Jesse Sadoc, Nilton Rodrigues, Paulinho Trompete, Moises Alves, Bidinho, Daniel Alcantara, Joatan Nascimento, Bruno Santos, Fabinho Costa, Waldir Gil, Nahor Gomes, Rubinho Antunes, e Barrosinho.

Trombone: Raul de Souza, Vitor Santos, Lucio Silva, Moises Santos, Zé da Velha, Bocato, e Paulinho do Trombone.

Accordion: Sivuca, Dominginhos, Luiz Gonzaga, Marcos Nimirichter, Toninho Ferragutti, Gilson Peranzetta, Renato Borghetti, e Oswaldinho do Acordeon.

Harmonica: Gabriel Grossi, Mauricio Einhorn, Edu da Gaita, Pablo Fagundes, e Rildo Hora.

Piano: Cesar Camargo Mariano, Luis Avelar, Jovino Santos Neto, Luiz Eça, Amilton Godoy, Amilson Godoy, Nelson Ayres, Luis Carlos Vinhas, Jota Moraes, Marcos Resende, João Donato, Wagner Tiso, Tom Jobim, Gilson Peranzetta, Cristovão Bastos, Osmar Milito, Glauton Campelo, Antonio Adolfo, Egberto Gismonti, Rique Pantoja, Eliane Elias, Marcos Silva, Chiquinha Gonzaga, Tania Maria, Marco Brito, Hermeto Pascoal, Renato Vasconcellos, Andre Memari, Hamleto Stamato, e Itamar Assiere.

Guitar: Toninho Horta, Helio Delmiro, Ricardo Silveira, Lula Galvão, Garoto, Daniel Santiago, Heitor TP, Paulo Andre Tavares, Nelson Faria, Lupa Santiago, Raphael Rabello, Yamandu Costa, Egberto Gismonti, Juninho di Souza, Paulo Bellinati, Marco Pereira, Jaime Ernest Dias, Chico Pinheiro, Pepeu Gomes, Torcuato Mariano, Tomati, Fernando Cesar 7 cordas, Heraldo do Monte, e Juarez Moreira.

Mandolin: Hamilton de Holanda, Dudu Maia, Jorge Cardoso, Marcilio Lopes, Jacob do Bandolim, Joel Nascimento, Deo Rian, e Luperce Miranda.

Bass: Arthur Maia, Nico Assumpção, Luis Chaves, Luis Alves, Pixinga, Luizão Maia, Jamil Joanes, Andre Vasconcellos, Tião Neto, Rodolfo Stroeter, Marcelo Mariano, Cisão Machado, Hamilton Pinheiro, Romulo Duarte, Toni Botelho, Nema Antunes, e Beбето Castilho.

Drums: Erivelton Silva, Nenê, Robertinho Silva, Rubinho Barsotti, Carlos Bala, Marcio Bahia, Esdra Ferreira, Airto Moreira, Claudio Infante, Kiko Freitas, Paulinho Braga, Duduca Fonseca, Allen Pontes, João Palma, Edison Machado, Teo Lima, Wilson das Neves, Leander Motta e Jurim Moreira.

Percussion: Naná Vasconcellos, Airto Moreira, Paulinho da Costa, João Bani, Café, Armando Marçal, Leander Motta, Firmino, Djalma Correa, Robertinho Silva, e Pernambuco do Pandeiro.

Female singers: Elis Regina, Sylvia Telles, Leila Pinheiro, Fernanda Abreu, Maria Bethania, Gal Costa, Leni Andrade, Ana Carolina, Elza Soares, Angela Maria, Elizeth Cardoso, Ivete Sangalo, Elba Ramalho, Alcione, Mônica Salmaso, Quarteto em Cy, Daniela Mercury, Zélia Duncan, Cassia Eller, Rita Lee, Baby Consuelo, Nara Leão, Joyce, e Nana Caymmi.

Male singers: Djavan, Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, João Gilberto, Milton Nascimento, Chico Buarque, João Bosco, Luiz Gonzaga, Gonzaguinha, Alceu Valença, Sivuca, Dominginhos, Lenine, Moraes Moreira, Lô Borges, Os Cariocas, MPB4, Beto Guedes, Guilherme Arantes, Lucio Alves, Dick Farney, Tom Jobim, Arrigo Barnabé, Ney Matogrosso, Emilio Santiago, Jorge Benjor, Wilson Simonal, Max de Castro, Paulinho da Viola, Zeca Pagodinho, Pedro Mariano, Fagner, Egberto Gismonti, Martinho da Vila, e Luis Melodia.

Influential Brazilian ensembles (partial):

Trios, Quartets, etc

Azymuth – trio
Trio 363
Zimbo Trio
Tamba Trio – Bossa trio
Curupira – contemporary trio
Trio Corrente – contemporary trio
Hamilton de Holanda Quinteto
Pau Brasil – quintet
Camerata Carioca – Choro ensemble
Época de Ouro – most important Choro group

Big Bands, Large Ensembles

Banda Mantiqueira
Orquestra Tabajara
Spok Frevo Orquestra

Hermeto Pascoal e Grupo
Banda Ouro Negro – large ensemble
Pife Moderno – flutes and percussion
Orkestra Rumpilezz – winds and percussion
SáGrama – ensemble

Important compositions by style:

Frevo:

Duda no Frevo (Senô)
Nas quebradas (Hermeto Pascoal)
Passo de Anjo (Spock e João Lira)
Último Dia (Edson Rodriguez)

Choro:

1x0 (Pixinguinha)
Murmurando (K-Ximbinho)
Noites Cariocas (Jacob do Bandolim)
Proezas de Solon (Pixinguinha)
Sarau pra Radamés (Paulinho da Viola)

Forró:

Asa Branca (Luiz Gonzaga e Humberto Teixeira)
Feira de Mangaio (Sivuca)
Lamento sertanejo (Gilberto Gil)
Nilopolitano (Dominginhos)

Samba:

Argumento (Paulinho da Viola)
As Rosas não falam (Cartola)
Com que roupa (Noel Rosa)
Conversa de Botequim (Noel Rosa)