

Critical Brass:  
The Alternative Brass Movement and Street Carnival Revival of Olympic Rio de Janeiro

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines relationships between public festivity and articulations of power through investigation of alternative carnival practices in Rio de Janeiro. I explore the musical and cultural knowledge of Rio's instrumental street musicians as cultural repertoires enacted in and circulating between a variety of scenarios—from carnival to protest and the stage. Through embracing the “alternative carnivalesque,” they seek to critique and expand the dominant repertoires available to them. Rather than viewing music as a “resource” of social movements, I argue for a model of “socio-musical movements” that considers such movements’ musical and social, as well as aesthetic and ethical, elements as dynamically intertwined.

Emerging during Rio de Janeiro's spectacular rise in the first decades of the twenty-first century to hosting the 2016 Olympics, a contemporary brass movement (*neofanfarrismo*) has articulated itself as an alternative to the neoliberal governance of a global city heavily invested in particular forms of cultural representation. I view the term “alternative” as the movement's theoretical framework, rather than a generic term. It generates a dynamic debate within the community through which participants theorize relations of power, tradition, innovation, and politicization. Based on eighteen months of ethnographic research, I examine the processes of consolidation of *neofanfarrismo* as it transformed from a culturally nationalist revival of carnival traditions in post-dictatorship Brazil into an internationalist, musically eclectic, and activist movement. Grounding my analysis on my collaborators' rejection of generic theoretical terms, I argue for the exploration of frames used by musicians themselves, such as the local concepts of “cultural rescue” and “cannibalism” in examining musical circulation.

This dissertation moves away from the typical focus on lyrical content in studies of musical activism to address instead the instrumental force of loud, mobile, and participatory ensembles in the public commons, reframing sound studies by asking what role acoustic sound plays in shaping senses of the public and private. Embracing an instrumental form of musical activism that promotes social inclusion, occupation of public space, and participation in protest, these musicians theorize carnival as an ethical guide to action and view public festivity as itself a mode of governance. Resisting celebratory narratives, however, this study probes the possibilities, limits, and contradictions of the articulation of alternatives by a middle-class demographic entangled in the privileges of a capitalist city, and I foreground the implications of

“alternative whiteness” in the study of Brazilian music. Through examination of feminist, class, and racial critiques of *neofanfarrismo*, I ask how diversification of the movement has altered its internal hierarchies and expressive practices. Lastly, in discussing the rise of the Honk Rio! Festival of Activist Brass Bands, I explore how this carnivalesque movement has been consolidated as a politically engaged socio-musical movement in global conversation with an international, “rhizomatic” street band network.

In memory of my father, George Walter King Snyder Jr.,  
who believed in all my endeavors, no matter how outlandish, but who did not live to see this  
project come to completion—though he did get to enjoy brass band parades with me in the  
streets of Rio de Janeiro.

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I could have never expected that I would complete a project such as this when I entered graduate school. The prospect that a growing and internationally connected instrumental movement that seeks to claim public space, spread musical education, and militate for a different world even existed was far from my mind eight years ago when I began to formulate thoughts about potential dissertation projects.

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## A Socio-Musical Movement of Public Festivity in an Olympic City

In the summer heat of carnival Tuesday, Orquestra Voadora's four hundred musicians play to an estimated one hundred and twenty thousand people on the grassy park that lines the coast of Rio's Guanabara Bay. Voadora has entertained carnival crowds annually since 2009 with a diverse set of brass music. Balkan brass, New Orleans second line, and countercultural songs from the Brazilian *tropicália* movement are mixed with Brazilian rhythms, from Rio's *samba* to northeastern *frevo* and *maracatú*. Imaginative and independently created carnival costumes, from superhero characters to unicorns and rainbows, disguise fraternizing musicians and audiences. They pass around beer, sugarcane liquor (*cachaça*), alcohol-laced popsicles, and joints during the slow rolling march through the park. Stilt walkers blow glitter into the air above the musicians, covering everyone in a sparkly rainbow dust. Musicians have traveled from throughout the Americas and Europe to play in this local, participatory ensemble. Outstanding professional musicians play alongside those who have just enrolled with Orquestra Voadora this year to learn their instruments. Despite some large variances in tuning audible from inside the ensemble, the total sound heard from outside is driving, rhythmic, and energizing to the tens of thousands of people in attendance.<sup>1</sup>

In the 2017 carnival, this *bloco*<sup>2</sup> would receive notable coverage from media giant *Globo* for its politicized performance, with loud and frequent chants of "*Fora Temer*" ("Down with Temer") that called for the overthrow of the conservative president. Ju Storino, a representative of the feminist collective Todas por Todas (All Women for All Women) took the microphone before the performance and demanded an end to sexual assault in carnival: "We will not accept any kind of assault. We will not be kept quiet. We will denounce any disrespect suffered. Let's make some noise!" (Zarur 2017, my translation). Some female musicians played topless in defiance of the possibility of sexual harassment, promoting the "freedom of the body." In the parade of the 2016 carnival the year before, Voadora had launched the event by denouncing the city's government for the evictions and destruction in the Vila Autódromo *favela* where the Olympic Park was being built. That year, the *bloco* won the *Globo*'s coveted *Serpentina de Ouro* prize for best *bloco* of the city's "street carnival" (*carneval de rua*), a proliferation of free musical events in public spaces that has grown exponentially in post-dictatorship Brazil.

Orquestra Voadora is one of the most popular *blocos* of Rio de Janeiro's street carnival. Among many of the so-called "alternative middle class," Orquestra Voadora's annual performance is now a main feature of street carnival not to be missed. The *bloco* is at the center of an explosive and exponentially growing musical movement of brass and drum ensembles, often referred to as *neofanfarrismo*,<sup>3</sup> which I researched during eighteen months as a participating trumpeter and ethnomusicologist from 2014 to 2016, as well as during other visits

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<sup>1</sup> See footage Orquestra Voadora's 2016 carnival performance of original song "Elefante":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVpDMmgoOsw> Full dissertation playlist here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6SaRKto7UfYWW0POSPGGYfaPc7Dvt7zx>

<sup>2</sup> *Blocos* are mobile street music organizations generally associated with carnival and often highly participatory.

There are many different kinds of *blocos* with a diversity of instrumentation, but my focus is on *blocos* of brass and drum instrumentation, which I call "brass *blocos*" in English. In Portuguese, I heard various terms for this kind of *bloco*, but predominantly "*bloco de fanfarra*" or "*fanfarra-bloco*."

<sup>3</sup> Based on the Portuguese word for brass band "*fanfarra*," this neologism translates to "new brass-bandism," emphasizing the movement's distinction from civic and military *fanfarras*. Other work on *neofanfarrismo* and street carnival can be found by Micael Herschmann and Cíntia Fernandes (2013; 2014a; 2014b; and 2014c), Martins (2015), and Dias (2017).

beginning in 2013. These mass musical events in the streets have provided a space of participation in carnival for “alternative” Cariocas,<sup>4</sup> whom I found generally uninterested in the famous *samba* school parades. Many of them view the *samba* schools as homogenous, commodified spectacles, and they do not consider them part of street carnival due to the expensive entrance fee to the closed-off spectator space of the parade route.<sup>5</sup>

In this dissertation, I explore how the *neofanfarrismo* community has grown and transformed from the revival of street carnival brass *blocos* in the mid-1990s to the growth of a year-long brass band movement and its convergence with the international HONK! network.<sup>6</sup> This development represents a gradual shift from a movement of cultural revival of an imagined “authentic” carnival to an embrace of internationalism and “activism” in the streets. Emerging during Rio’s spectacular rise in the first decades of the twenty-first century to hosting the 2016 Olympics, *neofanfarrismo* has sought to foster a more democratic and “public” city based around the “right” to “play in the streets” (*tocar na rua*). This right is an articulation of a broader claim of the right to act in public space and belong to and transform the political body. These musicians seek to offer alternatives to the neoliberal governance of a global city heavily invested in particular forms of cultural representation such as the *samba* schools.



Left: Overview image of Orquestra Voadora’s carnival *bloco*. Image available at <http://www.guiadaboa.com.br/239-bloco-orquestra-voadora-2017/details.html>

Right: Trumpeter “crowd-surfing” on a surf board at Orquestra Voadora’s *bloco* on carnival Tuesday, February 17, 2015. Photo by author.

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<sup>4</sup> “Carioca” refers to that which is from Rio de Janeiro, including residents.

<sup>5</sup> The *samba* schools are the iconic image of Rio’s carnival. Generally located in *favelas* and poorer parts of the city, they have since the 1930s been subsumed by the administrative structure of the city’s carnival and officialized as the authentic emblem of Brazilian culture. With each school playing on repeat the single, formulaic *samba-enredo* genre in an effort to win a competition, much of the street carnival views itself as a musically eclectic and “freer” alternative.

<sup>6</sup> The first HONK! festival was founded in 2006 in Somerville, Massachusetts as the HONK! Festival of Activist Street Bands, with new Honk festivals spreading around the United States and increasingly the globe, including Brazil with the inauguration of the Honk Rio! Festival of Activist Brass Bands in 2015 (see chapter 7).

## Critical Brass, Critical Theory, and the Repertoires of Socio-Musical Movements

This dissertation is an examination of the relationships between public festivity and social and political mobilization captured in my title *Critical Brass*. By this, I refer to the unique socio-musical capacities and repertoires of loud, mobile, and participatory brass ensembles. “Critical brass” is a play on the Critical Mass movement, known as “Massa crítica” in Rio de Janeiro, which is a global movement founded in 1992 in San Francisco of bicyclists who ritually take over public roads and spaces in direct actions to call for bicycle infrastructure and alternatives to car culture. *Critical Brass* was also the title of the third album (2005) of New York’s Hungry March Band, a reference for alternative brass bands in Rio. Through the title “Critical Brass,” I aim to show how *neofanfarrismo* is, like Critical Mass, globally linked and connected to transnational cultural networks that take a critical stance on “hegemonic” city culture by occupying the streets through instrumental force with “critical” and “alternative” practices.

Beyond this pun of “critical brass,” I mean to show that *neofanfarrismo* is itself a critical theoretical practice. At a conference I attended in November 2017 in São Paulo on the “Ends of Democracy,” Judith Butler argued that critical theory, referring to the intellectual tradition of post-Marxist criticism launched by the Frankfurt School, cannot be neatly exported to new times and places. Instead, we must broaden our conceptions of critical theory beyond its canonic history and let the term form itself around new vocabularies, new practices, and new places. Just as critical theory sought not to solely explain the world but to change it, *neofanfarrismo* is not merely an update of Brazilian brass band traditions but a radical critique of the context in which the movement is embedded, the neoliberal global city, and an active attempt to transform it. That is, it aims to make an impact, and in its larger international connections to similar movements throughout the globe, it is not an overstatement to claim that participants want to “change the world.” By locating critical agency and political power in festive practices, I argue that, as opposed to many who view social movements as “mobilizing” festive practices as resources for political action, in *neofanfarrismo*, *public festivity is itself a generative force of social and political mobilization*. The study shows then that the boundaries between social movements and public festivity can be far more blurred than has generally been portrayed.

Like critical theory, *neofanfarrismo* is not an “ideology” with an absolute meaning. The movement’s meanings and values are determined by participants; that is, *neofanfarrismo* is a debate. In this dissertation, I examine the internal dialectics and the transformations of the movement in the past twenty years, as participants have critically theorized their own movement. I draw on Eric Drott’s view (2017) that music is not only an element of “contentious politics,” but also part of a “politics of contention,” in which participants debate the meanings, values, and questions that music brings with it. Responding to Butler’s call for critical theory to be grounded in new vocabularies, I base my analysis of this politics of contention primarily in the analytical frameworks of participants themselves, putting them in conversation with broader debates regarding musical activism, musical circulation, social movements, and neoliberal governance.

Critical theory originally responded to the crisis of the rise of fascism, and *neofanfarristas*, or movement participants, also view their movement as developing in a moment of deep crisis in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the world. Musicians playing in Rio’s public commons confront the realities of increasing militarization, privatization of city space, international mega-events that impose new urban disciplines, and the rise of right-wing populism and authoritarianism locally and worldwide. In the post-Marxist world, leftist musicians are left with no “blueprint” of artistic and political practice to respond to the crises of capitalism.

*Neofanfarrismo*'s politics are ambivalent and ambiguous, and its practices constitute a wildly experimental laboratory for determining contemporary meanings of leftist politics and aesthetics.

I do not, however, romanticize *neofanfarrismo*'s limited but tangible efficacy in transforming its environment. I examine this largely middle-class movement within the larger interests and structures within which it is embedded, and I explore the possibilities, limits, and contradictions of its critiques. Unlike in protest song, in *neofanfarrismo*, the movement's critiques are enacted, rather than sung, through the creation and practice of repertoires in the streets. Largely not based on semantic discourses, these repertoires constitute embodied practices played through and with mobile brass and drum instruments.

In this perspective, I bring together three understandings of the word "repertoire," and I follow them through their various performative scenarios throughout the dissertation. First, in its most common musical usage, the repertoires of *neofanfarrismo* constitute the musical body of knowledge known by movement participants. These repertoires are widely variable but are based on certain classic and folkloric Brazilian genres that were codified during Rio's street carnival revival beginning in the mid-1990s and have expanded to include musical genres from throughout Brazil and the world.

By "repertoire," I also include all the extra-musical embodied practices of the movement, including the communally held knowledge of how to act in the street in order to musically shepherd hundreds to thousands of people. Musicians and *foliões* (audience members) know how to create human cords to protect musicians in dense carnival crowd settings. They know how to use the tactic of "mic check" (*microfone humano*) popularized in Occupy Wall Street to organize people in the streets. And they know how to musically and organizationally respond to police encroachment. In this sense, I draw on Diana Taylor's notion of repertoire as comprising enactments of "embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge" (2003: 20).

Finally, *neofanfarristas* employ these musical and extra-musical repertoires as political strategies and tools of mobilization. In this sense, I expand on Charles Tilly's "repertoire of contention," or the tools and knowledge available to social movements to challenge and contest hegemonic regimes. What I call the "musical repertoire of contention" constitutes the body of expressive and sonic knowledge that *neofanfarristas* employ in moments of contention. Despite the musical resonance of the term "repertoire," repertoires of contention have rarely been interpreted in terms of the musical and festive tactics available to social movement actors. This largely owes to the fact that most social movement scholars—although they may be interested in the cultural, emotional, or ludic elements of social movements—do not interpret cultural movements themselves as social movements that enact what they call "contentious politics."

It is in this sense that I argue that public festive practices can be generative forces of social and political mobilization. Rather than understanding how social movements "mobilize" or "do" music, I show that the relationship between festive and political practices is much more dynamic, interactive, and, in an important sense, inseparable.<sup>7</sup> In the case of *neofanfarrismo*, the

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<sup>7</sup> The scholarly history considering the relationship between social movements and music is thoroughly and well outlined by Eric Drott (2017). Briefly, in response to Gustav Le Bon (2007 [1895]) and others who viewed crowds and social movements as "irrational mobs," social movement scholars in the 1960s and 70s tended to downplay the role of culture in order to argue for the "rationality" of social movement actors. Indeed, the "disciplined" left in the twentieth century often disavowed the "festive left" (*esquerda festiva* in Brazil), or countercultural youth, as an impediment to revolution. Since the "cultural turn" of the 1980s, music, emotion, and culture have been revalorized for their roles in social movements but often in ways that are functionalist and treat music as a "resource" for social movement mobilization. Drott argues, as do I, for a revision of the relationship between social movements and

dominant theoretical paradigm of social movements using culture as a functionalist “resource” or propagandistic supplement is turned on its head: in Rio, politicized musical engagements in the brass band community largely arose from festive and carnivalesque practices and experiments in the streets. In this case, the question, therefore, is not the standard “how do social movements use music?” but rather how do musical communities come to articulate themselves as social movements?

When communities of public festivity take on critical and alternative stances to the interests of governing regimes, *I argue that they are themselves social movements, or what I call “socio-musical movements”* to underline their cultural component. I suggest that they articulate “contentious *cultural* politics,” highlighting both their cultural and political contentions, as well as their inseparability.<sup>8</sup> That is, public festivity is not “prefigurative politics”—it is politics itself. In this sense, I agree with Angela Marino that “Fiesta is about governance: governance of land, people and place... [The fiesta can operate] as if it were the state to rehearse an alternative system of rules and conduct...Fiestas offer ways to move further towards how to govern ourselves” (2014: 70-71).

In *neofanfarrismo*, lines between political, cultural, carnivalesque, and musical repertoires are blurred and even non-existent. Carnival songs are repurposed for the momentous 2013 protests. The Occupy Wall Street movement inspires the *bloco* Ocupa Carnaval, critical of Brazilian politics. New Orleans jazz funeral songs are performatively used to memorialize the “death” of street carnival when a *bloco* is attacked by the police. Again following Diana Taylor, I interpret the diverse repertoires of *neofanfarrismo* as enacted in a variety of “scenarios,” or shifting contexts and setups. From carnival to protest, late night jams in the streets, and major stages in Rio and the world, it is the shifting uses of these repertoires in changing scenarios that interest me—how *neofanfarristas* critically theorize and employ their embodied knowledge.

In viewing *neofanfarrismo* as a socio-musical movement, I also put it in dialogue with considerations of recent Brazilian and global leftist, anti-neoliberal social movements in the post-communist world, such as the global justice movement (or the anti-globalization movement), the Arab Spring, Indignadas, Occupy Wall Street, and Brazil’s June 2013 protests. Manuel Castells argues that in these movements, public space “is constructed as a hybrid space between the Internet social networks and the occupied urban space: connecting cyberspace and urban space in relentless interaction, constituting, technologically and culturally, instant communities of transformative practice” (2012: 11). For Castells, these “networked social movements” are internationally networked but manifest physically in the local public space. Their organizing form, like the internet, is horizontal and “rhizomatic,”<sup>9</sup> and they are critical of the hierarchical forms of communist parties and earlier social movements. Such movements have largely not militated for new ways to represent democracy but rather, in their direct taking of public space and experimentation with new models of governance like public assemblies, have sought to

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culture that is more interactive and dynamic, as well as one that questions the boundaries of these supposedly separate domains.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to put either the political or cultural in a relationship of priority. One could also use the terms “contentious political cultures” or musical-social movement.

<sup>9</sup> In contrast to an “arborescent” model, in which a hierarchical tree form represents origin of descendent “branches” to a common root, Deleuze and Guatarri’s notion of the rhizome (1980) is a model of influence that stresses multiple “horizontal,” or planar, interactions between various nodes with endless entry and exit points, any of which may be connected to any other. Many view the internet as a rhizomatic model, and I argue that the larger international alternative brass movement of which *neofanfarrismo* is a part should be considered as a “networked social movement” and is rhizomatic as well.



embody democracy itself. They are what Hardt and Negri call manifestations of the “multitude,” or “the living alternative that grows within empire” (2005: xiii). For these authors, in globalized neoliberal capitalism, the international networks of resistance that compose the “multitude” have replaced the working classes as the agentive class of history.

Like these movements, *neofanfarrismo* has used the internet and social media to put musicians and crowds in public space, circumventing the city’s cultural institutions and venues. They often proclaim “horizontal” organization, though the discourse of horizontalism is often in tension with hidden power dynamics. They are internationally connected and see themselves as part of a growing, international, and rhizomatic movement that seeks to reclaim public space. In taking over public space with musical crowds, they perceive themselves as a political alternative and even a model of democracy in action.

Theorists, musicians, and politicians have long debated the relationship of carnival practices to political governance, activism, and subversion. The “safety valve theory,” or the belief that carnivals provide temporary releases that maintain hegemonic relationships, associated with theorists including Victor Turner, is often posited in relation to the “resistance” theory, or the view that carnivals destabilize hegemonic systems, associated with Mikhail Bakhtin. Many scholars of carnival and carnival music practices in the past few decades have argued that both positions are simplistic and carnivals are never one or the other.<sup>10</sup> In articulating notions of activism of a musical tradition based in street carnival, however, *neofanfarristas* have adopted certain conceptions of Bakhtin’s understanding of carnival as a revolutionary, participatory, and egalitarian tradition and reinterpreted them as foundational ethics of activist *praxis*. The carnivalesque should not be, many *neofanfarristas* argue, a temporary subversion, but a year-round activist transformation of social and political reality. In other words, it is not whether Bakhtin’s insights into carnival are empirically true that is important to them. It is that *neofanfarristas* believe that they *should* be true.



Celebrations after Voadora’s carnival performance. February 9, 2016. Photo by author.

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<sup>10</sup> Averill 1994; Guilbault 2007; Brunet 2012.

## What Counts as Alternative?

If *neofanfarrismo* is a socio-musical movement, what is it against? What is it for? It is largely through the language of the alternative and carnival itself that *neofanfarristas* position their movement as a critique. For example, percussionist and bassist Chico Oliveira describes the brass movement in street carnival as “the most alternative carnival for people who want to enjoy carnival in a freer way with great liberty to use urban space. It’s a liberatory experience” (11/13/14).<sup>11</sup> Indeed, perhaps the most useful way of considering *neofanfarrismo* as a social movement is in its collective articulation being an alternative. Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue that “social movements create collective identity by offering their adherents a different view of themselves and their world” (2015: 165). But while many musical movements have positioned themselves as alternative, such a discourse raises the question, to riff on Ryan Moore (2005), “alternative to what?” What counts as alternative culture in a neoliberal global city heavily invested in particular cultural forms? Through what processes do musical movements consolidate themselves around certain concepts like the “alternative?” What alternatives do public festive practices provide our urban futures?

*Neofanfarrismo* is an expression of what I call the *alternative carnivalesque*, which seeks to critique and expand the dominant repertoires of carnival beyond carnival itself and beyond the local context of Rio de Janeiro. Because the entire ethos of carnival is celebrated as a counter dominant tradition, the alternative carnivalesque may appear redundant. But because carnival has been so often used and appropriated as a mode of hegemonic governmentality (Guilbault 2007; Roach 1996), the alternative carnivalesque seeks to renew carnival’s purported criticality. Like Bakhtin’s consideration of the carnivalesque as a literary mode, the alternative carnivalesque is a mode of expression through which *neofanfarristas* challenge what they view as hegemonic cultural and political power.

Most scholarship on the use of the word “alternative” in music focuses on “alternative rock,” the Seattle scene of the 1990s, or more generally on Indie Rock (Hesmondhalgh and Meier 2014; Moore 2005). But defining the alternative as an industry term (Kruse 1993) or as an attribute of particular styles, movements, ethics, or aesthetics ossifies a term that in its discursive uses is inherently relational and positioned. In explaining the use of the term in *neofanfarrismo*, tubist Raquel Torres emphasizes its relationality to what is viewed as dominant: “Alternative is the difference from what you think is common... The alternative valorizes ideas that are not imposed but rather are things you have to look for. They aren’t in the media or in your face. It’s hard for you to find them. It’s all a question of how you live a life in this system” (1/6/15). Arguing for an understanding of counterculture, a term also used in Rio to describe *neofanfarrismo*, that prizes its “non-specificity,” Sheila Whiteley asks us to understand such terms “not as homologous to certain social groupings but rather in the fluidity and applicability of their uses” (2014: 3). Following this insight, I view *the alternative as itself a critical theoretical framework through which participants debate the movement’s critiques of the broader culture and city as well as the movement itself*.

In its relational use, the alternative is always “emergent” in Raymond Williams’ sense (1977). He argues that certain “dominant” cultural forms and formations permeate social and political behavior. “Emergent” cultural formations can arise that may oppose the dominant

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<sup>11</sup> All translations of interviews from Portuguese, French, and Spanish are my own. Interviews were conducted in Rio de Janeiro unless otherwise noted. Published resources originally not in English that I have translated are marked as my translation.

cultural formations. But the emergent can also be woven into the dominant cultural formation out of which new emergent cultural forms arise. I propose that the alternative, like the emergent, is a form of cultural renewal and change that dynamically positions itself against what are perceived as dominant or hegemonic cultural politics. The alternative is always at risk of being coopted and reincorporated into the dominant, however, providing opportunities for new alternative critiques. The alternative and hegemonic are, therefore, mutually constitutive and entwined dialogic discourses.

Clearly these categories of alternative and hegemonic have relationships to real material conditions of power, position, and inequality. While I agree with Antonio Gramsci's view (1982) that hegemony is a value system articulated by the ruling class to justify its rule, my inquiry is based on musicians' *perceptions* of what is "dominant" or "hegemonic" and what is "Other" or "alternative." Likewise, my analysis is not primarily based on a Marxist model of ruling and subjugated classes in which the hegemonic is conflated with the former and the alternative with the latter. Nor do I view *neofanfarrismo* as engaged in purely anti-hegemonic "tactics" against the neoliberal city's dominant "strategies" (de Certeau 1984). Rather, I examine the articulations of dominant and alternative value regimes within this musical community and its diverse perceptions of other social formations.

I suggest that cultural groups that view themselves as alternative are likely to embrace change and be continually emergent—that is, *the alternative is an engine and theory of cultural change*. Once certain traditions have gained the veneer of tradition, dominance, or hegemony, a cultural formation that views itself as alternative will likely continue the search for new alternatives. The history of Rio's brass movement in the past twenty years emblemizes such a process. "Alternative" brass *blocos* emerged in the late 1990s as an alternative to the dominance of the *samba* schools. The *neofanfarrismo* movement was consolidated as an alternative to the cultural nationalism of the brass *blocos*. New alternatives, such as brass projects that highlight the role of women, the poor, and other historically excluded populations, have since arisen within *neofanfarrismo* to challenge certain forms of domination within the movement. While the alternative can sometimes be imagined as an unthreatening subculture within the hegemonic, in its combative manifestations the alternative can turn "activist."

The cultural, political, and social goals of an alternative music scene are rarely reducible to one coherent cultural or political agenda. The emergence of *neofanfarrismo* as a self-proclaimed alternative movement has been a complex, contested, unfinished, and even contradictory process. Alternative music scenes are in many cases animated by their *incoherence*—by their competing priorities and negotiations of contested territories, networks, spaces, and ideas. Indeed, there are also *neofanfarristas* who do not embrace the term "alternative" despite its prevalence. One trombonist, for example, pushes back: "I wouldn't want to consider it alternative, partly because I think you'd be isolating yourself from everything else going on and that's not something I want to do... I don't feel that by participating in it I'm being an activist" (Anonymous). Because the "alternative" is first and foremost a debate within a particular community, one should not expect to find singular or universal definitions, and it is my aim to capture how musicians engage in this debate. My focus is on the *tension between fragmentation and unity in the consolidation of an alternative socio-musical movement*.

I propose that because of the relationality of the alternative to the dominant, articulations by alternative movements of their otherness are inherently compromised. In the case of *neofanfarrismo*, this means that the movement's construction of itself as an alternative and at times revolutionary movement is inherently limited by and based on the conditions that make its



existence possible. In this respect, I follow Andy Bennett's argument that counterculture does not express simply a counter-dominant binary but rather "fluid and mutable expressions of sociality that manifest themselves as individuals temporarily bond to express their support of and/or participation in a common cause, but whose everyday lives are in fact simultaneously played out across a range of other cultural terrains" (2014: 26).

While the "alternative" may similarly have no essential or fixed meanings, it cannot be denied that it is used to describe particular demographics, beliefs, and aesthetics. Despite the frequent identification with the "street" (*rua*) and the "people" (*povo*), the larger demographic of *neofanfarrismo* is often referred to as the "alternative middle class."<sup>12</sup> As trombonist Marco Serragrande puts it, "To be alternative here in Rio is to like vanguardish things—up and coming, still growing—new parties. Of course, in practice its majority is the middle class that lives in the south zone, Lapa, and Santa Teresa, very much this cultural axis—Botafogo to the Center" (12/11/15). Trombonist Clément Mombereau suggests that *neofanfarrismo* "is at the margins of the principal culture of the south zone. It's 'alternative south zone' because the mainstream south zone is more the *playboyzinhos* and the *patricinhas*"<sup>13</sup> (11/11/14).

The "alternative middle class," in particular, may find itself in a precarious and problematic position in relation to its disavowals of hegemony. The *neofanfarrismo* movement is part of a demographic that is predominantly "whiter" within the Brazilian racial spectrum. Many have had access to international travel and university education and live primarily in the privileged south zone or center neighborhoods of the city. Many of the main bands are also predominantly male, although gender dynamics are changing quickly with an explosion of female participation. *Neofanfarrismo* is, then, imbricated within the class, gender, and racial structures and conditions it seeks to challenge. While *neofanfarristas* frequently denounce the profoundly unequal society of Rio de Janeiro and the capitalist system that sustains it, most are also beneficiaries of it. In this case, the alternative carnivalesque is an expression of worldliness, privilege, the intellectual left, and "alternative whiteness" within the hegemony of conservative whiteness. By drawing on alternative resources, brass musicians critique the predominant forms of representation of a carnival that had been authenticated through commodifying blackness. In this respect, this study foregrounds the implications of whiteness in Brazilian music studies where blackness and racial mixing have long received predominant attention.

This is not to dismiss *neofanfarristas'* political beliefs as disingenuous but to highlight the ways they are limited by their subject positions in the world. French trombonist Clément Mombereau, who has lived in Rio since 2011, perhaps says it best: "The movement generally sees itself as alternative but there is, however, some basic incoherence that is part of it all and is inherent to an alternative artistic movement. You are at once against and inside the system. How much can you really be political with this kind of thing? I don't really know" (11/11/14). How then does this intersection between certain social privileges on the hand and an ideology that militates against social privileges on the other create possibilities and limitations in the articulation of alternative culture? How can the middle class liberate those it necessarily exploits? The alternative carnivalesque then, when expressed by the middle class as opposed to the popular classes, reveals not a redundancy but a potential contradiction, or at least limitation.

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<sup>12</sup> The term "classe média" in Portuguese generally refers to people north Americans might call bourgeois or even rich, rather than those in the middle of Brazil's class categories by income of A, B, C, D, and E.

<sup>13</sup> "*Playboyzinhos*" (from "playboy") and "*Patricinhas*" are the respective male and female terms for the rich and "politically alienated" residents of the privileged south zone of Rio, where the famed beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana are located. "Alternative south zone" residents define themselves in opposition to such characters.

Privileged leftist movements that view themselves as cultural and political vanguards and seek to unite with disadvantaged groups for common cause are, of course, anything but new. In Brazil, alternative middle-class movements, such as the 1960s' popular song movement, presented the middle-class artist as a populist vanguard figure who "spoke" for the masses (Perrone 1989; Stroud 2008). Such movements have frequently been critiqued as out of touch, elitist, and ineffective in eroding social barriers. But how do these dynamics play out in the case of a participatory musical movement that seeks to claim public space, one that does not simply represent excluded others through song but plays alongside them in city squares, streets, parks, and beaches?

My goal is not, therefore, simply to celebrate this movement, though I am sympathetic to their visions and beliefs and I am also an active musical participant. My aim is to highlight the diversity of positions within its debates and understand how socio-musical movements of public festivity grow, fracture, and consolidate. That the meaning, or "spirit," of the alternative brass band movement forms a contentious debate in Brazil and beyond is underlined by French trombonist Clément Mombereau's comment:

What is the spirit of the brass band [*l'esprit fanfare*]? In France, it's impressive how many bar nights I have spent with old musicians [*fanfarons*] at three in the morning—"you don't know anything about the spirit of the *fanfare*. I know what it is!" "No, you don't know anything about the spirit!"...The idea I've made for myself is to play all kinds of music, for all kinds of people, in all kinds of places. (11/11/14)

### **The Alternative Brass Band**

Brass bands are still largely perceived as traditionalist, provincial, and culturally conservative. Rooted in histories of European imperialism, they have also been viewed as early musical agents of hegemonic globalization with the dissemination of European repertoires and performance practices worldwide. Suzel Reily and Katherine Brucher (2013) argue that brass bands have been overlooked by both musicology and ethnomusicology as they fall through the cracks between musicology's historical focus on "serious art" music and ethnomusicology's traditional lack of interest in European musical ensembles.

Nevertheless, an emerging body of scholarship<sup>14</sup> has shown the brass band to be a tremendously adaptable ensemble with a great diversity of local and populist manifestations. Charles Keil, in his utopian forward to *Brass Bands of the World* (2013), considers brass bands "as gateways to moral and political awakening" and sees "brass bands leading the parade into the sustainable, eco-nitched, autonomous communities of the classless future" (xviii-xix). I join newer scholarship<sup>15</sup> in showing that some brass band movements around the world have been forging international networks of affinity, leading to the consolidation of certain repertoires—especially New Orleans second line, Balkan brass, and certain Latin American genres—as the aesthetics of a new "global" brass movement. The sources of this international brass movement have come primarily from the "periphery"—marginalized cultures such as black New Orleanians or Balkan Romani—unlike the original globalization of the brass band through colonialism. In positioning these groups in relation to the "dominant" history of brass bands, therefore, I broadly use the term "alternative brass band."

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<sup>14</sup> Flaes 2000; Rumbolz 2000; Booth 2005; Reily and Bruckner 2013; Sakakeeny 2013; Snyder 2015; DeCoste 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Politz 2017; Erin Allen forthcoming.

Because Brazilian music is so heavily focused around percussion, strings, and singing, playing a horn for many *neofanfarristas* is already an alternative act. Carla Brunet has observed that “The preference of vocal genres over instrumental ones in Brazil is impressive” (2012: 62). Professional saxophonist Pedro Pamplona suggests that

To play instrumental music is already a political posture. You are already abdicating the possibility of making money and surviving from music at many levels. It’s already a movement of resistance because everyone pushes us not to exist, not to do what we do. The life of the instrumental musician is not linked to the big media of communication or to the mainstream media like television and radio. It’s a life of survival. (7/28/15)

Many *neofanfarristas* stress that their “new” brass movement is alternative because of its musically eclectic repertoire, populist ethics, and “activist” engagements. Juliano Pires (or “Juba”),<sup>16</sup> head organizer of Honk Rio!, frequently argues that *neofanfarrismo* represents a dual “cannibalism” (*antropofagia*) of the brass band in a musical and ethical sense. In using the term cannibalism, Juba draws on a Brazilian cultural discourse inherited from the poet Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928), in which Andrade argues that Brazil’s greatest artistic strength is based on voracious consumption and transformation of all possible influences, as opposed to those that Caetano Veloso would call “defensive nationalists” who have aimed to protect the “purity” and “authenticity” of Brazilian traditions:<sup>17</sup>

In *neofanfarrismo*, we have two cannibalisms: the musical part, which is the cannibalism of changing the format of the *fanfarra* that is more than a hundred years old. Generally, [these ensembles] play traditional music and we cannibalistically play contemporary music, whatever we like. And the other cannibalism is political and conceptual and comes from “*fanfarrão*,” because in Brazil a *fanfarrão* is someone who just parties and thinks everything is cool...But [in that case] the *fanfarra* has to do with not assuming responsibility for anything...We want to take responsibility. We want to assume that all art must have a political, social, and ecological [impact], even more when it is street art. The street is a privileged place because it has contact with all kinds of people. (10/12/14)

Juba makes a distinction, therefore, between the aesthetic and ethical innovations of *neofanfarrismo*. The movement is, on the one hand, a rejection of the association of the ensemble with “traditional” music and, on the other, a critique of the politically “alienated” “*fanfarrão*”<sup>18</sup> in favor of the “*neofanfarrão*,” the politically and socially engaged brass musician. Juba’s reflection on this “double cannibalism” structures my investigations in this dissertation into the

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<sup>16</sup> Juliano Pires mostly goes by nicknames connecting him to the instruments he plays: “Juba,” rhyming with “tuba,” or “Ju Bones,” for the trombone. In Brazil, musicians are sometimes known by the instruments they play, such as Jacob do Bandolim (Jacob of the mandolin).

<sup>17</sup> Cannibalism is a prominent discourse of Brazilian cosmopolitanism that originally romanticized indigenous practices of eating and digesting foreign colonizers in order to take their power as a metaphor for Brazilian creativity, as in the Brazilian film *How Tasty Was My Frenchman*. This is an important metaphor that will be explored throughout the dissertation.

<sup>18</sup> While the word *fanfarrão* appears to have an etymological relation to the word *fanfarra*, many disavowed any relation of the words. Marco Serragrande told me “‘*Fanfarrão*’ has nothing to do with brass instruments. At least, the slang means someone who just wants to have fun and who is not preoccupied with responsibility. It has nothing to do with music” (12/11/15).

aesthetic and ethical transformations and critiques of *neofanfarrismo* within the broader cultural politics of the Olympic city of Rio de Janeiro. While I do not make artificial distinctions between the aesthetic and the political, Part I investigates the aesthetic transformations of the movement from traditionalism to musical eclecticism, while Part II examines the movement's engagements with questions of activism, as explained in the two sections below.

### **From Rescue to Cannibalism: Alternative Music in and beyond Rio's Street Carnival**

*Neofanfarrismo*, in its proposal that carnival does not need to be associated with any particular genres, is a radical critique of Rio's "official" carnival. Despite their ethics of spontaneity and freedom, pre-Lenten carnivals are in many ways rites of traditionalism in which certain practices and genres gain auras of authenticity. Rio de Janeiro has significant investment in promoting certain carnival traditions as "authentic" manifestations of Brazilian culture, especially the *samba* schools, perhaps the primary image of carnival worldwide. Much scholarly attention on Rio's carnival has indeed been focused on the *samba* schools and their roles in consolidating a singular national identity, or *brasilidade*, framed around African and mixed-race cultural roots.<sup>19</sup>

Little attention has been paid, however, to Rio's revived and explosive street carnival, viewed by *neofanfarristas* as an experimental space for alternative experiences to that of the *samba* schools.<sup>20</sup> After a period of relative dormancy during the dictatorship (1964 to 1985), Rio's *blocos* have been growing and constantly diversifying the repertoires of carnival. With over five hundred official *blocos*, and many more unofficial ones, the importance of the street carnival revival and its growing musical diversity rivals, and for many eclipses, that of the *samba* schools. Both contribute to carnival now attracting approximately five million participants.

The initial musical critique of Rio's carnival by the brass *bloco* revival that began in the 1990s enlarged the admissible carnival repertoires beyond the characteristic *samba* and *marchinha*. These musicians positioned what I call "diversified cultural nationalism" as the aesthetic of a new "authentic" carnival through expanding repertoires to include other Brazilian genres, including *maxixe*, *ciranda*, and *forró*, especially those perceived as "folkloric." In this initial stage, they articulated a discourse of nationalist "rescue" (*resgate*), one that had been used in earlier moments in Brazilian popular music history. "Rescue" is devoted to the preservation and promotion of folkloric and national genres and is often anxious about international influence.

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<sup>19</sup> Rafael 1990; Queiroz 1992; Vianna 1995; Cabral 1996; Shaw 1999; Sandroni 2001; McCann 2004a; Isenhour and Garcia 2005; Cavalcanti 1999; Stroud 2008; Dunn and Avelar 2011. The use of carnival to promote national identity in the early twentieth century in Brazil has parallels in other societies in the Americas in their process of building cultural expressions for new post-colonial nations.

<sup>20</sup> For other discussions of the revived street carnival, see Andrade 2012; Herschmann 2013; Juagaribe 2014; Dias 2017.



The annual carnival parade of Cordão do Boitató (b. 1996), one of the oldest ensembles of the brass *bloco* revival that prioritized cultural rescue, parading with a doll of Pixinguinha, one of Brazil's most influential instrumental musicians. January 31, 2016. Photo by author.

Beginning in the mid-2000s, brass ensembles would further broaden carnival's aesthetic boundaries by embracing international and popular Brazilian genres beyond the folkloric pluralism of the earlier brass *blocos*, gradually embracing the term *neofanfarrismo*. In this "alternative" shift, they have employed the discourse of cannibalism, putting their musical movement in historical dialogue with Brazilian artistic movements that sought to be in active engagement with the rest of the world. In their musically eclectic claim that one could "play anything" in carnival, Orquestra Voadora and the bands of *neofanfarrismo* have revolutionized and globalized the aesthetics of one of the largest festivals of the world. In expanding the brass movement beyond the season of carnival, which nominally begins on King's Day (January 6) and ends on Ash Wednesday, into a year-round movement, they sought to "carnivalize" the entire calendar year with a diversity of genres in the streets. Both moments of nationalist rescue and internationalist cannibalism in Rio's recent brass history, therefore, sought in different ways to eclectically broaden the musical repertoires of its carnival. In this respect, I build on an emergent body of scholarship that has shown how carnivals in the Americas have become in the past several decades sites of diversification of repertoires and identities after mid-twentieth century efforts to use carnival to authenticate particular musical genres as national expressions.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For example, see Guilbault 2007; Herschmann 2013. Scholars have indicated how the proliferation of regional genres, decentralized access to recording technology, and rise of post-national subjectivities and diasporic music making have fragmented senses of national identity rooted in Vargas-era *brasilidade* (Vianna 1995; Dunn and Perrone 2001; Armstrong 2002; Avelar 2002; Isenhour and Garcia 2005; Draper 2010; Henry 2010; Madeira 2011; Sandroni 2011; Moehn 2011 and 2012). Other recent analyses of contemporary Brazilian popular music have

In the alternative brass movement, therefore, musical circulation is not only a matter of engaging with present, international resources—the movement also creatively draws on the resources in circulation from the past. In thinking about musical circulation as both a diachronic and synchronic system, I agree with Matt Sakakeeny, who argues that “Circulation does not merely *distribute* extant culture, it *generates* cultural forms and meanings and it does so cyclically, rather than linearly...[or] the *feedback* of culture” (2011: 29). Moreover, I suggest that this gradual diversification is not simply indicative of a movement from national to post-national identity. Thomas Turino has sought to “clarify the continuities and parallel cultural effects of colonialism, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism—three phenomena often understood in opposition to each other” (2000: 4). He argues that in Zimbabwe, cultural nationalism and cosmopolitanism have not been stages of historical development. Rather, they are discourses in dialogue with one another, both reflective of privileged middle-class subject positions of those who have selectively used national and international resources to forge post-colonial culture. As Stephen Greenblatt (2010) argues that cultural mobility must be understood in relation to the sense of the “rooted,” I examine these discourses in “friction” with one another (Tsing 2005).

In Rio’s alternative brass movement, musicians use national and international musical resources strategically in order to articulate alternative carnival and street music practices. What I call the brass movements’ musical eclecticism also reflects middle-class subject positions of access to learning about a variety of traditions, as the middle class is well positioned to be a conductive element between the local and the global. *Neofanfarristas* have framed their aesthetic choices in the lineage of an almost century-old intellectual debate regarding how Brazilian artists should position Brazilian artistic production in relation to influences both from inside the country and around the world. They draw on the precedents of middle-class Brazilian artistic movements, such as *música popular brasileira* and *tropicália*,<sup>22</sup> that have long engaged in the rescue/cannibalism debate in order to conceptualize their own artistic endeavors. Christopher Dunn has argued that after *tropicália* was incorporated into the *MPB* canon these divisions “were largely overcome” (2016: 153). I suggest, however, that while this may be true in the field of mediated popular music, these debates are far from over in other cultural spheres. In street carnival, familiar arguments regarding cultural authenticity and the appropriateness of international engagement continue to rage.

I find, therefore, the conceptual model of “globalization,” what Timothy Taylor defines as the “recent regime under which nonwestern peoples are dominated and represented by the West” (2007: 113-4), inadequate to understand the emerging internationalism of *neofanfarrismo*. Many scholars have noted that “peripheral countries” exercise agency in the globalized market and that a north-south direction of influence is too simplistic. Martins Stokes has argued that the term “cosmopolitanism” helps foreground the limitations of “globalization,” alerting us to “music as an active and engaged means of world making, not simply a response to forces beyond our control” (2007: 10). But I argue further that the kind of critical engagement that Judith Butler calls for involves investigating the conceptual vocabulary musicians themselves use, such as rescue and cannibalism, to understand their relationships to the rest of the world. In contrast to Taylor’s portrait of globalization, *neofanfarrismo* is an alternative model of what kinds of circulations are possible in a globalized world. In contrast to many studies of musical

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highlighted the role of adapting and reformulating traditional musical resources with global forms of popular music (Moehn 2001; Galinsky 2002; Sansone 2002; Avelar 2011; Herschmann 2013).

<sup>22</sup> In the 1960s, *MPB* sought to define and “rescue” authentic Brazilian popular music, while *tropicália* responded with a cannibalist critique that engaged with international and popular music (explored further in Part I).



globalization, *neofanfarrismo*'s fusions are not destined for the mediated, global cultural marketplace, as they do not circulate primarily through recording. They are primarily for the local streets and squares of Rio de Janeiro and all those who frequent them. *Neofanfarrismo* is a musical telling of stories in public space about what constitutes Carioca, Brazilian, and world music, as well as about the relationships of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil to the world.



Rim Bam Bum from Santiago, Chile at Honk Rio! in Praça XV. August 6, 2015. Photo by Carolina Galeazzi.

### **Instrumental Activism in the Neoliberal Olympic City**

*Neofanfarrismo*'s focus on activism has developed during some of the most politically momentous and turbulent years for both Rio de Janeiro and Brazil. As the Brazilian economy dramatically improved throughout the 2000s under the Workers Party, which ruled from 2003 to 2016, Brazil came to be seen as an important global player with the ninth largest economy in the world. The country was chosen as host of the 2014 World Cup and Rio as the host of the 2016 Olympics. Many viewed the World Cup and the Olympics as an opportunity to announce the country's "arrival" on the world stage and the arrival of the Olympic City of Rio de Janeiro as a global city.<sup>23</sup> The growth of the street carnival and Rio's brass movement initially flourished amidst these political and economic advances.

The gains from the economic booms of the 2000s were not, however, universally shared, and Brazil has become increasingly unstable politically throughout the 2010s. 2013 saw massive leftist protests that drew millions of Brazilians, and many *neofanfarrista* bands, to the streets in opposition to the neoliberal logic that had come to govern Brazilian cities and brought these mega-events to Brazil. They argued that prioritizing mega-events had produced spikes in cost of living, deprioritization of public services, and violent police occupations of the *favelas*. As the country hosted the events themselves, political and economic crises deepened with the end of a commodity boom and increasing partisanship. By 2016, the situation provided a political context for the impeachment and conviction of Workers Party president Dilma Rousseff despite lack of criminal charges against her. The Olympics would be overseen by conservative President Michel

<sup>23</sup> Zirin 2014; Jaguaribe 2014; Angelini 2015; Carvalho et al 2016.

Temer after a parliamentary process that many on the left viewed as a coup against a democratically elected president.

Daniel Martins, writing about musicians who played in the 2013 protests, argues that the musicians of *neofanfarrismo* are part of a broader Brazilian, and international, new left, “motivated by a common struggle [*luta*]: the antineoliberal struggle... shaken by the growing politics of privatization” (2015: 199, my translation). *Neofanfarrismo* has indeed broadly configured itself as an anti-neoliberal movement that puts the struggle against neoliberalism from the perspective of urban communities at stake. Wendy Brown has offered a diagnosis of neoliberal governmentality and issues a call to arms for the left to assert itself with “an alternative vision of the good” to the “(non)morality” of capitalism (2003: 42). For Brown, neo-liberal governmentality contributes to a reduction of community power to individual responsibility, resulting in depoliticization, privatization, complacency, and disassociation of the individual from the commons. She describes the left vision as one that develops the capacities and agency of citizens to participate in decisions and practices that shape their lives: “In its barest form, this would be a vision in which justice would not center upon maximizing individual wealth or rights but on developing and enhancing the capacity of citizens to share power and hence, collaboratively govern themselves” (2003: 42). If neoliberalism is hegemonic, the left vision is by definition an alternative one.

Referring to the volatile situation the past decade created in Olympic Rio de Janeiro, saxophonist and activist Tomás Ramos explains, “Rio de Janeiro between 2007 and 2016 has become a center of the global urban question... We have become a center of the transnational market, a laboratory of capitalism” (11/13/14). In reference to Olympic Rio, Beatriz Jaguaribe argues that global neoliberalism has forced urban centers to prioritize capital accumulation in partnership with global capitalist interests: “As a result, cities have increasingly found themselves drawn into new and heightened forms of interurban competition as they seek to adapt to the fast-changing realities of twenty-first-century capitalism and the growing necessity to promote the conditions of profitable accumulation within their own localities” (2016: 32).

To situate the experience of those living in global cities in the age of neoliberalism, I use the term “neoliberal urban governance.”<sup>24</sup> By this, I refer to the practices of governing a global city motivated by the interests of multinational capital, including institutions like the World Cup’s FIFA and the Olympics’ IOC that create the conditions for “shock doctrines” (Klein 2007) to enforce neoliberalization of the city.<sup>25</sup> The growth of the *neofanfarrismo* movement has been in active engagement, then, with what Theresa Williamson calls “a modern experiment in urban development and what has become the most debated case of mega-event impact in history” (2016: 143). What Carvalho et al. (2016) call Rio’s “Olympic urbanism” is, however, an extreme example of broader patterns in major cities around the world.

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<sup>24</sup> Neoliberalism has been theorized as the global hegemonic governmentality in which political, economic, and cultural policies are motivated primarily by private profit, eroding human rights and local and national state power (Brown 2003; Harvey 2005; Leitner et al 2007; Hall 2011; Ortner 2011). Michel Foucault (1995) has used the term governmentality to refer to the “arts of governing,” and the ways power is established through practices and institutional disciplines that internalize social control. Nicholas Rose (1999) and others have used governmentality to theorize the arts of governing under regimes of neoliberalism, pointing to how neoliberal governmentality produces “enterprising selves” that seek to maximize their own capital. For examinations of neoliberalism’s cultural effects, see Guilbault 2007 and Taylor 2016.

<sup>25</sup> FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) and IOC (International Olympic Committee) organize the World Cup and Olympics respectively and are often criticized for asserting political control in host countries by demanding various regulations and restructuring for the events.





Anti-World Cup street art shows a soccer ball removing a *favela*. Photo by author on September 23, 2014.

In contrast to Olympic urbanism, *neofanfarristas* promote through instrumental force what David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre call the “right to the city.” Harvey (2012; 2013) argues that the global social movements that have surged since the global financial crisis of 2008, of which the 2013 Brazilian protests are part, have resulted in the emergence of “rebel cities” that contest the neoliberal structuring of the city through popular occupations of city space. Underlining the urban context of *neofanfarrismo*, saxophonist and activist Tomás Ramos urges *neofanfarristas* to “think about citizenship not only as someone who lives in the city but who interferes in the city. You are part of the city, so you are a citizen, so you are active in the transformation of the city” (11/13/14). Most of the musical events I examine have taken place in the center of the Rio de Janeiro, which despite its colonial past, was largely abandoned by richer Cariocas in favor of the beaches of the south zone in the middle of the twentieth century. This dissertation is a musical ethnography of Rio’s revitalized and gentrifying city center, a place of contestation for the future of the city.

Because the musical activism of the brass ensemble is not primarily based on the semantic content of lyrics, the focus of many studies of musical activism,<sup>26</sup> I use the term

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<sup>26</sup> Garofalo 1992; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Peddie 2006; Fischlin 2003; Rosenthal and Flacks 2011. Musical activism has been a focus of much ethnomusicological work in Brazil from the stylized protest songs of the 1960s (Perrone 1989; Dunn 2001; Stroud 2008) to Brazilian hip-hop, *baile funk*, and the *blocos afro* of Salvador

“instrumental activism” to focus attention on the particular ways that instrumental ensembles manifest social and political power. I suggest that the power of music is in many cases, and certainly in instrumental music, defined more by the political, spatial, and musical relations it constructs in the act of performance than by semantic content.<sup>27</sup> I build on William Roy’s observation that “the effect of music on social movement activities and outcomes depends less on the meaning of the lyrics or the sonic qualities of the performance than on the social relationships within which it is embedded” (2010: 2). While I agree with his approach that privileges relationality, rather than only focusing on what he calls the “content of culture” of lyrics, my focus is on the relations created in urban space through instrumental music that *neofanfarrismo* seeks to transform. Employing “musical repertoires of contention,” musicians strategize in their use of music to engage in effective protest in the streets.<sup>28</sup>

Activism in *neofanfarrismo* is, however, more broadly conceived than solely engaging in protest. It aims, in some of the more utopian portraits of the movement, at a musicalization of the entire city. In contrast to the spectated, neoliberal city, *neofanfarristas* seek to foster a city culture of what I call *public participation in music* that reconstitutes senses of belonging to the public through playing in the streets. Through organizing open *blocos* and weekly classes (*oficinas*), including in *favelas*, musicians seek to democratize access to the production of music, which they view as a project fundamentally opposed to neoliberal cultural politics that commodify performance and separate producers from consumers. Though much of *neofanfarrismo*’s discourse presents itself as anti-neoliberal, however, *neofanfarristas*, especially the professional bands, are also entrepreneurs who play expensive shows, sell merchandise, and seek to live from music (Guilbault 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; Taylor 2016). Brass band classes (*oficinas*) and other institutions that generate income have been intrinsic to the movement’s propagation. I aim therefore to nuance the supposed contradictions between activism and entrepreneurialism.

In shifting focus to the tangible effects of sound in public space, this research reframes sound studies by asking what role acoustic sound plays in shaping senses of the public and private. *Neofanfarrismo* presents a critical lens through which one can understand some of the effects of and citizens’ responses to the massive transformations occurring in Rio de Janeiro as the world’s eye turned to Brazil in the middle of the 2010s. But it is more broadly a case study of citizens’ musical responses to larger scale patterns of neoliberalizing global cities. Or, as saxophonist and activist, Tomás Ramos puts it, “If I were to sum up the movement, I would say that it is a critique of the model of development of the city that is in question. Another city is possible, and we want more democracy” (11/13/14).

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(Armstrong 2001; Yúdice 2003 et al.). Samuel Araújo’s dialogic research project in the Maré *favela* (see Cambria 2012), Herschmann and Fernandes’ (2014) focus on musical activism in the streets, and Daniel Martins’ (2015; 2017) work on music in the 2013 protests have provided insight on contemporary critical projects in Rio. The focus on citizenship in Brazil of Christopher Dunn and Idelber Avelar (2011) in many cases touches on issues of activism in consideration of the ways that musical communities assert demands to belong more fully to the Brazilian nation.

<sup>27</sup> Scholars drawing on crowd theory and urban studies who investigate the relationship of music to place and urban space have provided important insights for investigating how music expresses relationships of ownership to important sites of cultural production in urban space (Smith 1997; Back 2003; McKay 2007; Krims 2007).

<sup>28</sup> I build on a recent focus on the strategic uses of music in social movements, activist communities, and political actions (Shepard et al 2008; Lee 2009; Roy 2010; Sterne 2012; Vila 2014; Snyder 2015; Bogad 2016, Martins 2015 and 2017; Drott 2017).



Calango Careta from Brasilia at Honk Rio! occupying Câmara Municipal in Cinelândia Square. Photo by author on November 2, 2017.

### **Debating *Neofanfarrismo* as a Socio-Musical Movement**

While I have chosen to view *neofanfarrismo* as in the process of becoming a “socio-musical movement” that emerged from carnival, it is important to stress that the question of whether or not *neofanfarrismo* is any kind of movement at all is an issue of much debate by participants themselves. Brass musicians use various terms to describe their “alternative” collective identity, including community (*comunidade*), scene (*cena*), and movement (*movimento*), as participants assert themselves on the cultural scene of one of the world’s most musical cities.<sup>29</sup> They constitute what Thomas Turino might call a cohort, “a social group that forms around the activity itself [providing]...an alternative to ‘modern’ capitalist lifeway” (2008: 187). In consolidating the community based in a name with an “-ismo” suffix, a contentious debate has raged over what kind of collective these bands and *blocos* constitute. *Neofanfarrismo* presents a case study for understanding processes of consolidating a socio-musical movement.

The *neofanfarrismo* movement is a dispersed network of professional to amateur and even beginning musicians, integrating all musical levels in between. These musicians are generally aware of one another’s bands and *blocos*, and they share a diversity of repertoires in

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<sup>29</sup> Scholars have provided various models for describing musical relationships and their consolidations into collective groups. By Kay Shelemay’s definition, *neofanfarrismo* could be largely seen as a “community of affinity,” organized “first and foremost from individual preferences, quickly followed by a desire for social proximity or association with others equally enamored” (2011: 21-22). As *neofanfarrismo* has defined itself around certain critical and alternative practices and discourses, it could also be seen as a “community of dissent,” catalyzed around opposition (19). It could also be viewed as a kind of subculture (Hebdige 1979; Slobin 1993), counterpublic (Warner 2002), cultural cohort (Turino 2008), or scene (Straw 2011).

common. *Neofanfarrista* ensembles generally operate with both closed and open formations, and participants mostly use the terms *banda*, *fanfarra*, and even the English “brass band” to describe the former with *bloco* describing the latter. During the year, bands develop their own repertoires in closed membership formations, performing in shows both in the street and on stage. For carnival, these bands often create their own open and expandable *blocos* in which to teach and disseminate their material. During the “long carnival season,” with carnival rehearsals beginning as early as five months before carnival, musicians circulate between a variety of mostly open *blocos* where they can learn a variety of songs. Orquestra Voadora, for example, is a closed stage band of fifteen musicians throughout much of the year. But through its classes (*oficinas*) and *bloco* of four hundred musicians, the band has spread its material to hundreds of other musicians. Such collective experiences build a strong sense of community across many independent manifestations.

The use of the term *neofanfarrismo* is itself controversial with unclear origin. It is especially used to describe the community of Orquestra Voadora and the many bands it has spawned. Other professional brass bands that began investigating diverse repertoires around the time that Voadora was founded in 2008 sometimes disavow the term in order to distinguish themselves from the Voadora community. It seems clear that the brass *bloco* revival did not use the term *neofanfarrismo* before the founding of Voadora in 2008. The brass *blocos* of the earlier street carnival revival were founded as alternatives to the carnival music options available in the 1990s, especially the *samba* schools. They did not view themselves as a movement concerned with innovation—the “*neo*” of *neofanfarrismo*—as they promoted cultural rescue and tradition.

*Neofanfarrismo* has come, however, to be used by some as a catchall term for all of the alternative brass bands and *blocos* that have emerged since the late 1990s. As the *neofanfarrismo* movement has grown since 2008, brass musicians have circulated between the more “traditional” brass *blocos* and the newer *neofanfarrismo* bands. This is not a closed circuit or an all-encompassing identity. Some musicians involved in the more traditional brass *blocos*, especially percussionists, are also involved in the *samba* schools and *blocos* and not at all in the newer *neofanfarrismo* bands. Some *neofanfarristas* are completely uninterested in the traditional repertoire of the older brass *blocos*. The movement is, therefore, a porous and diffuse community despite its shared repertoires.

The Honk Rio! Festival of Activist *Fanfarras* has provided since 2015 a new institution for the consolidation of the alternative brass community. The festival drew on the links that had been forged in the previous decade with musicians and bands from Latin America, Europe, and the United States, as well as within Brazil. The consolidation of the community around the annual festival has created a definitive shared experience for bands to sense themselves as part of the same community under the banner of activism. While Honk Rio! attempted to unite the community around activism, *neofanfarristas* have not been fully united around the priority of engaging in political action, resulting in contentious debates.

The movement reveals a classic split in alternative scenes between a “politicized left” and an “apolitical counterculture.” Many studies tend to conflate the two categories or treat the countercultural as the cultural or aesthetic expression of leftist politics. Others dismiss the tangible impact of counterculture as political, such as Thomas Frank (1997) who has argued that the countercultural aesthetics of the United States in the 1960s largely constituted forms of “hip consumerism,” the aesthetic expression of post-war capitalism itself. Others have defended the politics of countercultural movements as being oppositional in their own right, famously articulated by the feminist defense that “the personal is political.” The distinction, however,



between the cultural and the political highlights tensions common to many alternative scenes and movements caught between directly challenging conservative or authoritarian culture at the “macro” level and opting out of the dominant society at the “micro” level. In Brazil in the 1960s and 70s, the counterculture was explicitly disengaged from politics and criticized by the left, inspiring instead the development of an “‘alternative Left,’ which placed value on the subjective dimension of politics based on everyday experience” (Dunn 2016: 203). In this respect, *neofanfarristas* are engaged in this complex debate on the relationships between the very categories of the cultural and political in the formation of an alternative movement.

The various factions and lack of unified positions provoke some musicians to see *neofanfarrismo* as not having achieved the status of a movement. Saxophonist Gabriel Fromm reflects, “*Neofanfarrismo* doesn’t exist as such. It’s a name given to a movement that doesn’t exist... There exists a huge revival of *fanfarras* that were restricted to carnival and military bands. But a clear discourse doesn’t exist... We are not a group of artists all united in thought. *Neofanfarrismo* is just *fanfarras* going to the street again... It’s a fun word... but it’s not a movement” (1/8/15). Trombonist Clément Mombereau observes that *neofanfarrismo*’s celebration of freedom and personal expression makes it inherently difficult to unify and consolidate: “The nature of this movement, if there is one, is that everyone does what they want. There are people engaged in politics and there are people who are not at all and do it for the fun of it... The only political union of all these *fanfares* is reclaiming space where you can make noise” (11/11/14). On the other hand, many *neofanfarristas* believe that the community constitutes a kind of movement, growing quickly and dedicated to social, musical, and political change. Trombonist Carol Schavarosk explains, “I hope that it will be a real movement. My intention is to try to make people think about it as a movement. For me it is totally plausible [that it could be], just like *tropicália* was a movement” (11/5/14). Despite the controversies on the subject, I have mostly chosen to view *neofanfarrismo* as a socio-musical movement: it is a growing, open community with an emergent collective identity aiming at aesthetic and ethical transformations of the city’s dominant culture and politics.



Representatives of Honk Rio! 2015 bands. Photo by Carolina Galeazzi August 2015.

## Methodology and Relation to Subject

Participant-observation feels like a poor term to describe the myriad ways that I have been fortunate to become an actor in the alternative brass band network in Rio de Janeiro, in the San Francisco Bay Area, and internationally. While I am not Brazilian, the *neofanfarrismo* scene is so internationally oriented that, though I was frequently reminded of my inexorable condition as a *gringo*, I was a *neofanfarrista* as soon as I arrived. I joined the circuit of long-term creative international residents of the bohemian Santa Teresa neighborhood, sometimes called “gringos da gema,” a play on “Carioca da gema,” or a “Carioca cut from the gem,” referring to those truly from Rio.

My personal engagement with the international community of alternative brass bands began with the Occupy movement in 2011. Accompanying and propelling many of the actions of Occupy Oakland was the Brass Liberation Orchestra (BLO), founded in 2002 during the mobilization against the Iraq War. Helping to fuel marches with music from the Balkans, New Orleans, and Latin America, the tangible power of music that I theorized in ethnomusicology seminars never seemed so palpable. I started playing trumpet with the BLO at protests all around the Bay Area, discovering the networks and histories of activism for which the Bay cities are rightly known. In 2012, the BLO toured to the Boston HONK! Festival of Activist Street Bands. There I discovered the extent to which the idea of an activist street band that played an eclectic repertoire with shared musical references had extended throughout the United States and internationally. I played with several other brass bands in the Bay Area, including Balkan band Inspector Gadge and Extra Action Marching Band. In 2013, I was part of founding Mission Delirium, a professional brass band based in the Mission district of San Francisco that has shared bills with the likes of Rebirth, Soul Rebels, Kermit Ruffins, and Too Many Zoos.

This engagement oriented my academic attention to questions of regulation of public space and the cultural politics of public festivity. In 2013, I noticed that the Carioca band Os Siderais was listed as a performing band in Boston’s HONK! I found through the internet that the band was part of a much larger musical community that was also building on the references of the international brass movement with a Brazilian twist in Rio de Janeiro. I first visited Rio in the middle months of 2013, a season of landmark protests in Brazil where I found brass bands mobilizing protestors with many of the same songs I played with BLO, leading to ethnographic fieldwork in Rio from August 2014 to April 2016.

*Neofanfarrismo* is a movement of participation. My position as a trumpet player in all the *blocos* and bands I could play in was the foundation upon which I was able to carry out this research. If I had not played a relevant instrument, I would have had to start learning one to be taken me seriously as a researcher. As a trumpeter, my acceptance in the community felt immediate. I was asked to teach classes and run rehearsals for Orquestra Voadora and other bands. Many brass bands expand during carnival into *blocos* and run open rehearsals in which sitting in and playing in carnival is encouraged. Carnival seasons in particular, therefore, were periods when I could access almost any relevant music project. In other parts of the year, I performed with several bands, gave lessons, sat in on rehearsals, went to shows, played at protests, and played in the many jam sessions in the streets of Rio. My active participation made it easy to collect repertoires from these bands and *blocos* in order to study the musical transformations of the movement.



Author performing on trumpet with *neofanfarrista* band Bagunço at Honk Rio! on August 6, 2015. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/Bagunco/photos/t.9700888/1137391422943272/?type=3&theater>

It was clear to me that the movement was conceiving of itself as internationalist as soon as I arrived, as *neofanfarristas* were talking about throwing their own HONK! festival. I was part of the organizing committee of the festival, which took place in August 2015 for the first time, and I produced a tour for my band Mission Delirium to the Brazilian festival. I also experienced brass band internationalism as a trumpet player for six weeks with the Brazilian *neofanfarrista* band Bagunço in France and Italy in the summer of 2016. The next year, I toured with Mission Delirium in Spain and France in June of 2017, where we benefitted from tours and contacts established from Bagunço's tour the year before. In an effort to maintain my connection with Rio and the movement, I returned for the third Honk Rio! festival in 2017, and I have also met up with Carioca bands in the United States as they have increased their touring to North American HONK! festivals. While this research is focused on the development of a brass band movement in Rio de Janeiro, it is, therefore, inherently multi-sited and rhizomatic, both in the diversity of places it took me and in the translocal musical networks it engages.

The *neofanfarrismo* community also helped me through the variety of challenges of living in Rio, including its various dangers. After a production meeting for the Honk Rio! festival, for example, three other musicians and I were violently robbed by a drive-by car with four men armed with guns, and my trumpet and my friends' valuables were stolen. The *neofanfarrismo* community took it upon itself to throw events called "Honk Aid," busking in the street to fundraise and help us with the costs of replacing stolen property.

While around twenty bands and *blocos* have been especially important in my attempts to construct the history of this movement (see appendix 3), I framed my investigation particularly around Orquestra Voadora. This band, more than any other, inaugurated the transformation from the carnival brass *bloco* revival towards an internationally oriented year-round brass band movement that came to be known as *neofanfarrismo*. Using my research on Voadora as a pivot helped me tell the larger story of the trajectory of the movement before and after Voadora's

influence. Voadora is a logical focus because the band has simply had the biggest impact and visibility. Beyond its popularity, Voadora is a band that is both commercially successful, arguably views itself as activist, and sometimes engages in protest. In this way, it emblemizes the broader tensions between the diverse priorities of the movement. In the course of my fieldwork, however, Orquestra Voadora was already becoming an “old guard” of the *neofanfarrismo* movement as newer bands have decentered its earlier dominant influence.

This dissertation is also an oral history of a twenty-year movement, and I recorded interviews with forty-seven people involved in the movement. Interviewees were selected based on the relationships I was able to build. In interview settings, participants engaged in a monologue that went deeply into a subject about which they care deeply. I felt that my relationships developed quickly with those I had interviewed, and interviews were springboards into engaging in other fieldwork activities. Using social media was an integral part of the research process, both to contact potential interviewees and contacts as well as to follow the movement’s self-documentation and propagation. Many Cariocas rely on Facebook, Whatsapp, and other social media platforms to an extent I had not seen previously, and Facebook is used to organize events and musical groups without recourse to central venues or institutions to promote events in public spaces.

As with any ethnography, this dissertation is grounded in and limited by the contingencies of my field work engagements, the perspectives of my collaborators, my own subject position, and my particular questions and interests. No one actor’s story or beliefs frame my overall narrative, and this story is told from my own subjective position as an ethnographer and musician. I noticed as I went about the process of finding interviewees, for example, that certain biases were developing around whom I was interviewing. Because men are more centrally in roles of leadership—and I at first prioritized interviewing musicians who seemed to be “central actors”—a bias towards interviewing men developed quickly, which I attempted to rectify with some success. My own subject position, as a male, also made it more likely for me to successfully manage to have men meet for an interview than women. The participation of my wife Claire Haas, trombonist and community organizer, in Rio’s all-female brass band as well as other brass projects in which I did not, or could not, participate helped produce valuable perspectives on this project and helped bring the voices of women more into focus.

The movement’s racial demographics largely reflect the correspondence of Brazil’s middle and upper-classes with whiteness, as the *neofanfarrismo* community is indeed, though multi-racial, “whiter” than the rest of Rio. Because Brazilian racial politics have rarely been posed in absolute white/black polarities but rather along a spectrum of social hierarchy—the richer end of which is indeed whiter and the poorer blacker—I use the terms “whiter” and “blacker” rather than “white” and “black.” Many, though absolutely not all, *neofanfarristas* view themselves as white, though some Brazilians do not even explicitly conceptualize themselves within racial categories. I perceived the well-known tendency for race not to be as strong a social identifier and boundary in Brazil as class. This is at least nominally the case in explicit discourse, though this vision of the “racial democracy” has been frequently criticized as masking real power dynamics between whiter and blacker people in Brazil. As a white middle-class visitor hailing from another global city, I was in many respects viewed as having a similar racial, gender, and class position as those with whom I collaborated in Rio, despite my position as North American researching a musical movement in the “global South.” For me, the experience was a lesson in not homogenizing the global South and the positions of privilege within it.



I took many pictures, videos, and audio recordings to document the musical activities in which I was involved in order to explore the performance practices and contingencies of these mobile ensembles. In addition to using copious photos in this dissertation to capture the powerful visual aesthetics of the movement, I have footnoted video and audio links so that readers may have instant access to see and hear the bands of the movement online.<sup>30</sup> I recorded bands and *blocos* by leaving my Zoom recorder on while I played and roamed through the crowds of musicians for hours on end. I often thought of large *blocos* as carnivalesque bodies in Bakhtin's sense of being porous, grotesque, and full of laughter. Listening back to some of these recordings, my fieldwork itself seems grotesque, capturing the sounds of drinking and laughing, as well as the many mistakes musicians, including myself, made trying to drunkenly execute musical passages. In musical ensembles that could range into the hundreds, my recordings from inside the bands and *blocos* could never capture the sound of whole ensembles, but only the sounds of the various limbs of the grotesque musical body.

### Parade Route

The organization of this dissertation is based on Juba's above distinction between a musical and political transformation, or "double cannibalization," of Rio's brass ensembles. Part I examines transformations in the emergence of the *neofanfarrismo* movement from the brass *blocos* of the street carnival revival and the shifts from aesthetics of nationalist rescue to internationalist cannibalism. Part II explores the notion that *neofanfarristas* have transformed the brass ensemble from its apolitical, politically conservative, and/or festive functions into one preoccupied with social and political questions from leftist perspectives.

In chapter one, I discuss the street carnival revival at the turn of the millennium in relation to the broader cultural politics of Olympic Rio, a city permeated with discourses of revival as it set to cast itself on the world stage. I provide context regarding the longer history of Rio's carnival and the place of brass within it, and I examine how much of the street carnival revival positioned itself as alternative to the dominant carnival model of the *samba* schools. In chapter two, I examine the "rescued" Brazilian repertoires of the brass *bloco* revival at the turn of the millennium, and I show how they configured a diversified cultural nationalism as alternative to the "monocultural" nationalism of the *samba* schools. In chapter three, I show how, through drawing on cannibalism, the *neofanfarrismo* movement emerged into a year-long movement with a gradual incorporation of international and mass mediated popular styles of music. Embracing an aesthetic of what I call musical eclecticism, *neofanfarristas* pushed against the tendency of many pre-Lenten carnivals to celebrate tradition and cultural authenticity.

Beginning Part II on "instrumental activism," chapter four examines the engagements of *neofanfarristas* in protests, focusing on the ways they use music strategically to support and mobilize protestors. I show how moments of broader politicization have provided contexts for *neofanfarristas* to debate the political roles, functions, and priorities of brass ensembles. In chapter five, I show that the instrumental activism of *neofanfarrismo* goes beyond protest and is based especially on the forging of what I call a culture of *public participation in music*. *Neofanfarristas* promote social inclusion through occupations of urban space that foster communal senses of the public. But I show that the populist activism of the middle class presents

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<sup>30</sup> A full playlist can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6SaRKto7UfYWW0POSPGGYfaPc7Dvt7zx>

real challenges, limitations, and contradictions in integrating excluded populations. Chapter six explores how these limitations have provided the foundations upon which excluded groups, including women and the poor, have launched critiques and claims on the *neofanfarrismo* movement by founding their own musical projects, leading to a controversy in the 2017 carnival about appropriate politics of representation in the repertoires of the movement. In chapter seven, I discuss the founding of the Honk Rio! Festival of Activist *Fanfarras* and the challenges and consequences of consolidating a musical movement explicitly framed around activism.

With *neofanfarrismo*'s rapid rate of change, it seems unpredictable to me what shape the movement may take in five, ten, or twenty years from now, how it will position itself politically, and around what frames it may consolidate itself. The rapidly changing political context of Rio and Brazil will surely have consequences. This research began in 2013, a period of reserved hope with the ascent of center-left governments in Brazil, Latin America, and internationally and radical new social movements that were pushing conversations further to the left. In a post-Temer/Trump world, I am finishing this dissertation in a moment of despair for me, the *neofanfarrismo* community, and the broader international left.

In Rio, new waves of violence have engulfed the city since 2015 as economic and political crises deepen, threatening the safety of the public spaces *neofanfarristas* wish to call their home. The city's new mayor since 2016, Marcelo Crivella, is an evangelical who refused to attend carnival in 2017 and has threatened its funding. The jailing of former Workers Party President Lula da Silva and the assassination of Rio's socialist (*PSoL*) councilwoman Marielle Franco, known to and beloved by the *neofanfarrismo* community, show Brazil lurching towards the practices of the dictatorship. It may seem in retrospect that my fieldwork between 2014 and 2016 occurred during a period in which the democratic experiment of post-dictatorship Brazil began to lapse back into a familiar authoritarianism. Or perhaps the reactionary conservatism ascendant throughout the world will be seen as a hiccup in Brazil and/or elsewhere in a slowly democratizing world.

Whatever shape the movement, the country, or the world takes, the example of *neofanfarrismo* is, to me, a fundamentally hopeful one. Many assume that our postmodern and technophile existence will inevitably fracture senses of community and alienate us from the sociality of music making. Barbara Ehrenreich, in her history of public festivity in the West, observes that today "there appears to be no constituency today for collective joy itself. In fact, the very term *collective joy* is largely unfamiliar and exotic" (2006: 257). In contrast to such narratives, the example of a city in which music making in the commons has been growing at an exponential rate has been for me a testament to the resilience of human musicality and sociability, showing that Ehrenreich's observation is, in an important sense, wrong.

In the streets of Rio, stickers from various bands and social movements adorn the instruments of *neofanfarristas*, including a line from a recent socialist party (*PSoL*) campaign, "If the city were ours..." ("Se a cidade fosse nossa..."). Upon Franco's assassination, pictures swarmed social media of her wearing a T-shirt with this message. The line recalls Recife's famous carnival song "Vassourinhas" ("The Street Sweepers"), which imagines what street sweepers would do with the streets if they belonged to the workers themselves. It is often the final song played in the performances of the brass *blocos* of Rio's street carnival as *foliões* sing, "If this street were mine, I would pave it with brilliant stones for the street sweepers to pass." *Neofanfarrismo* is an imaginative debate and set of answers to the question, if the city were ours, what could we do with it?

## Part I: From Rescue to Cannibalism



Bloco Desce Mas Não Sobe (It goes down but not up) in Gloria neighborhood. Photo by author on February 26, 2016.

## 1. “Old Iron:” The Death and Life of Street Carnival

“Ferro velho! Ferro velho!” Syncopated shouts celebrating “old iron” in Portuguese emanate from the park spaces at the Orquestra Voadora carnival rehearsal. Hundreds of musicians dressed in hippiesh garb, covered in glitter, and drinking beer under clouds of marijuana smoke, momentarily take their mouths off their instruments in order to scream this short refrain before they return to playing. In the recorded version of Voadora’s original song “Ferro Velho,” the band overlays on top of the brass band a sampled recording of the mechanical and robot-like voice of the operator of a recycling truck. The truck routinely roams through Rio’s Bohemian hillside neighborhood of Santa Teresa, crying out “ferro velho” in search of old appliances, metals, and discarded materials. The band explains the song’s origin story:

The song that gives the name to the disk was created from the light sleep of Tim Malik (Tuba) interrupted by the auto-speakers that announce the arrival of the buyer of discarded materials: that gave inspiration to the principal theme, the refrain of four words and the conviction that it is possible to transform the “industrial discard” of which the song speaks into dancing material. (Orquestra Voadora 2014)<sup>31</sup>

Later in the performance, musicians yell out in chorus another of the truck driver’s lines from the original song, “whatever metal” (“qualquer metal”), a line that for the composer resonated with the democratization of access to music making that the street carnival revival and *neofanfarrismo* made possible in millennial Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, Tim explains that “metal” was meant to invoke both the materiality of brass instruments as well as aesthetics and ethics more reminiscent of punk music.

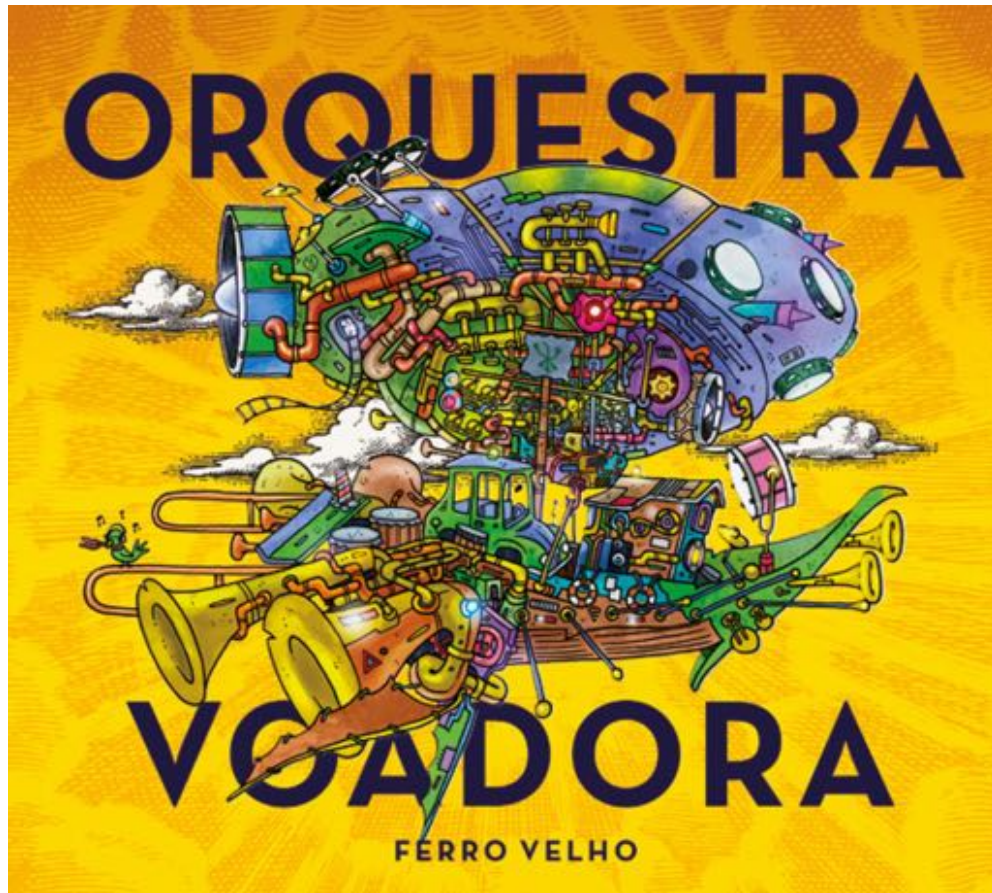
The first part of this dissertation examines the development of the musically eclectic movement of *neofanfarrismo* from the revival (*retomada*) of street carnival traditions in the 1990s, a transformation that I argue involves a conceptual shift from *resgate* (nationalist cultural rescue) to *antropofagia* (internationalist cannibalism). The “Ferro Velho” song, however, shows the interdependence of these concepts, that the desire to gain inspiration from the local past is always in dialogue with influences that come from abroad and the contemporary world.

The Santa Teresa truck referenced in the song quite literally rescues local discarded material to recycle for new uses, and the song puts the discourse of *resgate* as a central foundation of the band’s project. But there is also much in the song that is internationalist and in engagement with the histories of Brazilian cannibalism. The song’s author, one of the early core members of the band, is an American tuba player who lived in Rio for eight years, and one can hear American popular musical conventions in the song’s strong bassline and repetitive grooves not present in traditional Brazilian carnival music. In overlaying this sampled recording in the recording, the band’s aesthetic practices seem closer to the cannibalist movement of *tropicália* with its imaginative sonic juxtapositions. The song title is the eponymous name of the band’s first album, the cover art of which is reminiscent of the Beatles’ *Yellow Submarine*. The cover shows a flying object seemingly powered by brass instruments and carrying the various materials it has picked up—a brass tradition in motion. The song suggests, therefore, that the innovative movement of *neofanfarrismo* has Rio’s “old iron” at its core but is taking it to new places.

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<sup>31</sup> Orquestra Voadora in Lisbon playing “Ferro Velho” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMFbyWMZGpU>





Cover Art for the band's 2013 album

This musical analogy says much about the band's artistic practices, but it is also illustrative of larger trends regarding the cultural politics of revival and experimentation in the musical movement from which it comes and even the city at large, putting the sonic and the urban in a dynamic relationship. The revival of Rio de Janeiro's street carnival (*carnaval de rua*) and the brass *blocos* out of which Orquestra Voadora emerged did much the same thing as the "ferro velho" truck, recycling and reusing "discarded" brass instruments and traditions. In the face of what many viewed as a moribund street carnival culture by the end of twentieth century, musicians started to take back to the streets during the pre-Lenten celebration. Among other instrumental formations, many musicians revived a somewhat forgotten tradition of brass bands and brass *blocos* to create massive parades in the streets. Brass instruments had been a major part of Rio's carnival in the earlier half of the twentieth century. As the ascent of the *samba* schools eclipsed other carnival activities by the 1970s in Rio de Janeiro, however, brass-based ensembles in carnival declined along with the rise of a military dictatorship (1964-1985) that was intolerant of crowds in the streets.

By contrast, the revival of the street carnival has been a major development in millennial Rio that has birthed many new cultural movements. Many Cariocas refer to the revival of street carnival as a *resgate*, a "rescue" of local and national traditions. It is with the history of street carnival and the roles of brass in Brazil and carnival, therefore, that I begin this story. But more

broadly, I ask in this chapter how the street carnival revival was positioned in relation to broader discourses of revivalism, as Rio cast itself as an Olympic city.

I will argue in Part I that the seeds of the transformation to the musically eclectic movement of *neofanfarrismo* were planted in this earlier movement of cultural revival. Indeed, speaking of the larger *neofanfarrismo* movement, trumpeter Leandro Joaquim claims that “all these events that have happened, they have just one root—the carnival” (6/4/15). Many conceive of the growth of *neofanfarrismo* from the street carnival revival as part of the same family tree. Trombonist Gustavo Machado explains that “Boitatá is the grandmother, Orquestra Voadora is the mother, and all its children are *neofanfarrismo*” (12/19/14). The cover of RioShow magazine released before 2018 carnival shows a genealogical tree of prominent street carnival *blocos* on which the brass *blocos* appear on the middle branch. The movement grew then from an arborescent family tree conception of nationalist rescue to a cannibalist, or rhizomatic, aesthetic (Deleuze and Guatarri 2004 [1980]). All these ensembles included here will be considered in this dissertation, from the brass *blocos* of the street carnival revival—with Cordão do Boitatá, Boi Tolo, Céu na Terra—to the *neofanfarras* of Orquestra Voadora, Black Clube, Damas de Ferro, Ataque Brasil, and Mulheres Rodadas, among others not on this particular tree.



Photo by Richard Barros.

In this chapter, I examine the brass movement's initial impulse of rescuing "traditional" cultural resources as an expression of the alternative carnivalesque. I then provide historical context for the rise of the alternative brass movement through discussion of the revival of street carnival and carnival's longer histories in Rio within broader discourses and frames of "reviving" and "rescuing" Rio de Janeiro itself. Having lost its status as capital to Brasilia and its economic prowess to São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, traditionally known as the "Marvelous City" (*Cidade maravilhosa*), had become by the 1990s just as known for its violence and decadence as for its stunning beauty and vibrant culture. The aim of the city government of the early twenty-first century has largely been to reposition Rio as the cultural capital it historically was. City elites portrayed Rio as a city dignified to host mega-events, a city of spectacle, and a controlled and gentrified city safe for business—in short, a neoliberal, global, and Olympic city (Zirin 2014; Jaguaribe 2014; Barbassa 2015).

Picking up and reworking the "old iron" brass instruments of the past, the brass *blocos* of the street carnival revival positioned themselves as an alternative form of revivalism to that promoted by city elites. I do not argue, however, that the street carnival revival represented any pure form of resistance or alternative reality, though much of the movement's discourse does represent it as such. Rather, this self-defined alternative status entangled the brass movement within hegemonic realities in tense and contradictory ways that have been at the foundation of the community's challenges to articulate itself as an alternative or activist movement. But why would a movement initially preoccupied with cultural revival and tradition position itself as alternative to begin with?<sup>32</sup>

### **The Rescue Impulse and the Articulation of Alternative Culture**

Being "alternative" and seeking to rescue tradition may seem to be stances opposed to one another. Traditionalism is often associated with a reactive cultural conservatism and the cultural politics of the right, a harkening back to a "golden age" before some moment of supposed aesthetic and moral decadence. The alternative, on the other hand, is associated with innovation and critique of the old, while the left also is associated with narratives of social progress. How can we reconcile these apparently diametrically opposed concepts when they appear as part of the same movement? How might cultural conservatism, in the sense of wanting to conserve or recreate certain forms of culture, itself be an alternative stance?

With the concept of the traditional often comes a host of associated notions, such as the "authentic," "heritage," "revival," the "real," "rescue," and "roots"—indeed, these terms came up frequently when my collaborators discussed the brass *bloco* revival. As cultural "rescuers," these *blocos* were animated by earlier discourses prominent in the field of folklore to safeguard and preserve tradition. Cultural theorists have become acutely aware of the constructedness of these concepts. The apparent "authenticity" of certain cultural forms conceal histories that establish some practices as authentic and real and others as unreal or "fakelore" (Dorson 1950), giving the former cultural value over the latter (Bendix 1997). The oft-cited notion of the "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) brings this dynamic into focus—

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<sup>32</sup> The street carnival is much larger and more diverse than the particular world of the brass *blocos* and *neofanfarrismo*. Much of my discussion of the street carnival, therefore, is limited to how brass musicians talk about the street carnival and their particular expressions and interpretations of it.

traditional practices that appear as though they have always existed as authentic manifestations of culture have specific origin stories that once established their aura of authenticity.

While tradition may be a discourse often employed by the right, there are many examples of it being used by the political left. Communism often appropriated representations of “authentic,” “popular,” and folkloric cultures as part of state propaganda. In many leftist discourses, the nebulous category of the “people” (*o povo*) and their expressive cultures were constructed as engines of change, with the category of the popular referring not to mass mediated culture but the expressive practices of the “folk.” Some leftist governing regimes employed traditional folklore in order to validate their position as the vanguard of popular revolutions. The left-wing folk revivals of the 1960s that occurred throughout the Americas—musicians such as Geraldo Vandré in Brazil, Bob Dylan in the United States, or Violeta Parra in Chile—positioned the expressive practices of the “folk” and the “people” as resistant alternatives to conservative and authoritarian regimes. For Turino in the case of the United States, the 1960s folk revival offered a way to be “alternatively American” (2008: 156).

These artists appropriated “traditional” music forms as alternatives to the governing hegemony of capitalism and its obsession with the modern, the new, and consumer culture. Eyerman and Jamison (1998) have used the term “mobilization of tradition” to describe how social movements mobilize traditional resources to articulate their critiques of hegemony. William Roy (2010) shows how the political left mobilized black and white folkloric music in the United States in pursuit of revolution. In all these cases, the “new” could be viewed as a manifestation of the political right or the culture of capitalism, and the “old” as the people’s culture threatened by these forces. The view that “things used to be better” is not, therefore, beholden to the right.

This phase of repopularization of brass *blocos* and certain street carnival traditions imagined as part of an authentic Carioca carnival of the past constituted, therefore, a “music revival,” what Tamara Livingston defines as “social movements which strive to ‘restore’ a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society” (1999: 66). Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill argue that music revivals, “motivated by dissatisfaction with the present” (2016: 4) are often framed as activist movements, as they express opposition to the status quo, sometimes mobilizing people through participatory music-making and community building. In valorizing the past, revivalists frame themselves as tradition-bearers and rescuers of authentic lost culture, recontextualising it for the present.

In the case of the brass *bloco* revival in Rio, the movement’s traditionalism has been, like the 1960s folk revivals, a product of middle-class artists and a reaction to broader lack of interest in Brazilian culture among the middle-class.<sup>33</sup> My collaborators portrayed an “alienated” Brazilian youth in the 1980s generally uninterested in Brazilian cultural traditions and infatuated instead with the rock movements of the United States and England. Daniel Sharp observes that “the rock soundtrack of the 1980s often describes the decade of the Brazilian dictatorship’s slow transition to democracy as a time and place without memory” (2014: 46). Angélica Madeira argues that in the context of ascendant neoliberalism and embrace of international capitalism, the middle-class urban youth of the 1980s “sought to go beyond nationalism, cultural or biological heritage [through] the international language of rock... Cultural nationalism was regarded as outdated” (2011: 97-98).

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<sup>33</sup> The anxiety surrounding the supposed loss of the authentic Carioca carnival is not new. Jaguaribe claims, “Ever since the nineteenth century, the lament of the loss of an “authentic” carnival has been repeated in press accounts just as the critique of its commercialization has also been voiced by intellectuals and artists” (2014: 113).



But in response to the perceived social, political, economic and decadence and international orientation of the 1980s and 90s, many young musicians at the end of the millennium looked back to an imagined golden age of Brazilian music and cultural nationalism. They drew on a heritage of “radical nationalism” (Klubock 1998) that runs deep in Latin America and positions the post-colonial nation as a body of resistance against imperial capitalism.

The brass *bloco* revival also occurred within the context of what Rodney Harrison (2013) calls a global “heritage boom,” in which UNESCO and other important institutions sought to safeguard “intangible cultural heritage,” often in response to the perceived crises of a globalized world. In this context, many local traditions around the world, far from being lost by globalized homogenization, were reframed as “cultural expedients” (Yúdice 2003), or important cultural resources for asserting local distinction on the global stage. Recent scholars have emphasized that heritage, what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett defines as “a new form of cultural production of the present that takes recourse to the past” (1995: 269), is something produced rather than rescued. They have called attention to the institutions and cultural actors that selectively appropriate the past for the present and the future. Accordingly, I focus on the particular practices of the cultural institutions and *blocos* that “produced” the street carnival revival and how they reconfigured the past as a critique of the present.

I suggest, therefore, that there is no inextricable or necessary connection between hegemony and the right, the alternative and the left, tradition and nation with the right, or innovation with the left. Such simplistic formulations owe to a heritage of thinking about the manifestations of cultural politics in binary opposition. Examining the case study of the street carnival revival that transgresses such binaries shows how these terms may all be employed by a socio-musical movement as a means of articulating critique in relation to what is perceived as hegemonic at the time.

As we will see in the transition from the brass *bloco* revival to *neofanfarrismo*, the alternative position of this traditionalism would outlive its feeling of being alternative by the middle of the 2000s. The “alternative,” as a continuously shifting relational proposition, instead of demanding tradition, would come to demand new forms of carnival music and practices, entering a phase of “post-revival” (Bithell and Hill 2016). In Raymond Williams’ terms (1977), “emergent” cultural formations, like the brass *blocos*, may draw upon “residual” elements of culture, that which is from the past and seemingly forgotten, in order to critique the “dominant” culture. In the process, the emergent formation can also become dominant, as the brass *bloco* revival would in relation to the *neofanfarrismo* movement that emerged after it. How long, then, can tradition be posited as alternative before it too becomes viewed as dominant?

### **Reviving Rio de Janeiro**

Amidst these developments, Rio de Janeiro too has been “revived.” Many of my collaborators portray Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1990s as a city mired in social, economic, and political challenges with a young middle class more interested in North American rock than Brazilian musical traditions like those of street carnival. For Beatriz Jaguaribe, urban poverty, drug violence, and attacks on middle class residents in the 1990s “seemed to endorse the portrait of a city on the brink of collapse” (2014: 113). Teresa Caldeira (2000) paints a picture of Brazilian cities as mired in urban violence, deepening urban segregation, deep inequality, and a retreat of the upper-middle class to suburban spaces. Some of the most internationally visible

symbols of Rio in the 2000s have been movies like *City of God* (2002) and *Elite Squad* (2007) that depict extreme urban violence in Rio's *favelas*.

An expanding economy in the 2000s and the hosting of the World Cup and Olympics provided an opportunity to recast this image and revitalize the city. Rio became a site of immense investment and has been permeated with contested discourses of revival and renewal in the 2000s and 2010s. Massive infrastructure projects, like the reconstruction of the port (Porto Maravilha), have reshaped the city. Jaguaribe argues that “the Summer Olympics has served as the catalyst for a process of urban reinvention grounded in the production and (re)appropriation of urban space—a process that is simultaneously material and symbolic. It has focused on the strategically significant terrains, emblematic spaces that are critical to the city’s rebirth in the global imaginary” (2016: 36).

Jaguaribe suggests that Rio since the turn of the millennium has undergone a process of “branding” and renewal in its quest to become a “global city” (Sassen 2001) as it harnessed an economic boom based on oil reserves. This urban reinvention has taken many forms, including investments in cultural circuits like the Lapa entertainment district, “improvements” in “public security,” expanded public transportation, and gentrification. In Rio’s branding, certain representations of the city, cultural forms, and places became important spectacles for selling the city. Arguing that Rio is now a “peripheral-globalized” city, Jaguaribe observes that although it lacks the economic force of São Paulo, the city “absorbs and even exports the imaginaries and forms of consumption that circulate through varied media, tourism, and the market economy” (2014: 5). Rio seeks to regain its traditional role of mediating the marvels of Brazil in the international forum.



Left: Reconstruction of the central Praça Mauá, and the Museum of Tomorrow. December 4, 2014. Photo by author.  
Right: Completed renovations of Praça Mauá and the Museum of Tomorrow with Olympic City sign.

In this process of spectacular rebranding, colonial neighborhoods in the center of the city—neighborhoods including Lapa, Centro, Santa Teresa, Saúde, and Gamboa—have become musical destinations, surpassing the south zone famously known for the birth of *bossa nova* and other genres in the latter half of the twentieth century. The central neighborhoods had been, however, the cultural heart of the city before the development of the south zone in the 1930s and a gradual shift of wealth southward (Carvalho 2013). Like other cities throughout the world, investment and gentrification have moved in the past decades back into the central cores of cities. Following and provoking patterns of gentrification, the street carnival revival has been

especially strong in the center of the city, part of a larger revalorization of “traditional” local culture in the area. Lapa became once again in the 2000s and 2010s the cultural heart of the city, with major cultural institutions like Fundação Progresso and Circo Voador alongside a wide array of *samba* clubs.<sup>34</sup> Lapa and its surrounding areas are also the heart of brass activities in the city. Cultural rescue was not only framed, therefore, around repertoires and performance practices, but also particular urban spaces and territories.

As a result of these various investments, and especially due to the Olympics, Rio has many new projects that offer urban benefits to its citizens, such as an expanded metro system, a revitalized streetcar system, and new museums. The benefits of the Olympics, however, have not been equally shared. The expansion of the subway line, for example, links Ipanema with the rich suburb Barra de Tijuca, expanding the rich south zone. No substantial transportation investments were afforded, however, for the poorer north zone. The city became much more expensive in the 2000s, leading to an affordability crisis.

The story of the beloved Santa Teresa street car (*bonde*) emblemizes how many viewed the investment in “public resources” as essentially investments in tourist infrastructure or public services for the rich. The hilly central neighborhood of working-class, bohemian Santa Teresa has been served by a tram built in 1877 that links the neighborhood to the rest of the city from the Carioca metro station, over the Arches of Lapa, and into the curvy streets of Santa Teresa. After the trams in Brazil were largely replaced by the car economy in the mid-twentieth century, the Santa Teresa tram stood as the only remaining tram system in Brazil, and it remains an icon of the city. It was much loved by the inhabitants of Santa Teresa and was far cheaper than the bus and metro system. *Céu na Terra*, a *bloco* that helped lead the revival of brass *blocos* and is discussed below, was known for leading the crowd of *foliões* (carnival audience) by playing inside the tram itself.

In 2011, however, the tram was shut down after mismanagement that led it to derail and kill five people. Despite perpetual promises to reinstate service, the tram lay in disuse for four years. When I lived in Santa Teresa from 2014 to 2016, unfinished work sites adorned the streets, and residents came to cynically believe that it would never return after a series of missed deadlines. In August 2015, however, in time for the Olympics but late for the World Cup, the tram did reopen but with a significantly shortened line of operation that only brought passengers to Santa Teresa’s commercial center of Largo dos Guimarães. The tram came back as a free service, but it only operated Monday through Friday from 11 AM to 4 PM, missing rush-hour commutes for residents but allowing tourists to come visit the historic neighborhood during the day time when it was considered safer. Full service has still not been reinstated, and many believe the tram service will never serve the residents as it once did. In their view, it has only been restored “for the English to see” (*pra inglês ver*), an old expression that captures how Brazil has long made efforts for colonizing interests to present the country as advanced and competent while continuing to mask real problems for Brazilian themselves. How long, Santa Teresa residents wondered, does it take to fix a tram in a small neighborhood in a country capable of building stadiums?

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Herschmann (2007) has documented the revival of the central entertainment district of Lapa and the musical circuit of *samba* and *choro* clubs in the area.



Céu na Terra in the Santa Teresa tram in carnival. March 1, 2009. Available at <http://www.ceunaterra.art.br/bloco-carnavalesco/galeria-bloco-ceu-na-terra/>

Another challenge in Rio de Janeiro's branding was, of course, the images of extreme violence by the city's drug gangs that had come to control its many *favelas*. With the expectation of hosting the World Cup and Olympics, Rio set out on an effort to take back control of the *favelas* in 2008, invading them with "pacifying police units" (*UPPs*). These occupations had the official aim of guaranteeing safety to the citizens, but they have been extremely violent and controversial. The *UPPs* have been stationed strategically in *favelas* primarily near the south zones and center in an effort to secure territories frequented by tourists and the rich. Some *favelas* have also experienced spikes in housing costs as they have begun to be gentrified, while *favela* tours for visitors treat them like "urban safaris." Journalist David Zirin has described Rio as a city "where public space is dwindling, people are getting removed from their homes, and the poor are being marginalized in an effort to turn Rio into the megacity of the IMF's dreams" (2014: 3). Drives to "clean up" the city (*limpeza*) have a long history in Rio, especially in preparations for mega-events or other moments of heightened tourism (Sheriff 1999).

That many of my collaborators cynically view Rio de Janeiro's transformations in the first decades of the twenty-first century as a largely neoliberal revival may seem odd given that the city's economic boom occurred under the national reign of the center-left Workers Party (*PT*) from 2003 to 2016. Before the *PT* government's reign, Brazil had come out of Latin America's "lost decade" of the 1980s with chronic inflation problems and privatization schemes touted by president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Cardoso, having abandoned his earlier leftist beliefs about Latin America's "underdevelopment," openly proposed neoliberal rationales as the only path forward in the 1990s.

But while the *PT* did have radical roots in a wide array of Brazilian social movements that challenged Cardoso, *PT* Presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ("Lula") and Dilma Rousseff largely worked to build a state safety net within the neoliberal market framework set by Cardoso. They initiated important social programs like Bolsa Familia and Fome Zero, but for leftists, theirs was far from a socialist revolution. Rio de Janeiro's city government during the 2000s and

2010s was never led by the *PT* or any leftist party, but by center and center-right parties. Despite, or because of, *PT* rule, Zirin depicts Brazil as “a country that is attempting to use the World Cup and Olympics to both present itself externally to the world as a grand new power of the twenty-first century and continue internally a process of state-directed neoliberalism that puts profiteering ahead of human needs” (2014: 18).

The notion that the city could adopt neoliberal rationales during a period of leftist insurgency does not, therefore, represent a contradiction. It reflects the diversity of political realities and demands in which Rio de Janeiro came to cast itself as an Olympic city. The rise and retreat of the *PT* and other center-left governments in Latin America in the 2000s and 2010s, such as the Kirchners in Argentina, has been described as the “Pink Tide” (Webber 2017). The term represents a watering down of the “red” radicalism of the twentieth-century left and a more tepid fight against capitalism—a tide, rather than a wave, quickly retreats.

The current cultural movements in Rio that have sought to revalorize local culture, like the street carnival revival, are part of the cultural politics of the Pink Tide, a period in which a familiar mistrust of and anxiety about foreign imports, especially those coming from the United States, again came to be predominant. Many of my collaborators relate that the dictatorship (1964-85) presided over a devaluation of Brazilian popular culture, such as the decline of the street carnival, in favor of American imports and cultural models, that lasted into the 1990s.<sup>35</sup> While some such revivals of traditional culture have been inspired by leftist anti-imperialist discourses of revaluing and rescuing local culture, as against “Yankee” and imperial globalized culture, such discourses exist in tension with exigencies of commodification and profit-oriented presentations of local culture to sell the city as a unique metropolitan heritage site in a globalized and neoliberal world (Yúdice 2003).

The neoliberal rationale of urban renewal is not, therefore, unidirectional or totalizing. The discourses and practices of revival are contested and open for interpretation in diverse and contradictory ways. Jaguaribe argues that in Rio, “The spectacle is not all encompassing, neither does it devour all alternative imaginaries into its orbit. The spectacle can be resisted by alternative forms of critique, satire, and political agency until these forms of resistance themselves become part of the mainstream” (2014: 15-16). Street carnival, the brass *bloco* revival, and *neofanfarrismo* are manifestations of these diverse reimaginings of the revival of Rio de Janeiro. But how could brass ensembles be viewed as alternative? What had been the importance of brass music in Brazil before *neofanfarristas* recycled this “old iron?”

### **A Short History of Brass in Brazil**

In “A Banda” (1966), Chico Buarque sings of a brass band parading through town, a nostalgic portrait of the historical importance of brass bands in Brazil that brought happiness to all who passed by them. As the band “sings things of love,” “serious men” stop their business to appreciate it, an “ugly girl” dreams that the band is playing just for her, and an old man forgets he is old and begins dancing. As soon as the band passes, to the singer’s “disenchantment,” the sweetness ends, everyone “takes her/his place,” and “suffering” is heard in the people’s songs. The brass band, in Buarque’s portrait, is an agent of temporary happiness (*alegria*), one that provides carnivalesque, momentary relief from the daily travails and pain (*dor*) of life.

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<sup>35</sup> A larger shift towards revalorization of “traditional” culture can be seen in other post-dictatorship Latin American countries, such as the revitalization of Buenos Aires’ *tango* scene at the turn of the millennium (Luker 2016).



## Brass, Colonialism, and the Popular

Despite this carnivalesque portrait, brass bands worldwide, including in Brazil, are perceived as forces of cultural conservatism, order, civic culture, and colonialism. Robert Flaes portrays the brass band as a “tried and trusty mainstay of power, both as emblem and weapon” (2000: 9). Portable and loud, horns and drums made effective companions for expeditions, their “calls” offering a useful symbology for attacks, hunting, calling attention, and revelry. Flaes recounts that recreational bands frequently grew, however, in tandem within military units. The ambivalence between discipline and recreation in uses of military ensembles was as common as soldiers’ own ambivalence to the order imposed upon them and the ways that they found sources of amusement in trying and oppressive circumstances.

The modern form of the military band dates to the French Revolution, and it was a major part of articulating a national and patriotic culture and its practices of spectacle and domination. Civilian bands grew outside the military and were part of creating emerging national cultures, as the brass band ensemble formats were standardized by the 1870s throughout Europe. Intensity of European colonialism throughout the world was at its peak in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and brass bands spread throughout colonized lands. Emerging nation states in Latin America that had already been freed from European rule such as Brazil also promoted military bands, crafting their own cultural forms of state consolidation.

Brass bands were major vehicles of musical globalization, passing down a standard repertoire and set of performance practices throughout the world. They also constituted a form of popular and mass culture decades before recording technology existed (Reily and Bruckner 2013: 10). They played European classical music in a “lighter” context, and they translated the music of operas, symphonies, and ballets to more recreational environments and dancing. While these events were meant to have a “civilizing” function—as citizens, slaves, and subjects witnessed the “primacy” of Western culture and entertainment—they also promoted pleasure, social relaxation, and class contact. Because of their loud and mobile nature, these bands led parades, processions, and other out-door events that could draw in spectators and participants into open-air spaces, forging affective relationships of subjects to public places. Beyond military and civic events, brass bands became preferred musical ensembles for a variety of public events throughout the colonized world, playing in the gazebos (*coretos*) of squares (*praças*) and other public spaces.

As these bands became part of many different kinds of institutions, their social and political purposes diversified. In many cases, working-class men enlisted into the bands and accessed musical training. Brass bands were in turn important sites of musical fusion, as European musical repertoires and performance practices mixed with those of the colonized musicians, the subjects such ensembles were designed to discipline. All over the world where brass bands were disseminated, they were ensembles in which colonized subjects “learned to curse” in the language of their masters.<sup>36</sup> Black, Romani, Indian, and many other musical concepts and languages were blown through the restrictive chambers of the European chromatic scale, creating new distinctive repertoires. The Africanization of brass bands in New Orleans is a

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<sup>36</sup> In Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Caliban is enslaved in his native island by Prospero who arrives shipwrecked on the island. Caliban points out that through learning the language of his colonizer he has also learned to curse him. The work has been an inspiration for post-colonial theory, such as Roberto Fernández Retamar’s essay (1989) in the context of Latin America. Many critics have speculated about whether Shakespeare intended Caliban’s name as an anagram of “cannibal.”

central component, for example, if a misunderstood and marginalized one, of the birth of jazz (Sakakeeny 2011; 2013). These musicians also used their instruments for pursuits anathema to colonial projects. Flaes quips, “it was one thing for the natives to learn and reproduce our music and our culture on our instruments. But that they should worship the local deities or chiefs with our instruments, dancing, smoking drugs, getting drunk and even having sex—that was never the intention” (2000: 10). In all this history, it is clear that military brass bands have always had a ludic and populist side, and sometimes a subversive one. Masses of people were entrusted with loud portable instruments that had the capacity of taking space and calling attention.

The military band gained prominence in Brazil beginning in the 1830s, with the founding of the National Guard and military police bands, becoming popular especially during the Paraguayan War (1864-70). Brass bands were an important part of producing an emerging civic culture as civilian bands modeled themselves on military bands from the 1870s onwards. These early bands predominantly played *dobrado*, Brazil’s traditional military march genre, as well as extracts from operas and operettas and European popular dance forms, such as polka, waltzes, mazurkas, and schottisches. They promoted a martial nationalism in public spaces throughout the country, playing for civic events like Independence Day celebrations (Reily 2013). Such bands are still a prominent part of military, police, and firefighter institutions, and they invoke a conservative Brazilian nationalism against which Rio’s alternative brass movement positions itself (Costa 2012; Binder 2006). Black and mixed-race musicians—in many cases slaves, ex-slaves, and their descendants—were trained on wind instruments and played in public spaces in ways deemed more “acceptable” and “civilized” than the frequently repressed expressions of Afro-Brazilian culture, especially percussion. For example, band leader and composer Anacleto de Medeiros, the son of a freed slave, was renowned in late nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro.



A “traditional” *fanfarra* in interior Brazilian city of Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais playing on Christmas Eve. Photo by author on December 24, 2015.

For some, the dissemination of Brazilian brass bands is the earliest articulation of a national, popular music based on cultural mixing in Brazil. Saxophonist Pedro Paes argues, “The *dobrados* and *marchas* were appreciated by the public because every Sunday there was a band in the square playing these genres. Then it all started to mix with other cultures. The composers of the age mixed the European harmonic language with rhythms that had elements of African and indigenous influence” (1/30/15). Likewise, Larry Crook argues that “the bands represented the first musical institution in Brazil with a truly nationwide scope and popular appeal” (2009: 115). The role brass bands have played in the formation of popular culture in emerging public spheres and spaces, therefore, must not be underestimated.

### **The Rise and Fall of Brazilian Brass and Street Carnival**

Brass bands are certainly not the primary image of Brazilian carnival for which the festivity is world famous. Yet the first major movie that dramatized Rio’s carnival, the French-made *Black Orpheus* (1959), features in its first shots of Rio’s carnival preparations a brass band dressed in coordinated formal clothing and parading in the streets. Brass and wind instruments made their way into carnival from the beginning of the festivity’s transformation from *entrudo*<sup>37</sup> to the more musically-based carnival traditions that emerged in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The class politics of contemporary debates have long been at play in Rio’s carnival, expressed through different instrumental formations, repertoire choices, and performance practices.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the ascendant bourgeoisie’s “great societies” (*grandes sociedades*) replaced the popular-class traditions of *entrudo* with carnival clubs that held masquerade balls and parades modeled on Venetian and Parisian traditions and accompanied by military bands, which were “an integral part of Carnival parades in Recife, Salvador, and Rio de Janeiro” (2009: 50). Associated with military discipline, the inclusion of marching bands and brass instruments in carnival was initially part of an effort to “civilize” the raucous festivities, as recently freed ex-slaves filled the streets at the end of the nineteenth century (Queiroz 1992; Araújo et al 2005).

By the 1870s, popular-class carnival organizations emerged with the *ranchos* and *cordões*. The *cordões* featured percussion, string instruments, and singing in the streets. They suffered persecution from the police because of their associations with the recently freed slaves. The *ranchos*, a tradition from the Northeast of Brazil originally associated with religious processions, used wind, brass, string instruments, and percussion. The *ranchos* played complex arrangements of opera tunes and other popular music of the day, and they were viewed as a counterpoint to the unruly *cordões*. The fact that brass was considered less problematic than percussion shows that “musical instruments were often associated with specific racialized bodies and carried with them the associations of the corresponding racial and social classes” (Brunet 2012: 27). Samuel Araújo et al. (2005) argue that the *ranchos* served as “cultural mediators” by playing a wide diversity of music, including *dobrados*, *maxixe*, and *marchas*. *Ranchos*, which included flag-bearers (*porta-bandeira*), original music (*enredos*), and linear parade formation, served as a foundation for the organization of the *samba* schools in the 1920s. *Blocos* developed in the late-nineteenth century with musicians parading through their neighborhoods using a

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<sup>37</sup> Entrudo was based on the Portuguese traditions of celebrating carnival brought to Brazil in the seventeenth century and included throwing various kinds of liquids and powders on passers-by (Queiroz 1992).



variety of instruments including brass (Tinhorão 2013 [1974]).<sup>38</sup>

With the emergence of radio, brass ensembles were contracted to play in the streets instrumental versions of songs that were broadcast on the radio. Discussing the song known as the first carnival *samba*, “Pelo Telefone,” Marc Hertzman relates that “Military bands played instrumental versions, revelers sang parodied versions, and Carnival societies feted guests and members to seemingly endless repetitions of the catchy tune” (2013: 101). Brass and wind instruments were used in some of the first genres of what came to be known as Brazilian popular music, such as *maxixe*, *choro*, *marchinha*, and *samba*. Early recordings of the instrumental genre *choro* feature a plethora of wind instruments, and early recordings of *samba* are also often orchestrated with wind instrumentation, from the Dixieland-like sounds of “Pelo Telefone” (1917) to orchestrated *samba-canção* (*samba* song genre) like the famous “Aquarela do Brasil” (1939).

Street carnival and its brass ensembles declined, however, beginning in the middle of the twentieth century. Brass also fell out of use in Brazilian popular music, as *bossa nova* promoted a more intimate aesthetic further developed by the musicians of *música popular brasileira* in contrast to the triumphant, orchestrated *samba-canção* that had preceded it. With the military dictatorship (1964-85), expressions of street carnival, as well as many other kinds of public gatherings, became highly suspect and many songs were censored (Andrade 2012; Jaguaribe 2014; Herschmann 2013). Ethnomusicologist and former musical director of the brass *bloco* Céu na Terra, Rafael Velloso, explains that during the dictatorship, “you couldn’t go to the street with a group because you’d be accused of being a communist and would go to jail... If you went to the street, made noise, and blocked it, you were going to jail at that time, definitely. They built the *sambódromo* so they could get people out of the streets and perform in a safe area” (Florianópolis 5/26/15). The dictatorship fretted that carnival celebrations in Rio “emphasized scenes of libertinism, where eroticism and sex are exploited, giving the impression of an atmosphere of open orgy” (Cowan 2016: 240). Ruy Castro (2004) recounts that “The parade of open-top cars ended in the forties. The trams, on whose running boards the revelers would hang in bunches, stopped running in the sixties. The *marchinhas* too are going, going, gone—no one’s composed them for decades... Carnival had lost its meaning. It seemed to be the end of a long beautiful tradition” (2004: 99).

Micael Herschmann (2013) also credits the decline of street carnival to the fall of Rio as the primary cultural engine of Brazil, the growth of carnival in Salvador and Recife, extreme violence in Rio in the 1980s and 1990s, and Rio’s place as one of the centers of resistance to the dictatorship. When journalist Alma Guillermoprieto researched carnival at the end of the 1980s, she satirized south zone middle-class acquaintances as having the following attitude: “Carnival? Boring. Vulgar. Noisy, some people said, and recommended that I leave town for that horrible weekend... Was it true,” she asks, “that carnival was something that happened principally in the slums?” (1990: 6). With the boom in street carnival and brass ensembles in the last couple of decades, this can no longer be said to be the case, as “street carnival, to a great extent, is a socio-cultural phenomenon of the middle class of the south zone” (Herschmann 2013: 285, my translation).

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<sup>38</sup> While the term *bloco* initially had a more distinct meaning within the different kinds of street carnival manifestations like *cordão* and *rancho*, today it generally refers today to any mobile musical street carnival organization, as opposed to *samba* schools, club dances, public concerts, or other carnival manifestations.

## The Street Carnival Revival versus the *Sambódromo*

For many in Brazil and around the world, Rio de Janeiro is synonymous with pre-Lenten carnival. It was, therefore, shocking to me that many of my Carioca collaborators in their twenties, thirties, and forties claimed that in their childhood, there was, in fact, “no carnival.” In the supposition that there was “no carnival,” these musicians imply that the world-famous *samba* parades did not in fact qualify for them as an expression of carnival. Saxophonist Tomás Ramos explains, for example, that

When I was a child, people left Rio during carnival. Either you went to the *sambódromo*, or to Bahia, or to Minas Gerais. In Rio, there wasn't really street carnival. There was carnival in Rio Branco street and in the *sambódromo*, but the middle class would leave Rio. When this movement of *neofanfarrismo* began, a series of *blocos* started to parade again through the streets of Rio de Janeiro. People started to stay for Rio's carnival, and carnival was transformed into something marvelous. (11/13/14)

Tomás' comment shows that middle-class youth did not perceive the *sambódromo*, the avenue built for the *samba* schools in 1984, as “their” carnival. Entering a private spectator space at a high price seemed to many of them anathema to the spirit of carnival, and they chose to use their vacation to travel, often in search of “authentic” carnivals in other parts of Brazil. The revived street carnival stands for many as an idealized alternative to the *samba* schools.

*Samba* schools emerged in the late 1920s in Rio de Janeiro out of the *blocos*, *cordões*, and *ranchos* primarily in poorer mixed-race and blacker neighborhoods, including *favelas*. While *samba* musicians had been persecuted and repressed earlier in the twentieth century, the populist government of Getúlio Vargas (1930-45) viewed them as potential vehicles for a post-colonial nation-building strategy that would prize mixed-race and African heritage as authentic expressions of Brazilian culture.<sup>39</sup> Unlike the musical organizations from which they emerged, the *samba* schools became highly formalized and structured with a myriad of rules governing instrumentation, nationalistic song themes, parading, and other elements. Brass and wind sections in *samba* schools were officially restricted in 1934, and the instrumentation of *bateria* (percussion ensemble), singer, and *cavaquinho* was standardized (McCann 2004a). The department of tourism Riotur took charge of the *samba* parades and restricted them to downtown where they would compete against one another, later moving them to the *sambódromo* in 1984. As street carnival declined, the schools became the preeminent expression of Rio's carnival by the 1970s.

For many in the street carnival movement today, the roles of outsiders, from the Vargas government to the television company *Globo*, represent commodifications of artistic labor that have long compromised the carnivalesque “authenticity” of the *samba* schools. The transfer of the parade to the *sambódromo*, occurring at the end of the dictatorship's reign in 1984, represented for many of my collaborators the dictatorship's final repression against carnival.

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<sup>39</sup> This transition that reconstructed Brazilian national identity in the 1930s through valorizing histories of racial mixing and Afro-Brazilian contributions to national culture was a major shift from the earlier Brazilian ideology of “whitening” (*branqueamento*) in the post-abolition period, which sought to make Brazil whiter through European immigration and miscegenation (Skidmore 1974). Other countries in the Americas, such as Trinidad (Guilbault 2007), also came to promote the cultural expressions of oppressed populations as authentic expressions of the nation in the first half of the twentieth century.

Such low esteem for the *samba* schools also appears in academic literature on the subject. Alison Raphael has provocatively claimed that *samba* schools “have been used as a convenient vehicle through which the larger society has coopted and undermined a genuine manifestation of popular culture” (1990: 73). Likewise, Robin Sheriff (1999) views the construction of the *sambódromo* as the most recent “theft of carnival” in a long history of commodification and appropriation, and her informants speak of its construction as the final death of the “real” carnival.



The *sambódromo* during the Champions parade. Photo by author on February 14, 2015.

If carnival supposedly militates against official society and its practices and institutions, street carnival participants question, how could the *samba* schools, with their highly orchestrated and disciplined events performed to a single style of *samba*, be considered truly carnivalesque? By contrast, the street carnival represents for many a space of free and uncontrolled experimentation, egalitarianism, and radical self-expression. Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta (1991 [1979]) argues that Rio’s street carnival creates experiences of *communitas* (Turner 1969) and equality for participants that stand in contrast to the structure and hierarchy of everyday life. Street carnival, for DaMatta, provides the possibility for open encounters with social others that, outside of carnival, would be marked by social distinction and distance.<sup>40</sup>

While street carnival participants celebrate freedom of expression and musical diversity, *samba* school participants have little to no control over the selection of the theme, the *samba*-

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<sup>40</sup> DaMatta contrasts the street carnival, which for him includes the *samba* schools which were initially part of street carnival, to domestic indoor carnivals, as his book was written before the construction of the *sambódromo*. The opposition between carnivals in Rio today, however, generally opposes the street carnival of the *blocos* to the *sambódromo* and the *samba* schools.

*enredo*,<sup>41</sup> or their costumes (*fantasias*), which are decided by officials and designers high up in the schools' hierarchy. Many brass *bloco* participants find contemporary *samba* schools' songs homogenous, too fast, and lacking in rhythmic diversity. The *sambódromo* carnival is built around a competition, whereas street carnival events rarely aim at winning a particular competition (though *Globo* does award prizes to *blocos*). While competitions and various forms of rivalry are part of many carnival cultures, many of Rio's street carnival participants view competition to be anathema to the spirit of carnival.

DaMatta argues that the street carnival *blocos* have long been imagined as institutions that bear carnivalesque "authenticity" in comparison to the *samba* schools:

The fact that the *blocos* are organized in a far simpler way than the *samba* schools makes it possible for the former to distinguish themselves by saying, among other things, that the schools 'no longer obey the Carnival tradition'...that they are 'for the tourists' rather than for the people, and that they put on a 'show' instead of a spontaneous parade. The *blocos* claim to express purer Carnival values. (1991 [1979]: 95-96)

Likewise, Ruy Castro quips that the *sambódromo* "may be the greatest spectacle on earth, but that's what it is, a spectacle. The real carnival is the one in which people enjoy themselves, and don't just watch others having a good time...and when it appears suddenly in your street, it takes the whole neighborhood along with it" (2003: 106).

Beatriz Jaguaribe's thoughts on the festive street carnival crowd, as opposed to the spectator crowd of the *sambódromo*, reinforce this view of *blocos* as the "purer" expression of carnival values: "Being 'caught in the festive crowd' is a counterpoint to the fragmented sphere of consumption, to the individuality of the competitive market, and to the isolation of viewer spectatorship of mass mediated products" (2014: 110). A song by Monobloco, "Arrastão da Alegria" (2013) ("Crowd of Happiness") captures well the attitude of many street carnival participants towards the *samba* schools. This *bloco*, founded in 2000, was one of the first *blocos* that sought to stir up the musical diversity of Rio's carnival by mixing a diversity of Brazilian and popular global rhythms. Monobloco founded classes (*oficinas*) to teach their eclectic musical styles in Lapa for students to participate in the yearly *bloco*, now bringing half a million to the streets for its carnival *bloco*:

I am, I am, I am  
Monobloco.

My *samba* school is my *bloco*  
My Avenue Sapucaí<sup>42</sup> is the street.  
It is I who comes to invade the city  
That burns and explodes under the sun and the moon.

The earliest *blocos* of the street carnival revival were founded in the south zone, emerged during the process of democratization in the mid-1980s, and were credited by my collaborators as part of a broader response to the repressive attitudes of the dictatorship in the wake of the

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<sup>41</sup> *Samba-enredo*, or a *samba* that tells a story, is the genre of the *samba* schools. Each school composes an *enredo* each year in an attempt to win the competition for best *enredo*.

<sup>42</sup> The name of the avenue of the *sambódromo*.

“Diretas já” protests for direct elections at the end of the dictatorship. Nailson Simões, professor of trumpet and Brazilian music at Uni-Rio and performer in many brass *blocos*, portrays the relationship between the resurgent street carnival and *sambódromo* as a revolt against commercialism.

I got involved in the movement that was surging in the 1990s, the necessity for a street carnival with more quality and more diversity. People are searching for the street carnival because it's more spontaneous, as it was before. There was the growth of the *samba* schools, but the growth wasn't healthy for Rio because it's very commercial. It got to a point in Rio de Janeiro that was terrible. Carnival is spontaneous...It's something completely out of the ordinary to go out into the street...It's the rejection of the people to what we have. The return to the street I feel to be a revolt. (5/20/15)

Some brass musicians even brought carnival theory into the discussion in defending the authenticity of some forms of carnival festivity over others. Trombonist and tubist Juba cites Bakhtin (1984 [1941]) in his defense of street carnival against the *sambódromo*:

I read Bakhtin who speaks of carnivalization and street culture as forms of resistance. Even in the darker epochs of the middle ages, there were carnivalesque festivals that lasted months. Laws diminished and there wasn't so much hierarchy or domination. The nobles would go into the street and were treated as if everyone were equal...Carnival was a form of irony and subversion, of resistance to oppression. The *sambódromo* represents a false carnival according to the principles of carnival. The street carnival is the carnival in which you are equal with everyone together. Over there [in the *sambódromo*], it is just a stage, just observing, not participating. In carnival, you have to participate actively. In the street, there is this possibility. (Pires 10/12/14)

Indeed, Bakhtin views the carnivalesque as a literary mode found in medieval literature, and he is often interpreted as prizing a kind of “idealized” carnival. He claims that “Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people: they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people” (1984 [1941]: 7). Arguing that carnival represents a moment of radical egalitarianism in a hierarchical society, he writes that “all were considered equal during carnival” (10). For Bakhtin, carnival constitutes the people's “second life,” all that is opposed to institutions, hierarchy, order, and spectatorship.

I argue that alternative brass movement participants draw on these “carnivalesque ethics” to theorize their practices based on conceptions of what a pure and ideal carnival “should be.” Bakhtin has been widely critiqued in studies of carnival that argue that conceiving of carnival simply as a revolutionary moment of equality is too simplistic to apply to the diversity of carnivalesque manifestations. But for *neofanfarristas*, it is Bakhtin's normative conception of what carnival *should* be that are important to participants in their theorizations of carnival practices. Notions that carnival should be open, spontaneous, critical, subversive, revolutionary, and equalizing constitute an ethical belief system for festive practices from which *samba* schools supposedly departed long ago.

In this view, the *sambódromo* is perceived as the dominant carnival practice of Rio de Janeiro against which the brass *blocos* with their participatory ethics articulate themselves as alternative. Carioca percussionist Thaís Bezerra describes the shift: “Today everybody wants to

be part of the carnival. This is the goal. Twenty years ago everybody wanted to go to see the carnival, but now everybody wants to play” (Oakland, 5/10/16). Indeed, *oficinas*, or band/*bloco*-led classes that teach particular styles and instruments often with the goal of enabling participation in street carnival, have proliferated in the past twenty years in Rio de Janeiro. Like the supposition that there was “no carnival” before this expansion, however, these global statements reveal particular class and racialized subject positions. Given the relatively lower earning power of even middle-class Brazilians, the very materiality of brass instruments and their lack of accessibility guarantee the movement’s relative middle-class profile.

For the thousands of poorer people mobilized by the *samba* schools, each one with about three thousand participants, the notion that carnival did not exist and that *samba* schools are not participatory are absurd. Carla Brunet (2012) encourages us to view the *samba* schools as important institutions in the lives of Brazilian communities that are still “real” and important even as they recognize their commercialization and histories of appropriation. Trombonist Claire Haas, who also participated in Estácio de Sá *samba* school, observes,

I feel there’s some obliviousness about the fact that the *samba* schools are a lot more inclusive than *neofanfarrismo*. To participate in *neofanfarrismo* you first have to buy an instrument which will cost at least a thousand *reais* [300 USD]. Then you have to go to the *oficinas* and learn how to play it. It’s a very upper middle-class group of people and someone coming from a lower social group would feel this kind of social exclusion. Participating in a *samba* school doesn’t have that barrier to entry. We paid fifty *reais* to participate in Estácio de Sá. You don’t have to buy a drum to play in the *bateria* of a *samba* school... There are also lots of rehearsals in the streets... The critique of the *samba* schools, part of it is true: lots of money, putting culture on display for people who can pay for it... But it’s eighteen thousand people who do the parade per night... *Samba* schools are much poorer and blacker than any of *neofanfarrismo*. (2/15/16)

I also found that the dismissals of *samba* schools felt akin to other middle-class rejections or working-class culture. My purpose here is not to reify brass musicians’ prejudices against the *samba* schools but to portray the debates within the community that animate their practices.

### **“Alternative” Performance Practices of the Brass *Bloco* Revival**

Beyond their critiques of the *samba* schools, the brass *bloco* revival promoted itself as an alternative within the landscape of the larger street carnival revival, the indoor carnival club dances, and the few brass *blocos* that survived the dictatorship. Cordão do Boitató (1996) and Céu na Terra (2001) are the primary brass *blocos* associated with the brass *bloco* revival from which *neofanfarrismo* emerged. When they came on the scene, Rio’s carnival consisted primarily of the *samba* schools as well as a few *blocos* that had either existed through the dictatorship or started in the years after it fell in 1985, such as Cacique de Ramos, Simpatia é Quase Amor, Suvaco de Cristo, and Escravos do Mauá. Most of these *blocos* are akin to miniature *samba* schools. They write and rehearse an *enredo* for the year that they play in carnival over instrumentation based on the *samba* school model. Many of these *blocos* formed the *bloco* league of Sebastiana in 2000 based in the center and south zone of the city and were devoted to their neighborhoods of origin, focusing on political satire, valorization of the past,

free participation, Brazilian “authenticity,” and promoting political causes (Barros 2013; Jaguaribe 2014).

At the time Boitatá and Céu na Terra were founded, there were also a few brass ensembles still in existence. Bola Preta, the oldest running brass *bloco* founded in 1918, never stopped performing. It now attracts two million people during carnival, giving it the title of the biggest *bloco* in the world over Recife’s Gala da Madrugada. Banda de Ipanema was formed in 1965 with some levels of connection to anti-dictatorship movements (Herschmann 2013). These *blocos* are, however, far outside of Rio’s alternative brass community. Instead of producers organizing and contracting musicians, Boitatá and Céu na Terra were organized by the musicians themselves. While the older brass *blocos* played on sound cars (*carros de som*) above the audience, these newer ones played in the street acoustically. While who could play in the older *blocos* was determined through contracting, Boitatá and Céu na Terra mixed contracted professionals with interested amateurs, creating an open participatory structure with a strong musical core, though they still use cords around the musicians to protect them from *foliões*.<sup>43</sup>



Early image of the Cordão da Bola Preta, founded in 1918, blown-up on the wall of the group’s headquarters, which also functions as a popular music venue. The band’s uniforms defining exclusivity of who can perform, still in use today, sets it apart from the colorful costumes and participatory spirit of the brass *bloco* revival.

For Thiago Queiroz, the musical director of Boitatá, free use of *fantasias* (carnival costumes) is an important part of the alternative brass movement’s critical departure from *blocos* like Bola Preta: Boitatá and Céu na Terra “are carnival *blocos* that recreated this old tradition with *fanfarras* and *fantasias*” (12/16/14). The prizing of individual *fantasias* is part of a reaction to the t-shirts (*camisas*) that many *blocos* and all *samba* schools use to define who is and is not

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<sup>43</sup> Thomas Turino (2008) would call this a participatory structure built on a core and elaboration.



part of the organization, as well as of the formalities of the “traditional” brass *blocos* like Bola Preta. The example of Salvador’s *trio elétricos*,<sup>44</sup> in which t-shirts are used to keep track of who has paid to be inside or outside of the cord that defines the *bloco* is a particularly negative example for this community. While the *fantasias* of the *samba* schools are imaginative as well, they cannot be said to represent any kind of individual expression of the self. When I participated in the Estácio de Sá *samba* school, I picked up my *fantasia* a week before the parade at the City of Samba factory (*Cidade do Samba*) without any choice in the matter.

Brazilians use the term “brincar” to describe the playful acts of engaging in carnival. *Brincar* has a child-like and innocent connotation, and carnival is conceived as a moment for adults to reengage with their capacities to “play,” in particular to “play” the characters they dress up as. DaMatta explains that “the word *brincar* may also mean to ‘enter into a relationship’ by breaking down the barriers between social positions to create an atmosphere of unreality... we are dramatizing relations, possibilities, desires, and social positions” (1991 [1979]: 109). When I asked professional *fantasia* maker and bass drummer in the *neofanfarrismo* movement, Helena Tyrrell, what the *fantasia* does in the play (*brincadeira*) of carnival, she replied:

This is very serious business. The name of my brand is Panu Panu Dreams in Weaving. I don’t sell clothes. I sell the dream of a person, the expression of a person. I think that with the carnival *fantasia* you have the space to play with this. Carnival is the great stage for you to express this freely. The carnival *fantasia* is your vehicle for you to put out what is inside you and what you want to explode. The carnival *fantasia* is a great form of expression of your *id* and of what facet of it you want to play with. (1/11/16)

Similarly, stilt-walker Raquel Potí, who has popularized stilts in street carnival *blocos*, relates, “I don’t create *fantasias*. The *fantasia* creates me. I go to Saara<sup>45</sup> and things find me” (1/19/16).



Left: Stilt walker Raquel Potí. Photo by Micael Hocherman on January 30, 2017; used with permission. Right: Thiago Queiroz, director of Boitatá, directing the final hits of the parade. Photo by author on January 31, 2016.

<sup>44</sup> A manifestation of Bahian carnival in which trucks blast music in the streets.

<sup>45</sup> A central shopping district famed as a place to buy carnival *fantasias*.



For trombonist Gustavo Machado, this spirit is a major difference between street carnival *blocos* in the south zone and the brass *blocos* of the center of the city: “If you go to a *bloco* in Ipanema you will see very few people in *fantasias*. In this *neofanfarristica* movement, we produce our own *fantasias* to create something beautiful, *fantasias* that may be interactive with other people. There in Ipanema you don’t see this. You see a shirtless man with a little hat from Antarctica [beer company] hitting on women” (12/19/14). In the brass *bloco* revival, dressing in an elaborate *fantasia* and playing out a character are essential parts of the experience, both for the musicians and for the *foliões* (audience). Being a *folião* in a carnival *bloco* (from the word *folia*, or revelry) is a participatory audience experience, both through the singing of songs initiated by the band and through “playing” in a *fantasia*. For the former musical director of Cêu na Terra and ethnomusicologist Rafael Velloso, these are elements of what constitutes the expression of alternative culture for many participants:

The way people related and came together in the streets was alternative. It’s not just the music itself; it’s the whole performance concept. You’re not performing in a sound truck; [you’re in the street] so people can sing with you and dress in costumes. There are gardeners, *pierrôs*, clowns, people who get in the character [of the songs]. It’s magical for the audience; they can be part of the thing. The alternative is related to the whole context. You go to the carnival and have fun and drink with your friends and you bring the costumes and sing the songs. When you have five, six, or seven thousand people, they can’t even hear [the music]. They’re not there for the music, they’re there for the event. It’s a very important part of the concept. Young people who don’t know that repertoire don’t want to go to a private party and listen to DJs play *marchinhas* and old stuff. This is not alternative. But going to the streets with crazy people, drugs, alcohol and dressing in ways you invent yourself—that’s alternative. That’s something you never did in your life. (Florianopolis 5/26/15)

Velloso’s observation about private parties is a reference to the indoor middle-class carnival parties (*bailes de clube*) where carnival marches are also played by brass ensembles. Though many of my collaborators had been to such parties, mostly in their youth, these events are completely divorced from the street-oriented brass *bloco* scene. For Velloso, it is the whole performance context beyond the particular music chosen (see chapter two), that creates an alternative carnivalesque experience.

The brass *blocos* design ornate standards (*estandarte*), a practice that *neofanfarrista blocos* and bands would adopt in the years following, rather than the flag (*bandeira*) more associated with the *samba* schools. Standards—which are also used in military and religious processions—are held by a standard bearer (*porta-estandarte*) who leads the parade. Being the standard-bearer is a position of power, privilege, and responsibility of leading sometimes thousands of people. Standards in the brass community are not industrially produced, and, like *fantasias*, a do-it-yourself ethos is part of their construction. Helena Tyrrell, who also makes standards in the brass movement, explains the mythos of the standard in defining a crowd as a *bloco*:

The standard is an instrument. The standard is a living symbol of the collective it represents. If you have a street carnival *bloco* and that standard is up, this means that that carnival *bloco* is there playing. If the standard goes down, there are just people there. It’s

not the carnival *bloco* that is there. The collective of people has lost identity as a collective. This applies to carnival *blocos* just like an army in war. While the standard is up the war continues. It doesn't matter how many soldiers are standing. Same thing with a carnival *bloco*. If the standard is up, even if there are two musicians playing, it's a *bloco*. (1/11/16)



Left: Boi Tolo tenth anniversary standard leading parade. January 3, 2016.  
Right: Boitatá standard. January 18, 2016. Photos by author.

In sum, free use of *fantasias*, playing acoustically, participatory musical structure, musicians taking roles as producers, and occupation of city streets in the center of the city were all elements that embodied alternative expressions of carnival in relation to the kinds of carnivalesque experiences that were available in the 1990s. The kinds of critiques participants launch towards the *samba* schools and other expressions of street carnival must, however, be understood within the particular class and racial context of participants. While middle-class Cariocas, and especially “alternative” middle-class Cariocas, chose to leave Rio during carnival during the dictatorship and its aftermath, they have since carved out a space within carnival that they feel is authentically theirs.

### Neoliberalization of Street Carnival

Though discourses of resistance are common for street carnival participants, especially in the alternative brass movement, street carnival has emerged as a big business in its own right with massive systems of management and funding set up to organize it. Street carnival cannot be simplistically celebrated as a purely resistant manifestation separate from the logic governing the *sambódromo*. Jaguaribe contextualizes the revival of the street carnival as part of a larger rationale of reviving the city as a center of tourism, portraying it as part of

the re-democratization of civil society and the ever increasing prestige given to manifestations of popular culture; the force of the tourist industry that envisioned, in

street carnival, a lucrative form of seducing potential visitors; the media coverage of the street carnival that extolled the comeback as an ‘authentic’ demonstration of the city’s joyful spirit; and the sponsorship of businesses combined with the patronage of the municipal authorities that not only close the street for the merry making but also offer guides, map, and itineraries of the partying. (2014: 125)

The official *blocos* of Rio’s street carnival are managed by the city’s tourism agency Riotur, but they have been funded since 2011 primarily by sponsorship from the beer company Antarctica, a brand owned by the global company AmBev, which also owns Budweiser and 25% of the beer market globally (Andrade 2012). In official street carnival *blocos*, the only beer allowed to be sold in public space is Antarctica. While many musicians, especially amateurs, are willing to work for free and outside this system, professionals, generally, are not. Carnival *blocos* are free events, and the primary possibility for remuneration through playing in street carnival is through the funds offered by corporations like Antarctica. Laws for the incentivizing of cultural expenditure have created a system in which private companies, instead of paying taxes to the government, subsidize culture, choosing what kinds of cultural manifestations to support and determining much of the funding of street carnival.<sup>46</sup>

While much of the discourse of street carnival, then, is revolutionary and proposes itself as a public alternative to the *sambódromo*, its existence is predicated on the neoliberalization of the carnival tradition, leaving its conditions of existence to private companies. This leads, in some cases, to a wide gap between theory and practice. For example, the producer of Céu na Terra, for example, claims that street carnival is inherently a political act: “You don’t need to be partisan [in a *bloco*]. You’re in carnival. You are practicing a political act in its essence. You are occupying the street and exercising the power of intervening” (de Beyssac 1/30/15). During a Céu na Terra *bloco* rehearsal in early 2016, however, I noticed videographers who looked uncannily like young North American hipsters recording the *bloco*’s rehearsal. They were from Airbnb, a company that has faced extreme criticism for the spike in affordability of rental markets in cities worldwide. They were making a commercial for the Olympics called “Stay with me” and had paid Céu na Terra to include the *bloco* in the commercial. While many musicians in Céu na Terra had decried the gentrification and affordability crisis of the Olympic city in protests in 2013, they were profiting from the financing of a company directly involved in such controversies. The producer of Céu na Terra spoke after the rehearsal, explaining that, while they did not view capitalist corporations as their friends, they were raising needed money for international exchanges. *Samba* schools, he explained, receive support from Riotur, but the *blocos* receive nothing but the sponsorship of Antarctica.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See the law at Brazilian government’s site: <http://www.brasil.gov.br/cultura/2009/11/lei-rouanet>

<sup>47</sup> Flávia Dias describes a similar tension in the “Day of the Street” (*Dia da Rua*) event in which sponsors market themselves through Rio’s street traditions.



Airbnb filming a Céu na Terra rehearsal. December 13, 2015. Photos by author.

Bruno Muller, a producer of the brass *bloco* Prata Preta, near the port area of the city, describes the challenging position in which the *bloco* found itself in trying to critique the capitalist system of the Olympic city and also deriving their income from it: “We critique property speculation, but our biggest sponsor is the new port. They have a cultural arm. It’s a dilemma because we as citizens have rights to benefit from cultural money. We have to take advantage. But at the same time, we are knocking on the door of the people who will screw us one day” (Loyola, Muller, and Sarol 11/18/15). Ethnomusicologist Dil Fonseco explains the ambivalent and difficult position *blocos* face in financing their projects:

A lot of groups live from this kind of financing...The big *blocos* are part of the logic of privatization. These brass groups, as they are groups of the south zone, are even more imbricated in these projects. But you can’t be moralistic about it. A musician in the modern era is someone who’s trying to sell his or her work and tries to live, generally badly. How can a musician live? You have someone who wants to be revolutionary and share music with everyone—how beautiful. And you have someone else who is more entrepreneurial, who wants to make money and has bills to pay...The groups dispute the available money, and there are various conflicts between them. (10/20/14)

The street carnival boom then cannot be portrayed as purely resistant or alternative. Participants navigate the choices available to them. The event reflects a diversity of sometimes contradictory discourses and rationales, but it also reflects a deep and impressive reengagement with public music making in a city trying to reposition itself as a revived and resurgent global city. The revival stands in contrast to the perception of modernist malaise in which one sees the



social world, and especially that of the middle classes, as growing towards inevitable social isolation and disassociation. The street carnival boom shows that even in a neoliberalizing world, social participation can *increase* and society can become *more* musically engaged rather than less.

### Conclusions

I have argued in this chapter that Rio de Janeiro has undergone a major process of revitalization, aggressively pursuing a status as a global city. The city has not only been innovating, but renovating: rescuing, revisiting, and rebuilding, recalling its past glories as it cast itself as an Olympic City. The act of newly reconstructing an old city parallels the newness of *neofanfarrismo*, a new musical movement based on an old instrumental format, picking up the “old iron” of the past and renovating tradition. The brass *bloco* movement of the street carnival in many ways sought to contest the hegemonic discourses of the city’s revivalism, offering alternative ideas and practices of what might constitute a revival of the city’s culture. They cast the brass ensemble, an earlier expression of Rio’s carnival but still associated with conservative institutions, as an alternative and liberatory form of street carnival.

This has been, however, a contested and contradictory process. Despite the populist discourses of carnival and the movement’s embrace of “carnavalesque ethics,” the brass *bloco* revival remains limited mostly to the whiter middle class. Musicians navigate a neoliberal city in which their survival and success depend on acquiescence and financial support while they attempt to transform these systems. The street carnival revival has been a negotiation of the real pressures musicians have faced as they sought to create different expressions of carnival that could challenge the prevailing options available at the time.

This chapter has focused on the various performance practices and discourses of the street carnival revival that were proposed as alternatives to what they viewed as dominant and even “inauthentic” carnival traditions. In the next, I turn to the particular musical repertoires they sought to rescue, showing how they configured a diverse musical portrait of Brazilian traditions that countered the dominance of the “*samba* paradigm,” through which Rio de Janeiro has traditionally represented itself as the cultural heart of Brazil.

## 2. The Brass *Bloco* Revival and Diversifying Cultural Nationalism: Rescued Repertoires of Rio's Street Carnival

The street carnival [revival] started off alternative. Céu na Terra and Boitatá are quite an alternative bunch. Boitatá started walking down the streets on their own and they were going against the flow. Even though they were playing traditional carnival music, it was almost like a countercultural statement because traditional Brazilian music had been lost... And then over the course of several years, what they played is smack dab in the center of carnival culture, completely on the beaten track. But I think they'd consider themselves alternative and countercultural. And that has sown the seeds of why the [brass] *blocos* have a countercultural element now. (Ashe 10/23/14)

In the face of heightening globalization, Cordão do Boitatá (1996) and Céu na Terra (2001) “rescued” what they viewed as authentic expressions of popular Brazilian culture, bringing young, alternative middle-class crowds back into the streets and paving the way for the brass movements that would follow. Boitatá’s first carnival parade in 1997 has been described to me as small numbers of people taking relatively deserted streets, but it is now a mainstay of street carnival attended by tens of thousands of people every year. The *bloco* of Céu na Terra likewise packs in around twelve thousand people into the claustrophobic streets of hilly Santa Teresa.

Around the same period as the birth of these *blocos*, Hermano Vianna, in *The Mystery of Samba* (1995), discussed the ascendance of regionalism and globalization in the Brazilian popular music industry and the resultant fragmentation of *samba* as the singular articulation of *brasilidade* (Brazilian cultural identity). He asked, “Does this also spell the end of the ‘mestiço paradigm,’ that version of Brazilian identity created with so much care and effort by many groups with a converging interest in ‘things Brazilian’? What can now assure the unity—even if only the musical unity—of Brazil?” (1995: 106). In the face of musical diversification, the *samba* schools would continue to forge ahead with a singular style mediated throughout the nation and the world as a representation of a homogenously mixed-race nation.

The response to Vianna’s question by Boitatá and Céu na Terra, however, was not to defensively hold on to only *samba* as the singular authentic expression of *brasilidade*, nor to celebrate globalization as a response. Rather, these brass *blocos* forged a repertoire that would become a canon of street carnival that reimagined the nation around a multiplicity of Brazilian “popular” traditions. They framed their musical projects around the notions of populism, diversified cultural nationalism, and cultural rescue, forming a musically eclectic expansion of Brazilian carnival music. The former musical director of Céu na Terra, Rafael Velloso, explains:

The idea of the popular was very important and inherent to the group. They would say we play popular music, we are a part of popular culture. To them it meant folk music and [urban] popular music together... We brought different kinds of music to the carnival—*samba*, *maracatú*, *frevo*—to have a diverse show. We believed we should play all the kinds of rhythms and music of Brazil, the kind of repertoire that fits in an orchestra and relates to the identity of popular music in Brazil. Céu na Terra pushed an idea of folk authenticity. We played *frevo* and *maracatú* from Recife, *maxixe* by Chiquinha Gonzaga, composers foundational to these styles. We played *sambas* by Pixinguinha and Donga and [Afro-Brazilian] *jongo*. We played roots music and folk music translated to an



orchestra...It was an engagement with Brazilian traditions and a diversification of carnival music. (Florianopolis 5/26/15)

Why was it important to diversify Rio's carnival beyond *samba* in Rio's carnival at the turn of the millennium? What assumptions about the nation, folk authenticity, and the popular were articulated in these musical choices? What precisely was being "rescued" of Brazilian music? In this chapter, I examine the motivations and musical choices of these *blocos* in their embrace of an aesthetics of diversified cultural nationalism as a leftist and alternative critique of the dominant cultural paradigm in which the *samba* schools and Rio's carnival had been held up as the authentic manifestation of Brazilian national culture.

### Pre-Carnival Weekend

Under the encroaching but still blistering 7 am sun in hilly Santa Teresa, I walk with my trumpet into the growing "concentration" (*concentração*, or meeting point) of the Bloco do Céu na Terra (the "Heaven on Earth" *bloco*). It is February 7, 2015, a Saturday nine days before Fat Tuesday (*terça-feira gorda*), or "pre-carnival" weekend. For many, it is the real start of carnival, though people have already been saying carnival has begun for months. The musical director is dressed as a strange bird, and he mingles among the other musicians dressed as pirates, flowers, and men in drag, all generously doused in glitter. More musicians slip under the cord held by strong men, separating them from the public that grows larger by the minute. The horn players warm up as free flavored *cachaça* (Brazilian sugar liquor), *cachaça* popsicles, watery but cold (*geladona*) Antarctica beer, and joints are passed freely among the musicians. The *foliões*, or carnival public, are also drinking all the Antarctica they can get their hands on from the mobile beer sellers. They are increasingly packed in by new *foliões* in the little space provided on the sidewalk as the *bloco* occupies the street. Some stand locked in embrace with people they have just met.

Then a trancy 12/8 beat from the Afro-Brazilian *candomblé* religion sparks the beginning of the *bloco*. The musicians set off, but carnival walking is extremely slow. Unlike second line brass bands in New Orleans that shoot off at a clip I could barely keep up with, Céu na Terra meanders drunkenly and slowly, sometimes only moving when pushed by the force of the crowd to do so. It would take four hours for us to cover the distance in Santa Teresa that I normally walked in fifteen minutes. I struggle to imagine what the parade (*desfile*) was like when the *bloco* paraded inside the historic tram that has been mostly out of service since an accident left five people dead in 2011 (see chapter one).<sup>48</sup>

After the *candomblé* song, we launch into the technically challenging *maxixe* genre, Rio's popular music of the turn of the twentieth century—if we had played these songs later in the set four hours later, no one would have had the chops or memory to pull them off. The heart of Céu na Terra's repertoire, however, is the *marchinha*, or the satirical carnival march genre. While there are many *marchinhas*, the twenty or so played by Céu na Terra are canonical on the streets of Rio. All the *foliões* can, and do, sing along with the often comical lyrics that celebrate, among other subjects, drinking, gender queerness, demands for money, and drinking. Residents of the neighborhood sing along from the window tops and douse us with hoses, despite complaints from the organizers that the water will destroy the portable sound cart (*carrinho de som*),

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<sup>48</sup> *Maxixes* in Céu na Terra parade: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqbwHnevA0Y>

amplifying a few stringed instruments. The movement from one song and genre to the next, expected by the musicians and *foliões* alike, gives the event a ritualistic feeling.

After playing a few “classic” *sambas*, the *bloco* goes into the “regional” northeastern genres of *afoxé*, *maracatú*, and *ciranda*, finishing with some beloved *frevos*, the fast-paced syncopated brass genre from Recife, before closing with the final *marchinha*, “Cidade Maravilhosa,” the famous anthem that celebrates the “marvelous city” of Rio. When we arrive at the destination *praça* (plaza) of Largo das Neves, the separation between the *bloco* and the crowd dissolves as the cord is lifted. Although the parade is technically over, many musicians will stay and jam for hours, exploring other repertoire and playing the same *marchinhas* on repeat. As I walk back towards my house through the route of the parade, it looks like a *piñata* has exploded over the entire neighborhood with confetti and Antarctica cans littering the entire street. The fast-paced carnival workers are already hosing down the street, making quick work of the remnants of the *bloco* and getting ready for the next one.



The pre-carnival parade of Céu na Terra. Photo by author on January 30, 2016.

February 8, the next day, I am again under the hot sun in Praça XV, warming up on trumpet and drinking cachaça. Playing while drinking is generally not an activity I associate with the morning, but some of these *blocos* relish the morning sun before it becomes insufferably hot. It is the street parade of Cordão do Boitató.<sup>49</sup> Many of the same musicians from the day before are here, and we are expecting to play much of the same repertoire. But there are some important differences. There are horn players hired from the symphony orchestra. The master of the percussion section is also the master of percussion at the Vila Isabel *samba* school. It’s much more organized and less anarchic—there’s even sheet music hung around the backs of the musicians in front of me. The parts are more orchestrated, and many musicians know all the

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<sup>49</sup> Footage of Boitató parade: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cf9Waa6dc90>

counter melodies by heart. But it is still fairly open—anyone with a horn can come under the cord, even not having gone to any of the four weekly rehearsals beforehand, though this would change with the ongoing explosion of amateurs interested in participating. There are some of the amateurs of Céu na Terra but far fewer. I am dressed as a devil wearing a red *MST*<sup>50</sup> social movement shirt and I tell other musicians that I am dressed as a social movement as seen by the right wing. A trombonist dressed as an angel says, “fancy seeing you here.”

We start with a rendition of Heitor Villa-Lobos’ “Trenzinho do Caipira,” a slow lyrical melody by the most renowned classical composer of Brazil and the emblem of Brazilian modernism and musical nationalism. From there we go through many of the same pieces as Céu na Terra, but with more musical ambition, as we snake through the colonial streets of old downtown Rio from Praça XV to Praça Tiradentes. The parade is led by an *ala* (section, or literally “wing”) of stilt walkers dressed in ornate gold performing elaborate choreographed movements. The name “Boitatá” is a reference to a mythical Amazonian serpent god, and a gigantic serpent doll is passed over the musicians and the crowd as we amble. A large doll of Pixinguinha, the black Carioca musician who popularized instrumental music in the early twentieth century and is often compared to Louis Armstrong, rises above the musicians.

The *bloco* parades with standards of a pantheon of Brazilian popular music icons, including Cartola (a *sambista*), Luiz Gonzaga (the icon of northeastern *farrô*), and the progressive “jazz” musician Hermeto Pascoal, who philosophized about a “universal music” based on Brazilian music. Céu na Terra and most brass *blocos* use standards that bear their names in a colorful backdrop, but Boitatá also uses them to pay homage to the Brazilian musicians that inspire their *bloco*. When we arrive in Praça XV, we launch into the *frevo* “Vassourinhas” to finish. The director Thiago Queiroz has many of the superb musicians solo over the B section—I’m honored to be called—and then play the head a final time. He then begins jumping up and down frantically to cue the final hits and the end of a four-hour parade.



Pixinguinha and Boitatá serpent dolls in the Boitatá parade. Photo by author on January 31, 2016.

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<sup>50</sup> *Movimento sem Terra*, or the Movement of the Landless.

## The Brass *Bloco* Revival and the Heritage of Post-Colonial Cultural Nationalism

The music of Cêu na Terra and Boitatá became a canon of the brass carnival world. Though they diversified the available carnival musical repertoires, they also created new national boundaries that constituted limits of acceptability of what could be considered authentic carnival music. In doing so, they entered a century-old debate on what constitutes “our music” (Hertzman 2013). Like counterparts in many other countries in the Americas in search for “national identity,” intellectuals of the Brazilian modernist movement in the 1920s began debating how Brazilians might forge national art forms that would not be merely imitative of European models, but authentic representations of the nation.

Two predominant positions emerged during that period as ways of thinking about Brazilian artistic production in relation to the rest of the world. Mário de Andrade, who documented a variety of regional Brazilian cultural practices and is frequently viewed as Brazil’s first ethnomusicologist, fostered a discourse of cultural nationalism and rescue in search of representations of “authentic” Brazilian popular culture. By contrast, the poet Oswald de Andrade proposed a position he referred to as cannibalism. He argued that Brazil’s greatest artistic strength was based on active devouring of all possible influences, including of international and metropolitan cultures, and transformation of them all into new Brazilian artistic products. It is these two discourses that would be in debate as *neofanfarrismo* emerged out of the diversified cultural nationalism of the brass *bloco* revival.

Cultural nationalism, what Thomas Turino calls “the use of art and other cultural practices to develop or maintain national sentiment for political purposes” (2000: 14), became the official policy of the Getúlio Vargas dictatorship, which presided over Brazil’s so-called golden age (*epoca de ouro*) of popular music in the 1930s and 40s. After decades of official whitening during which Brazil encouraged European immigration in order to “elevate” the country according to European standards of civilization (Skidmore 1974), the Vargas regime came to celebrate cultural mixing and Afro-Brazilian culture.<sup>51</sup> Vargas, like Perón in Argentina and other mid-century populists, defied simple categorization between left and right. Many viewed him as a “third way” between communism and unfettered capitalism, and others compared him to European fascists.

His regime was, however, fundamentally populist, nationalist, and oriented towards the urban working classes, which in Brazil were often mixed-race and black. The thinking of Gilberto Freyre (1933), which cast the authentic Brazilian subject as mixed-race, provided an intellectual foundation for the new regime. Vargas promoted *samba*, a Carioca genre based in Afro-Brazilian practices, as the official expression of the nation. Bryan McCann, underlining the long-lasting importance of these decades, has argued that in Brazil, “Innovation occurs within the patterns established between the late 1920s and mid-1950s. After fifty years of reiteration and revision, these patterns have acquired a range of meanings and the density of tradition” (2004a: 245). *Samba* accomplished through music, therefore, the construction of what Benedict Anderson calls the nation as an “imagined community” (1983). Across the Americas in the first half of the twentieth century, particular genres often based in the musical practices of urban black populations—*samba* in Brazil, *son* in Cuba, calypso in Trinidad, and jazz in the United States—were consolidated as the authentic national genres of the nation.

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<sup>51</sup> This trend has parallels in other countries in the Americas, such *la raza cósmica* in Mexico, which celebrated Mexican identity around the mixing of Spanish and the Indigenous.

Interest in international musical styles and exchanges would arise, however, in tension with this particular construction of cultural nationalism. These positions of rescue and cannibalism were not dialectically opposed but rather depended upon one another, as can be seen in the debates between practitioners of *MPB*, or the genre of Brazilian popular music, and *tropicália*, a divide that has been influential in the debates between the brass *bloco* revival and *neofanfarrismo*. *MPB* was a “defense of tradition,” of the narrative about Brazilian nationalism that emerged with the Vargas regime (Stroud 2008). More than a particular style of music, it became a kind of policing boundary of permissible genres that could “authentically” express *brasilidade*.

Although nationalist, *MPB* was primarily an expression of leftist cultural nationalism, especially distinguished from what these artists considered Yankee imports, such as *bossa nova* and 1950s and 60s Brazilian rock (*iê-iê-iê*, a Brazilianization of “yeah yeah yeah” from the Beatles’ “She Loves You”). When the American-supported dictatorship took over in the 1964 coup, the need to assert Brazilian musical forms that were culturally independent from the United States was palpable for the left. In *MPB*, tradition was mobilized as a populist alternative to the dominant culture of the dictatorship and, by extension, North American hegemony that supported it (Perrone 1985; Treece 1997). Christopher Dunn argues that in *MPB* political alienation from leftist causes took on a cultural component: “a symptom of alienation would be cultural inauthenticity—the production and consumption of cultural products divorced from ‘national reality’” (2016: 170).

For Stroud, *MPB* is the musical expression of the leftist Brazilian middle class and has traditionally acted as its cultural icon because it is associated with notions of “quality.” Stroud argues that “Any type of music can become *MPB*, but only if its regional roots are de-emphasized...its rough edges are honed...or its harmonies are made more complex” (2008: 41). The idea of “honing” popular genres in *MPB* reflects the elite status of the practitioners of the movement who interpreted popular genres. While *MPB*, by its very name, might seem to be a wholesale embrace of Brazilian popular music, even if a “refined” one, notable references to Brazilian popular music are perceived to be outside of its realm. *Funk carioca*, in particular, is much maligned by middle-class musicians preoccupied with “quality,” as are many other genres influenced by American music.

The restricted scope of *MPB*’s cultural nationalism was famously challenged by the *tropicália* movement in the late 1960s. The *tropicalistas* embraced international trends of the day, especially psychedelic rock, avant-garde classical music, electric guitars (initially anathema to *MPB*), and theoretically anything else. Invocations of cultural nationalism and cannibalism have occurred, then, almost cyclically in a dialectical relationship for almost a century. Brazilian artists have found dominant attitudes at times overly nationalist and at others too focused on international trends and have used their opposites to articulate alternatives. I do not propose that these patterns constitute a fundamental archetype or essence of Brazilian creativity. Rather, they are familiar cultural references and debates that have informed the cultural politics of subsequent musical movements. The graph below shows this dialectical development throughout key moments in the history of Brazilian popular music and the lineages on which the brass *bloco* revival and *neofanfarrismo* primarily drew (the latter will be explored further in the next chapter).

### Nationalist Rescue (*resgate*)

Mário de Andrade (1920s)  
Rise of *samba* schools (beginning 1930s)  
Brazilian Popular Music (*MPB*) (early 1960s)

First stage of street carnival revival (1990s-present)

Cordão do Boitatá and Céu na Terra

### Internationalist Cannibalism (*antropofagia*)

Oswald de Andrade (1920s)  
*Bossa Nova* and Brazilian Rock (1950s)  
Tropicália (late 1960s)  
Mangue beat (1990s)

Second stage of street carnival revival (mid-2000s to present)

Orquestra Voadora and *neofanfarrismo*

The brass *bloco* revival manifests many of the cultural characteristics, priorities, and anxieties of *MPB*. Like *MPB*, its practitioners are overwhelming middle-class and from the privileged south zone. They are preoccupied with representing “authentic” Brazilian culture, but due to their middle-class status, these have been relatively elite interpretations of popular class traditions. Like *MPB*, the brass *bloco* revival intended to shift focus away from perceived American cultural dominance—both movements were based on prioritizing elite interpretations of authentic Brazilian popular music in reaction to the influence of rock (*iê-iê-iê* in the 1950s and B-rock in the 1980s). They were both responses to the military dictatorship—in the case of *MPB*, against the reality of living under it, and, in the street carnival movement, against the legacy of oppression and cultural devalorization over which it presided. Like *MPB*, while Boitatá and Céu na Terra are viewed as “traditional” because of their focus on Brazilian popular culture, their “traditions” did not exist before they were “invented.” They established *blocos* with an *MPB*-like objective: to interpret, defend, and disseminate the urban and folkloric musical traditions of Brazil, employing the “popular Other” as an alternative and critical cultural formation. While *neofanfarrismo* would adopt a more “rhizomatic” approach, the initial brass *blocos*, like *MPB*, viewed themselves as part of an “arborescent” family tree of musical influence.

Drawing on the rationales of *MPB*, the brass *bloco* revival articulated a diversified view of “authentic” cultural nationalism, an alternative to the singular cultural nationalism mediated by *samba* since the 1930s (Vianna 1995; McCann 2004a; Hertzman 2013, et al.). For Boitatá and Céu na Terra, representing Brazil in its plurality and diversity was a construction of an alternative imagined community of the nation, not in its homogeneity through the *samba* paradigm, but in its heterogeneity—as Céu na Terra’s former director notes above, they wanted to play “the many kinds of rhythms of Brazil.” Despite their promotion of a musical eclecticism bound by the nation state, they were not all encompassing of Brazilian diversity, nor could they be. They left in place *certain notions of which expressive practices and populations could constitute the nation*. Doing so gave them the mystique of nationalist authenticity in a diversified form. A revival is always a present-day reinterpretation, and the particular repertoire and performance practices of these *blocos* constitute a “selective tradition,” a particular policing of aesthetic boundaries of what constitutes the expressions of “authentic” tradition (Williams 1961).

Many of the aesthetic decisions considered in this and the next chapter constitute forms of cultural appropriation and present ambiguous ethical questions. This is a topic considered further in chapter 6, whereas my focus here is on the motivations behind these aesthetic choices. In the rest of this chapter, I examine the repertoire of the Cordão do Boitatá and Céu na Terra in order to show the range of musical references of this musically diversified, but bounded, interpretation of popular Brazilian music.



## The Music of Boitatá and Céu na Terra

While for many *neofanfarristas*, Boitatá and Céu na Terra are synonymous with the rebirth of street carnival, for neither group is carnival the sole focus in the year. Carnival was not even the primary mission of Boitatá when it was founded in 1996. Co-founder Pedro Pamplona explains that the group came together to study “a repertoire of ‘folkloric’ Brazilian music... We learned to play this music in our Carioca style, putting together a repertoire of *carimbó*, *boi*, *baião*. And when carnival arrived we thought ‘hell let’s play carnival too, the old marches’” (7/28/15). Both groups developed a nucleus of members that would expand to include contracted, invited, and uninvited musicians in a carnival *bloco*.

Throughout the rest of the year, Boitatá and Céu na Terra perform for the cycle of Brazilian folkloric manifestations, with particular emphasis on carnival, the northeastern June festivals, *folias de reis* (Kings’ Day traditions), the northeastern traditions of the *boi* (Brazil’s famous ox drama), and the Christmas tradition of *pastoril*. Ethnomusicologist Dil Fonesco explains that both groups “have a profound link with Catholic rituals that form Brazilian traditions of popular culture. They call themselves research groups. They go inside Brazil. They bring information that for urbanites is also new. [The city-dwellers] don’t know these traditions that are from the interior” (10/20/14). In the case of Boitatá, such an interest in folkloric culture came partly from the academic musical milieu in which the young musicians met. They were exposed to ethnomusicology in the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and Uni-Rio, which has a bachelor program in Brazilian popular music. Rafael Velloso, the former musical director of Céu na Terra, is now an ethnomusicologist.

Similar to the discourse of *MPB*, many of the musicians I interviewed used the words “popular,” “Brazilian,” and “quality” in describing the groups’ aesthetic preoccupations—indeed, the smaller performance group of Céu na Terra is called the Orquestra Popular Céu na Terra. The engagements of both groups with Brazilian traditions beyond carnival throughout the calendar year brought other forms of Brazilian music into their carnival repertoires. The producer and snare player of Céu na Terra explains that “the objective was to study arrangements, formations, and other popular rhythms, and I think in this movement we opened up to the *maxixe*, *frevo*, *ciranda*, *afoxé*, *samba*. It worked in carnival and then we started to open more even to São João, with *forró*, *quadrilha*, *xote*, rhythms used in the middle of the year [outside carnival]” (de Beyssac 1/30/15).

These two *blocos* merged what I call Carioca classicism, or “classic” genres of Rio de Janeiro, with Brazilian regionalism, a southeastern interpretation of the relationship between regional genres and the cultural metropolises. In the rest of this chapter, I explore the meanings, stories, and histories related to the genres and some of the songs they have chosen, focusing on how and why such choices formed for many “authentic and traditional music,” a new canon, of Rio’s street carnival. My examination of this repertoire moves largely according to the succession of songs in the parades of Boitatá and Céu na Terra themselves. I have included a chart below that shows the many songs I collected and identified while playing with these two *blocos* during carnival in 2015 and 2016.

<b>Boitató Repertoire</b>					
<b>Song</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Region Ref</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>CT*</b>
Coisa Número 4	Candomblé/MPB	Moacir Santos	Bahia	1965	Yes
O Trenzinho Do Caipira	Brazilian classical	Heitor Villa-Lobos	RJ and nation	1933	
Cheguei	Maxixe/choro	Pixinguinha	Southeast	1946	
Ou Vai Na Rocha	Maxixe/choro	Anonymous	Southeast		Yes
Madeira Que Cupim Não Rói	Frevo	Capiba	Recife	1963	
Tristeza	Samba "de raiz"	Niltinho and Haroldo Lobo	Southeast	1966	Yes
Maracangalha	Samba "de raiz"	Dorival Caymmi	Salvador/RJ	1956	Yes
Zé Pereira	Marchinha	Francisco Correia Vasquez	Southeast	1869	Yes
Ó Abre Alas	Marcha-rancho	Chiquinha Gonzaga	Southeast	1899	Yes
Pastorinhas	Marcha-rancho	Noel Rosa and João de Barro	Southeast	1938	
Máscara Negra	Marcha-rancho	Zé Keti and Pereira Mattos	Southeast	1966	Yes
Teu Cabelo Não Nega	Marchinha	Lamartine Babo and Irmãos Valença	RJ/Pernambuco	1932	
Touradas De Madri	Marchinha	João de Barro and Alberto Ribeiro	Southeast	1938	Yes
Ta-hi	Marchinha	Joubert de Carvalho	Southeast	1930	Yes
Pierrô Apaixonado	Marchinha	Heitor do Prazeres and Noel Rosa	Southeast	1936	Yes
Vai Com Jeito	Marchinha	João de Barro	Southeast	1957	
Jardineira	Marcha-rancho	Benedito Lacerda and Humberto Porto	Southeast	1938	Yes
Allah-La-Ô	Marchinha	Haroldo Lobo & Nássara	Southeast	1940	Yes
Quem Sabe Sabe	Marchinha	Joel de Almeida and Carvalhinho	Southeast	1955	
Saca-Rolha	Marchinha	Zé da Zilda and Zilda do Zé	Southeast	1954	
Cachaça	Marchinha	Mirabeau and Lúcio de Castro	Southeast	1953	Yes
Aurora	Marchinha	Mário Lago and Roberto Roberti	Southeast	1940	Yes
Bola Preta	Marchinha	Vicente Paiva and Nelson Barbosa	Southeast	1961	
Canto De Iemanjá	Candomblé/MPB	Baden Powell and Vinicius de Moraes	Southeast	1966	
No Woman No Cry	Reggae	Bob Marley	Jamaica	1974	
Colonial Mentality	Afrobeat	Fela Kuti	Nigeria	1977	
African Market Place	Jazz	Abdullah Ibrahim	South Africa	1975	

Eu Só Quero Um Xodó	Xote	Dominguinhos	Pernambuco/RJ	1973	
Filhos Ge Gandhi	Afoxé/MPB/Funk	Gilberto Gil and Jorge Ben Jor	Bahia	1973	
É d'Oxum	Afoxé		Bahia		
Toda Menina Baiana	Afoxé/MPB	Gil Gilberto	Bahia/RJ	1979	
Na Cadência do Samba	Samba	Luíz Bandeira	RJ	1974	
Ê Baiana	Samba	Fabício da Silva and Baianinho	RJ	1971	
Tem Capoeira	Samba enredo	Mangueira	RJ	1973	
Festa do Interior	Frevo	Moraes Moreira and Abel Silva	Pernambuco	1981	Yes
Balancê	Marchinha	João de Barro and Alberto Ribeiro	Southeast	1937	Yes
Sassaricando	Marchinha	Luis Antônio, Oldemar Magalhães	Southeast	1955	
Chiquita Bacana	Marchinha	João de Barro and Alberto Ribeiro	Southeast	1949	
Yes Nós Temos Bananas	Marchinha	João de Barro and Alberto Ribeiro	Southeast	1938	
Mulata Bossa Nova	Marchinha	João Roberto Kelly	Southeast	1964	Yes
Mamãe Eu Quero	Marchinha	Vicente Paiva and Jararaca	Southeast	1937	Yes
Maria Sapatão	Marchinha	João Roberto Kelly	Southeast	1981	
Cabeleira do Zezé	Marchinha	João Roberto Kelly	Southeast	1964	Yes
Me Dá Um dinheiro Aí	Marchinha	Homero, Ivan, and Glauco Ferreira	Southeast	1959	Yes
Índio Quer Apito	Marchinha	Haroldo Lobo and Milton de Oliveira	Southeast	1960	Yes
Emoriô	Afoxé/MPB	João Donato and Gilberto Gil	Bahia	1975	
Patuscada de Gandhi	Afoxé/MPB	Gilberto Gil	Bahia	1977	
Festa Para Um Rei Negro	Samba enredo	Salgueiro samba school	Southeast	1971	
Bafo de onça	Samba	Zequinha de Abreu	Southeast	1931	
Cabelo de fogo	Frevo de rua	José Nunes/Arr. Duda	Pernambuco		Yes
Vassourinhas	Frevo de rua	Mathias da Rocha	Pernambuco	1949	Yes
Cidade Maravilhosa	Marchinha	André Filho	Southeast	1934	Yes
Bandeira Branca	Marcha-rancho	Max Nunes and Laércio Alves	Southeast	1970	Yes

\*Repertoire above played by Boitatá; if also played by Céu na Terra is marked with a Yes under “CT.”

<b>Only Céu na Terra</b>				
<b>Song</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Region ref</b>	<b>Year</b>
Eu Quero É Botar Meu Bloco Na Rua	MPB	Sérgio Sampaio	Southeast	1972
João Lopes	Maxixe	Anonymous	Southeast	
A Felicidade	Bossa Nova	Tom Jobim and Vincius de Moraes	Southeast	1958
Vai Passar	Samba/MPB	Chico Buarque and Francis Hime	Southeast	1984
Cocada	Frevo	Lourival Oliveira/Arr. Duda	Pernambuco	1967
Samba do Grande Amor	Samba/MPB	Chico Buarque	RJ	1983
Exaltação a Tiradentes	Samba-enredo	Império Serrano	RJ	1949
Benguelê	Maxixe	Pixinguinha	Southeast	1946
Turma do Funil	Marchinha	Mirabeau and Milton de Oliveira	Southeast	1955
Cabeleira do Zezé	Marchinha	João Roberto Kelly	Southeast	1963
Santa Morena	Choro	Jacob do Bandolim	Southeast	1954
Pirata Na Perna de Pau	Marchinha	João de Barro	Southeast	1946
Céu na Terra	Marchinha	original	Southeast	2008
Bonde Folia	Marchinha	original	Southeast	2008
Se Você Jurar	Samba de raiz	Ismael da Silva	Southeast	1931
Quem Me Deu Foi Lia	Ciranda	Baracho	Pernambuco	1972
Minha Jangada Vai Sair Pro Mar	Ciranda	Dorival Caymmi	Pernambuco	1965
Chuva, Suor e Cerveja	Frevo/MPB	Caetano Veloso	Pernambuco	1971
Verde Mar de Navegar	Maracatu	Capiba	Pernambuco	1967

Repertoire above played by only Céu na Terra.

That the drive by these *blocos* to “rescue” Carioca classicism and Northeastern regionalism as iconic representations of diversified cultural nationalism reflected more than just my own theories seemed apparent upon encountering the portraits shown below of Pixinguinha (left), icon of Carioca popular music, next to the voice of northeastern regionalism, Luiz Gonzaga (right). They were hung above a collection of objects in the streets of Rio, to be rescued and recycled.



Photo by author on November 2, 2017.

### **Carioca Classicism and the Nation**

The period between the 1920s and 1950s is often called a “golden age” (*época de ouro*) of Brazilian music as represented by Rio de Janeiro, at the time the cultural and political capital of the nation. Through the use of radio, the city mediated to the rest of Brazil a sonic construction of “authentic” Brazilian music genres. President Getúlio Vargas, who ruled from 1930-45, centralized power in Rio de Janeiro, and his dictatorial *Estado Novo* (“New State,” from 1937-45) further consolidated his control over social, political, and cultural spheres. Vargas promoted but also disciplined the *samba* schools, and *samba* emerged from its status as a critical and repressed musical genre to a nationalist and propagandistic one supported by the state. The music of Rio de Janeiro in particular, because of its status as cultural capital and its role in mediating its own culture during an era of political and social centralization, was articulated as the archetypal representation of Brazilian culture. What came from Rio could be marked as the culture of all Brazilians, whereas “regional” music was understood as referencing only the cultural experience of particular populations outside the capital.

Boitatá and Céu na Terra’s repertoire reveal an aesthetic debt to this heritage and cultural project of what came to be considered Brazilian music. The repertoire ranges from 1869-1981, but the bulk is from the 1920s to the 1960s. The aesthetic orientation of Carioca classicism and Brazilian regionalism is clearly expressed in Boitatá’s opening of its carnival parade with “O Trenzinho do Caipira” (the “little train of the Caipira” from 1930) by Heitor Villa-Lobos, as aforementioned, Rio de Janeiro’s and Brazil’s most famous classical music composer. The piece is part of Villa-Lobos’ *Bachianas Brasileiras*, an adaptation of Baroque musical ideas to Brazilian popular music. It references the Brazilian rural *caipira* character, marked by straw hats and other characteristics of rurality and associated with the June festivals (*festas juninas*) of the Brazilian Northeast, “a rustic man of mixed racial heritage whose homespun wisdom and virtues

symbolized the ‘authentic’ national character” (Weinstein 2015: 33). In the original piece, the orchestra is used to simulate the sounds of a train passing in the wilderness over a repeated lyrical melody. When played in the streets during Boitatá’s pre-carnival parade, the musicians play out-of-tune horn blasts to simulate the sound of a train horn.<sup>52</sup>

Villa-Lobos is associated with Brazil’s modernist movement of the 1920s, famously inaugurated with the *semana de arte moderna* held in São Paulo in 1922. The events brought together artists, writers, and musicians in defense of a Brazilian artistic modernist movement that would not be an imitation of styles from Europe. Villa-Lobos himself lived in Paris and met many of the modernist composers of the era, but he also traveled widely throughout the Northeast and North of Brazil, absorbing a diversity of Brazilian music styles and integrating a project of cultural rescue with internationalist cannibalism. A reference to Villa-Lobos, then, is not only a reference to “Carioca classicism,” or a set of references indelibly associated with the music of Rio de Janeiro. It is a reference to a form of cosmopolitan musical nationalism of an iconic urban artist in dialogue with regional music, in which the rural and the urban are engaged with one another in constituting the national (Béhague 1994).

Indeed, because of these entwinements between the capital and the region, any strict opposition between the Carioca and the regional is untenable. The famous Carioca *samba* itself is associated with black populations that migrated after slavery from Bahia, and the debate over whether *samba* is from Rio or Bahia continues to rage. Many “regional” forms of music were popularized in Rio de Janeiro where they underwent considerable changes in presentation and form as they were broadcast throughout the nation on the radio. Famous musical movements of southeast Brazil, such as *bossa nova* and *tropicália*, counted northeasterners among their principal voices. It remains the case, however, that some genres are understood to be of Rio de Janeiro, while others are associated with particular regional centers.

Early in Boitatá’s pre-carnival parade, the *bloco* launches into Pixinguinha’s technically challenging *maxixe* “Cheguei” (“I’ve arrived”), declaring the arrival of the *bloco* itself. The *maxixe* is Rio’s instrumental music that became known as the first national music of Brazil and reached Paris before jazz as a dance craze of the new world (Tinhorão 2013 [1974]). *Maxixe* is a fusion of the Afro-Brazilian *lundu* with European couple-dance genres, such as *polka*, *mazurka*, and the *schottische*. Afro-Brazilian musicians syncopated and adapted many of these popular 2/4 couple dances of the nineteenth century (Fryer 2000). Also known as the *tango brasileiro*, the *maxixe* is a musical element of the Atlantic world that Ned Sublette calls the “tango complex” (Sublette 2007 and 2008). Its rhythm is similar to other Afro-European fusions in the new world that emerged as popular genres, including the *habanera* in Cuba, the “Bamboula” in New Orleans, the *milonga* and *tango* in Argentina, and the Caribbean *tresillo*.

John Chasteen (1996 and 2004) argues that the origin of carnival dancing in Rio de Janeiro and the notion of a national music genre itself lie in the popularization of *maxixe*. *Maxixe* dancing was often associated with sexuality, blackness, and the street, and “during carnival... *maxixe*, with its alluring air of subversive wickedness, became a general diversion of middle-class males” (1996: 39). As *maxixe* moved its way up into theatrical reviews and middle-class dance halls at the end of the nineteenth century, “everyone knew that the phrase ‘national dance’ referred to *maxixe*” (40). The first song marketed as a carnival *samba*, “Pelo telefone” (1916), uses the *maxixe* rhythm rather than the more complex Estácio rhythms that would

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<sup>52</sup> “Trenzinho do caipira” played by Boitatá in carnival [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHm\\_vWyTKeA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHm_vWyTKeA)



become known nationally as *samba* in the 1930s.<sup>53</sup> *Maxixe* occupied the space of *samba* as the first popular genre understood as national, and there was slippage in terminology between the two genres as *samba* was consolidated as the national genre.

Musical groups known as *chorões*, constituted in many cases by urban barbers, began interpreting these new syncopated melodies in smaller and more intimate formations of guitar, flute, *cavaquinho*, and *pandeiro* (Livingston-Isehour and Garcia 2005). The genre of *choro* today is an “umbrella term” used to describe a collection of instrumental genres, including *maxixe*, *schottische*, *choro-sambado*, and *choro-canção*, played in this intimate instrumentation. At the turn of the twentieth century, however, *maxixe* and *choro* were often played by wind ensembles and brass bands with the various complex counterpoints played by different horns, as can be heard on the recordings of Pixinguinha (Tinhorão 2013 [1974]). Former musical director of Céu na Terra, Rafael Velloso, explains the importance of and relation between brass bands and *maxixe* in carnival: “We know that before the carnival appears as percussion, the carnival was brass bands, and they played *maxixe*. Pixinguinha had a *bloco* called Cabocla de Caxangá. They performed with artistic costumes in the street with horns.” (Florianopolis 5/26/15).

*Maxixe* and the umbrella genre *choro* are, therefore, perceived today as instrumental genres at the foundation of Carioca music, played in carnival before *samba* and *marchinha* became the primary carnival music references. The revival of interest in these genres, or the “choro revival” in Rio de Janeiro, is part of a much larger previously mentioned revival of interest in “classic” Carioca music. The Escola Portátil de Música (“portable music school”) was founded in 2002 to offer accessible instruction in *choro* and related genres of early instrumental Brazilian music. Providing instruction on horns as well as the instruments that became the standard instrumentation of *choro*, the school offers a space for Cariocas to learn or improve on their instruments at an affordable price. Students can take classes on the history of the genre, study associated instruments, and participate in the *bandão* (big band), a multi-level ensemble of up to two hundred musicians that includes students and professors playing together elaborate arrangements of these older genres.<sup>54</sup> Professors of the school have organized instrumental groups such as the carnival *bloco* Rancho Flor do Serreno and the *fanfarra* Luzeiro to play these older instrumental repertoires. The reference to older Carioca instrumental styles associated with early styles of wind ensembles, therefore, articulates a clear relationship with the Carioca past within the alternative brass movement.

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<sup>53</sup> The Estácio style is associated with the first *samba* school Estácio de Sá (originally Deixa Falar) and is characterized by a variety of percussion instruments and complex polyrhythms that continually shift on and off the beat (Sandroni 2001).

<sup>54</sup> Choro played by EPM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEfObc4WpfM>.



The *bandão* rehearsal of the Escola Portátil de Choro at Uni-Rio. Photo by author on September 14, 2014.

The genre, however, that is at the heart of brass *blocos* is the *marchinha*, or “little carnival march.” Before the rise of the *marchinha* at the beginning of the twentieth century, carnival music in Rio was indistinguishable from music played in the rest of the year (Castro 2004; Tinhorão 2013). Indeed, trombonist Gustavo Machado quips “The *marchinha* is the root of everything, isn’t it?” (12/19/14). Gustavo’s comment reflects the position of the *marchinha* as the first genre specifically associated with Rio’s carnival. Indeed, the vast majority of the repertoire of Céu na Terra and Boitató is a collection of well-known *marchinhas*. Their choices of which *marchinhas* to play (which has considerable overlap) has determined in large part the canon of *marchinhas* played today in street carnival.<sup>55</sup>

“Zé Pereira,” the first known music of Rio’s carnival, is an old French march that had new words written in 1869, celebrating one of the oldest identifiable characters in Rio’s carnival. *Zé Pereiras* were carnival groups in the nineteenth century named after a mythologized Portuguese immigrant of the same name, and they paraded around the city playing thunderous bass drums. The words of the march celebrate Zé Pereira as the personification of carnival, as Boitató and Céu na Terra’s renditions invite the *foliões* to sing the lyrics, “long live carnival” and “revel in its days of drunkenness.”

The carnival march genre can be divided into the fast-paced and often comical *marchinha* that became popular in the 1920s and the older *marcha-rancho*, a slow and more somber version of the same rhythm. Tinhorão associates the birth of the march with the repertoire of the *rancho*

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<sup>55</sup> The *marchinha* is musically characterized by instrumental fanfare introductions followed by a sung melody with satirical lyrics. A syncopated snare rhythm akin to a 3-2 clave contrasts with the steady *surdos* emphasizing the second beat and fourth beats of the measure (as in *samba*).

ensembles (see chapter one), though the *marcha-rancho* songs known today were mostly composed and popularized afterwards (2013 [1974]). The first carnival song known as a Brazilian carnival march is a *marcha-rancho*, “Ó Abre Alas” (“Open the Wings”), composed by Chiquinha Gonzaga in 1899, the first major female Brazilian composer. The song’s opening lyrics demand the opening of the *alas*, or thematic sections within a parade, as the singer or musical group asks for passage: “Open the *alas*, for I want to pass.”<sup>56</sup>

In Céu na Terra and Boitatá, “Ó Abre Alas” is usually the first march played of many. As the first song known as a carnival march, its selection as the first march played underlines its historical importance in the development of the genre. The song is itself an invitation to movement. In street music contexts outside of these particular *blocos*, if a musician begins the introduction of this song, the entire crowd begins to move forward. When one *bloco* is jammed in the street due to crowding and cannot move, the citation of this melody provides a sonic demand to provide passage.

The diminutive “-inha” suffix satirizes the military march genre and the “official culture” that the military emblemizes. The lyrical sources of *marchinhas* are diverse, lambasting contemporary politics and particular popular characters. Some compositions, such as “Pierrô Apaixonado,” reference the Italian *commedia dell’arte* that continues to have a hold on popular imagination in Rio’s carnival and in carnivals elsewhere. Others take an irreverent populist tone, such as “Me dá um dinheiro aí,” which consists mostly of the narrator demanding, “you there, give me some money.” Many are essentially drinking songs, and references to the Brazilian sugar cane liquor “cachaça” are frequent. In “Cachaça não é água não” (Cachaça isn’t water), the singer simply advises, “You think that cachaça is water, but cachaça is not water.”

In Céu na Terra and Boitatá, the order of *marchinhas* is somewhat set, and the musicians move through them as though they are suites of a larger piece. Céu na Terra producer Jean de Beyssac describes playing *marchinhas* as an activation of Brazilian collective consciousness and a kind of ritual:

The *marchinha* is a social and political chronicle, and it has a lewd and sexualized side as well. This kind of thing attracted many people, and these songs spread from the nineteen thirties, forties, fifties, until the sixties. It was a genre that a grandfather sang to a father, a father to a son, a son to a grandson. There is an element of unconsciousness that is very strong. It is a genre easy to sing in the street. People know them; even if they don’t know all the words, they know the refrains. It’s something that is very much in the consciousness of the Carioca, and of the Brazilian... Singing *marchinhas* is like the meeting of a band of *candomblé*. It’s a ritual. (1/30/15)

The performance of *marchinhas* is indeed a kind of ritual of Brazilian popular culture. During carnival, they are sung by masses of people on the bus or metro as they beat out the 3-2 clave on any available hard surface. The words are often shifted and used in protest. The most well-known *marchinhas* are, indeed, known and sung by everyone, and extreme repetition seems not to deter many Cariocas from engaging in this form of collective effervescence. *Marchinhas* were popularized during the 1920s to the 1960s through the radio when competitions (*concurso*s) were sponsored that led to a plethora of memorable and winning compositions as well as many forgotten ones. During carnival, brass *blocos* such as Bola Preta (founded in 1918) traditionally

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<sup>56</sup> “Ó Abre Alas” in Boitatá rehearsal: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QvFSKdCdI8>.

played these songs on the street. Ethnomusicologist Dil Fonesco explains that “the street reflected this entry of musical media, this schizophrenia of street and media” (10/20/14).

Despite its mass popularity, the *marchinha*'s importance has often been attributed to the aesthetic predilections of the middle class as opposed to the preference in carnival for *samba* and *samba-enredo* by poorer populations. DaMatta argues that

Whereas samba is more danced than sung, the march is more spoken and sung than danced. In the march the lyrics are more important than the music because one must say things—a typical affirmation of the egalitarian ideals of the middle class...The march is the samba of the middle class, as it were...Alongside the music of the poor that is freer and made for dancing, we have a musical formula that allows us to harmonize the world in a more discreet, ‘spoken’ way; its square, dry rhythms are more reminiscent of the large military corps. At Carnival both musical forms are present as open, positive elements, elaborating the same or similar themes and thus permitting the integration of everyone with everyone. (1991 [1979]: 110-11)

These contemporary middle-class Cariocas have re-claimed the *marchinha*, what DaMatta argues has always been a middle class genre, as the primary repertoire through which to reinsert themselves in carnival.

Despite the prominence of *marchinhas* in Rio's carnival, no genre is more associated with Rio de Janeiro or Brazil than the *samba*. Carioca *samba* emerged in the center of Rio de Janeiro and the *favelas* that were quickly appearing on the hills of Rio de Janeiro in the beginning of the twentieth century. *Sambistas* experienced frequent repression, and the genre during this period is often portrayed as cultural resistance. References to *malandragem* (rogue life), sexuality, the *favela*, and lack of interest in working initially made the *samba*, for middle-class Cariocas, disreputable and tantalizing, as the *maxixe* had been before. As *samba* was incorporated into middle-class society and was then used as an arm of nationalist propaganda by the Vargas regime, a number of changes were enforced. Lyrics were required to be more nationalistic and references to *malandragem* were prohibited.

In 1928, the first *samba* school was founded, and it transformed the genre into a more syncopated rhythmic scheme using an assortment of percussion instruments that would become known as the “Estácio style” and would become the predominant form of *samba*, displacing *maxixe* rhythms. The city sponsored the first official *samba* school parade in 1932, and in 1934 it prohibited wind instruments and set the standard instrumental formation of percussion, guitar, *cavaquinho*, and singers (McCann 2004a). Before the 1950s, schools sang through a few different *sambas* and sometimes practiced improvisation. The creation of an original *samba-enredo*, or story *samba* that would be sung by the entire school and visually expressed through costumes and floats, became increasingly normalized and predominant. The dramatization of the *samba-enredo* required exacting rehearsal and discipline and eventually became the primary artistic focus of the *samba* schools, remaining so to this day.

Former Céu na Terra director Rafael Velloso suggests that the reduction of European horns in *samba* was part of the nationalist campaign to frame Brazilian identity around Afro-Brazilian practices, emblemized by percussion (Florianopolis 5/26/15). He claims that even the saxophone played by Pixinguinha fell out of use in *choro* due to its associations with American jazz. While *samba* is now not much associated with brass today, the choice to play classic *samba* songs in a brass/percussion formation by Boitatá and Céu na Terra is not at all without precedent.

It resounds within the memory of what some forms of *samba* were possibly like in Rio de Janeiro before a particular form of the genre that excluded brass became normalized.

“Classic” *sambas* played by these *blocos* include Ismael Silva’s “Se Você Jurar” (1931), one of the first well-known *sambas* of the Estácio style that emerged in the 1930s with the first *samba* school Estácio de Sá. The song illustrates the attitude of the rogue character (*malandro*) who promises to his love that he will “regenerate himself” from the “orgy” of *malandragem*. Boitatá makes reference to “classic” *samba-enredos* with its version of “Exaltação a Tiradentes,” of the Império Serrano *samba* school in 1949. The song is reflective of the shift in *samba* lyrics from matters of *malandragem* to the nationalistic style of *samba-exaltação* (exaltation *samba*) which praised Brazil, its natural beauty, and its historical figures. Tiradentes was a leader of the failed revolutionary movement, the Inconfidência mineira, against Portuguese colonial rule at the end of the eighteenth century. The *samba* exalts his status as a virtuous soldier for national freedom who never betrayed his country.

Perhaps the most common *samba* in the brass *bloco* revival is “Tristeza” (1966), or “Sadness,” by Nilton de Souza. This song was the last “traditional” *samba* to win carnival before *samba-enredos* completely displaced other forms. It was released amidst historic flooding in the beginning of 1966 that killed two hundred and fifty people and left fifty thousand homeless in Rio de Janeiro. It was speculated that carnival might even be cancelled that year. The words invite the singer to let sadness depart and let happiness and rebirth exude through singing. While the theme of embracing transient happiness in a life of sadness is a common theme in Brazilian carnival music (Brunet 2012), the song was particularly poignant that year.

In Rio, aesthetic and terminological divisions between contemporary forms of *samba* reveal stark class divides. The terms *pagode* and *samba de raiz* (roots *samba*), for example, are associated with popular-class and middle-class Cariocas respectively though they are both played in *rodas de samba* (*samba* circles) with some important instrumental differences. “Roots *samba*” is posited in opposition to what many middle-class Cariocas view as the “inauthentic,” “low-quality,” and even “lower-class” predilections of *pagode*. Though some ethnomusicologists view *pagode* as an expression of Afro-Brazilian “resistance” (and also “roots”), the word is associated for many middle-class Cariocas with commercialism and a fall from the standards of the “golden age” (Galinsky 1996).

Likewise, unlike the *samba* schools, which produce new *sambas* every year, the range of choice of *sambas* of Boitatá and Céu na Terra is limited to “classic” *sambas* and *samba-enredos* from the 1930s to the 1970s. This choice range parallels the repertoire of the more middle-class *samba* circles of the center city/Lapa *samba* revival that perform a repertoire of “classic” *sambas*, the words of which are generally known and sung by most audience members. I frequently heard middle-class musicians denigrate present-day *samba-enredos* of the *samba* schools as generally “homogenous” and “too fast.”

The brass *blocos* often position themselves in contrast to the contemporary *samba* schools, but it is clear then that this relationship is not any kind of dismissal of the genre itself but rather of its purported commercialism. Unlike the *samba* schools, or even many *samba blocos*, composing an original *enredo* is not part of the project of Céu na Terra or Boitatá. Rather, the relationship to *samba* of these *blocos* represents an articulation of “quality” based on middle-class and whiter aesthetic values that prize “classic” *sambas* of historical resonance. New *samba-enredos* and *pagode*, as well as plenty of other forms of Carioca music, are not part of their hit parades.

## Brazilian Regionalism and the Nation

Brazil has historically been a decentralized nation given its enormous size. Regional identity is important in any part of the country, often in contrast to the hegemonic political and cultural weight of southeastern Rio and São Paulo. McCann quips, however, that “not all regions were created equal...and in the process of national consolidation some regions would inevitably appear more ‘Brazilian’ than others” (2004a: 101). Indeed, while the Amazonian Boitatá serpent creature in some ways represents Boitatá’s regionalist aesthetic, Amazonian music is not part of the *bloco*’s repertoire. It is the music of the northeast, and in particular from Pernambuco and Bahia, that figures as the primary reference for regional music.

In the Brazilian imagination, the northeast figures as a kind of a national cultural heartland and the birth place of “authentic” forms of popular music and culture in contrast to the industrialized Southeast. The region is the oldest colonized area of Brazil—Salvador da Bahia was the first capital of Brazil from 1549 and remained so until the capital was ceded to Rio de Janeiro in 1763, and Recife, Pernambuco was also an important city in colonial Brazil. During the Vargas period, the work of Pernambucan anthropologist Gilberto Freyre (1933) helped cement the northeast as a place of cultural and racial mixing, which gave validation to the mixed-race Brazilian as the “authentic” national subject. As the two other cities most associated with Brazilian carnival, Salvador and Recife have produced well-known genres of carnival music and are, therefore, primary carnival references for other parts of Brazil. Barbara Weinstein (2015) portrays the romanticization of the northeast as a form of “internal orientalism” projected by the southeast.<sup>57</sup>

McCann (2004a) uses the arrival in Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s of Luiz Gonzaga and Dorival Caymmi as representing the emergence of two kinds of regionalisms in the Brazilian imagination—the former from the harsh *sertão*, the Northeastern interior drylands, and the latter from the lush Bahian coast. For McCann, these regionalisms were not separatist but foundational:

They militated not for opposition to a larger Brazilian national character, but for a special place for the Baiano and the nordestino *within* that character. Their cultural projects only make sense in terms of the link they proposed to establish between region and nation: they rescued the vital folklore of the region for the edification of the metropolitan center and, by extension, of the nation. They communicated a part—a crucial part—to the whole. The implication was that only the chosen could live these cultures, but that all Brazilians could and inevitably did benefit from them, because they kept essential elements of the national soul. (2004a: 120)

The northeast and its music, therefore, provide an origin story for the Brazilian modern nation within the construction of *brasilidade* promoted by the Vargas regime, in some ways similar to the role played by the music and culture of the North American southeast in the construction of North American popular culture.

While such an opposition between the interior and the coast is clearly important, a bigger distinction in Rio’s street carnival today lies perhaps between preference for the cultural forms of

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<sup>57</sup> She argues that the regionalism supported by the Vargas government in Rio was contested strongly by alternative regionalisms. São Paulo’s 1932 revolt against the federal government in the 1930s, for example, rejected the lauding of the northeast and instead promoted the southeastern state’s whiteness as an emblem of progress and modernity.



Pernambuco over those of Bahia, reflected in the repertoire of these *blocos*. There is widespread belief in Rio that the carnival of Salvador is highly commercialized and that the city's *trio elétrico* tradition, which charges admission to street carnival events, amounts to the privatization of street carnival. Though Cariocas had romanticized Salvador and its carnival in the 1990s and earlier (Gaudin and Hallewell 2004; Dunn 2016), I found that today distaste for Salvador's carnival often mirrors rejections of Rio's own *sambódromo*.

For example, the genre of *axé* music, Salvador's commercialized carnival pop music originally based on the beat of *samba-reggae*, is frequently derided in Rio. The opinion of Orquestra Voadora's producer, Renata Dias, was quite common: "Axé, I don't like it. I find it superficial. The *marchinha* speaks of revelry and has a critical side, lyrics that make you think and that have analogies, and you think wow that's cool. Axé doesn't. Axé is 'ie ie ie la la la u u u.' Very weak, no content." (1/21/16). According to ethnomusicologist Dil Fonesco, Rio's *blocos* have a general prejudice against Bahian music: "It's a fight with Bahia, because there is a fight over the origin of *samba*. Pernambuco, all good" (10/20/14).

Such low valuations of Bahian music and its carnival contrast strongly with the conception of carnival in Recife, Pernambuco embraced by Céu na Terra's producer:

There [in Pernambuco] it's very rich with diverse rhythms. Here it's *samba, samba, samba, marchinha*. There you have *frevo, ciranda, maracatú, maracatú solto*. Much richer than here. Here carnival was appropriated to sell the image of the city as the greatest carnival. For me the greatest carnival is the carnival that has the most possible diversity. And that is the Pernambucan carnival. (1/30/15)

Recife's carnival is also celebrated for the perception that it is much more connected with the street than in Bahia and free for consumption. In the 1990s, moreover, when the principal popular music coming from Salvador was *axé*, it was the Pernambucan movement *mangue beat* that captured the imagination of "alternative" Cariocas. Explored further in the next chapter, *mangue beat* bands helped produce a revitalization of interest in Pernambucan folkloric genres after a steady decline by mixing these genres with popular global styles (Galinsky 2002; Sharp 2014). The importance of the *mangue beat* movement in helping spark interest in Brazilian folkloric and "classic" music among the youth was frequently noted in my interviews, and the *mangue beat* movement helped underline Pernambuco as a reference for the Carioca street carnival revival.

By examining the choices of regional references of these two *blocos*, I explore the cultural affiliations with other regions of Brazil articulated by Boitatá and Céu na Terra at the turn of the millennium. I argue that these references constitute a particular imagined national community that privileges certain styles, regions, and populations as more authentically Brazilian than others.

One of the first pieces played by Céu na Terra and Boitatá in their pre-carnival parade is Moacir Santos's "Coisa Número 4," based on a 12/8 *candomblé* rhythm. *Candomblé* is an Afro-Brazilian syncretic religion comparable to *santería* in Cuba and other Afro-diasporic religions. It is particularly associated with the Yorubá but represents a mix of other African religions and elements of Roman Catholicism. In all of these Afro-diasporic religious manifestations, worship is practiced through music. Practitioners worship to the sounds of percussion and singing with call-and-response vocals, as they seek to be induced into trance. There are many rhythms of *candomblé*—indeed, rhythms are associated with particular deities (*orixás*)—but 12/8 rhythms in

particular, when used in popular Brazilian music, act as archetypal references to *candomblé*. While there are many places of worship (*terreiros*) for *candomblé* in Rio de Janeiro, the genre acts as an important regional reference for the northeast because of the importance of Afro-Brazilian religious expression in both Bahia and Pernambuco, particularly in the city of Salvador. Salvador is predominantly Afro-Brazilian and is well known for Afro-Brazilian cultural expressions such as *candomblé* and *capoeira*, which were both historically condemned by the Catholic church and persecuted into the 1970s. In homage to Salvador, Boitatá plays an arrangement of “Canto de Iemanjá” for the *candomblé* *orixá* goddess of the sea, from Baden Powell’s famous album *Os Afro-Sambas* (1966). In the original song, the singer invites the listener to come with her to Salvador to hear Iemanjá sing and see the sea covered with flowers, a traditional mode of honoring the *orixá*.

The use of *candomblé* by these *blocos* is a reference to a regionalism that is at the heart of the Brazilian nation within the post-Vargas narrative that locates Afro-Brazilian culture as the authentic root of Brazilian culture. Majority white and middle-class *blocos* like Boitatá and Céu na Terra articulate particular affinities to Afro-Brazilian religious and cultural expression through opening their parade with *candomblé* rhythms. Christopher Dunn argues that *candomblé* has become especially potent for “alternative” Brazilians since it was explored by Brazilian middle-class hippies in the early 1970s: “*Candomblé* offered an alternative cosmology, liturgy, and ritual that attracted these visitors in search of new cultural and spiritual experiences” (2016: 110).

Boitatá and Céu na Terra also draw on *afoxé* and *maracatú*, from Salvador and Recife respectively, musical traditions based in *candomblé* practices that made their way into carnival in the late nineteenth century. *Afoxé* emerged in Salvador with the rise of black parading groups that celebrated African themes and cultural expressions in the 1890s after the abolition of slavery in 1888. The song “Filhos de Gandhi” (Sons of Gandhi), played by Boitatá and composed by *tropicália* artist Gilberto Gil, honors Filhos de Gandhi, the first well-known *afoxé* group, founded in 1949 and inspired by the non-violent campaigns of Mahatma Gandhi. The group sings in a mix of Portuguese and Yorubá and plays rhythms, especially the characteristic *ijexá* rhythm from *candomblé* percussion, on instruments derived from *candomblé* ritual, such as *agogôs* (double-bell instrument) and *atabaques* (hand drums). In the 1970s, *tropicália* artists Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, after returning from political exile in London, involved themselves in representing the musical culture of their native Bahia (Dunn 2001). Gil in particular composed many *afoxé*-based songs and marched with the Filhos de Gandhi in carnival.

The multitude of *afoxé* groups that would follow Filhos de Gandhi would help pave the way for *samba-reggae*, which would further politicize black identity in relation to Salvador’s carnival (Crooks 2009). *Samba-reggae* is, however, not a major element of Boitatá and Céu na Terra’s repertoire. As a more recent genre that celebrates Afro-Brazilian culture in dialogue with other Afro-diasporic practices of the “Black Atlantic” (Gilroy 1993), *samba-reggae* seems to fall short as an expression of “authentic” Brazilian culture within the nationalist frame of the brass *bloco* revival.

With the emergence of *mangue beat*, a variety of Pernambucan genres were popularized throughout Brazil and the world, especially *maracatú*. *Maracatú de baque virado* (“of the spun beat”) is a highly polyrhythmic percussion and vocal tradition from Recife. *Maracatú* is now extremely popular in Rio de Janeiro, with the group Rio Maracatu having led the charge in exposing Cariocas to the practice since 1997. Céu na Terra’s rendition of the *maracatú* song “Verde mar de navegar” simulates the call-and-response vocals of the original song between trumpets and trombones over dense

syncopated polyrhythms.

Connected to *candomblé* houses that in many cases established lineages of ancestry to particular African nations, the *candomblé* and *maracatú* groups were organized into “nations” (*nações*). Colonial practices of crowning certain members of the slave “nations” as “kings” (as in the “rei de Congo”) were accompanied by African-derived musical traditions, often presented on certain saint days. Descended from these processions, *maracatú* processions feature a symbolic African royal court dressed in the clothes of European royalty, purportedly so that the slave masters would believe that the black Brazilians were honoring them. Today there are several other *baterias* of *maracatú* in Rio, and many other groups, including *neofanfarrismo* groups, employ the beat and instruments in their arrangements. Some of the middle-class and generally white practitioners of *maracatú* in Rio portrayed the practice to me as “more roots” (“mais de raiz”) than the *samba* schools. *Maracatú* then has become a kind of “alternative” *bateria* that counters the predominance of *samba* in Rio.<sup>58</sup>

The primary extra-Carioca ingredients of the repertoires of Boitátá and Céu na Terra are from the coastal northeast and their carnival traditions. But *fórró*, the music of the dry interior lands of the northeast known as the *sertão* and not associated with carnival, also plays a role in these Carioca carnival parades. *Fórró* refers to a number of rhythms—such as *baião*, *xote*, and *xaxado*—and is traditionally played in the *pé de serra* (“foothill”) format with triangle, accordion, and *zabumba* bass drum. While in Rio, and throughout Brazil, *fórró* is played all year long, the genre is particularly associated with the *sertão*’s June parties (*festas juninas*) dedicated to three popular saints. Accordingly, the closed groups of Boitátá and Céu na Terra tend to play this repertoire more in the winter months in *arraiais*, or June feast parties. Some of this music does make it into the carnival *blocos*, and Boitátá’s version of “Eu só quero um xodó,” Dominginhos’ *xote*,<sup>59</sup> is a favorite in the repertoire.

*Fórró* has had a long presence in Rio de Janeiro since the arrival in the 1940s of the genre’s principal exponent Luiz Gonzaga, but interest in it has also exploded in the past twenty years along with the larger traditional music revival in Rio. The Feira de São Cristóval, a northeastern cultural arts market, parties throughout the night every weekend with various *fórró* bands and other cultural manifestations of Brazil’s northeast, attracting a mix of middle-class Cariocas and northeastern migrants. At the *feira*, middle-class dancers gravitate to *fórró universitário* tents (university *fórró*), a southeastern movement that has attempted to preserve the traditional instrumentation of Gonzaga. Jack Draper observes that *fórró universitário* represents a “middle-class nostalgia for popular authenticity” (2010: 3), but the more bombastic sounds of *fórró estilizado* (stylized *fórró*) are popular with northeastern migrants and can feature horns, synthesizer, and drum set (Sharp 2014). At the Feira de São Cristóval, both styles mix freely as Cariocas intermingle with northeastern immigrants. *Fórró estilizado* is mostly abhorred by middle-class Cariocas, and it is the sensibility of *fórró universitário* and its concern for authenticity that influences the repertoire choices of *fórró* played in the brass *blocos*.

Even when referencing music of the northeastern coast, it can be the “folkloric” status of certain genres that is more important than a particular connection to one of Brazil’s carnivals. The *ciranda* from the Island of Itamaracá in Pernambuco, for example, is not traditionally a rhythm of carnival, but it has found its way into the carnival of Pernambuco and now in Rio as well. The *ciranda* is a slow syncopated circle dance that brings dancers into the center with a shout of “Ei!” marked by a loud downbeat on the bass drum on beat one. Céu na Terra’s version of “Esta ciranda quem me deu foi Lia” (“It was Lia who gave me this *ciranda*”) makes reference

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<sup>58</sup> *Maracatú* in Rio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfGQOxe170>.

<sup>59</sup> “*Xote* is a Northeastern adaptation and pronunciation of the European dance *schottische*.”

to Lia de Itamaracá, the well-known *cirandeira* who helped popularize and transmit the style. In Céu na Terra's parades, *cirandas* are climactic moments usually coming at the end with collective dancing and shouting that leads into the much faster *frevo* at the end of the parade, a release from the somber circle dance. While *ciranda* and *frevo* are not explicitly related traditions, they are often paired together because of their similarly syncopated snare parts and their associations with Pernambuco.

In Rio's brass *blocos*, Recife is worshipped as a reference not only for its musical diversity as noted above but because of the high-quality performance level of *frevo*, a technically demanding, fast, and highly syncopated genre—the principal brass reference for all of Brazil and the “official” carnival music of Recife. While there are different formats of *frevo*, as with *samba* and other genres, *fanfarras* in Recife bring *foliões* to the street with loud renditions of the standards of *frevo de rua* (street *frevo*) during carnival. *Frevo* features fast call-and-response brass and woodwind lines over an incessant syncopated snare with bass hits on beats two and four. “Cabelo de fogo” (“Hair on fire”), a favorite in Rio's brass *blocos*, is known in Recife as a “*frevo de abafo*” (“muffler *frevo*”), played typically when one *frevo* group meets another and tries to drown it out. Many of the carnival groups in Recife were historically associated with working class guilds, and both Céu na Terra and Boitató usually conclude their parades with the well-known *frevo* “Vassourinhas” (the street sweepers). In this ode to the street sweepers, the song inverts the status of the worker as the one who benefits from the product of his labor and is glorified in carnival (see introduction).

Mixing Afro-descendent rhythms with the polka and other music played by military bands, *frevo* became increasingly accepted in the 1930s in Recife as Afro-Brazilian cultural forms became part of official national culture. Crook argues that *frevo* “served as a variation on the theme of Brazilianness [that *samba* came to emblemize], as a regional musical counterpoint to the centralizing discourses involving Brazil's national cultural essence” (2009: 107). While *frevo* could be compared to the status of the *samba* in Rio, my collaborators think of the *frevo* as a more elaborated and faster version of the *marchinha*. Indeed, the two genres are the principal carnival brass references of Recife and Rio respectively, and the rhythms are similar based in older march forms. When comparing the two, many Cariocas disparage the musical quality of the *marchinha* in favor of the complexity of *frevo*.

*Frevo*, like other “traditional” genres, suffered a decline from the 1970s to the 1990s but was accorded the status of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 2012. The “progressive” *frevo* tradition has been reignited by SpokFrevo Orquestra, with impressive renditions that integrate elements of big band jazz and virtuosic soloing. While SpokFrevo travels the world showing another side of Brazilian carnival music, *frevo de rua* has also experienced a momentous revival in Recife along with the larger street carnival revivals in both Recife and Rio de Janeiro. In Rio, the highly professional Bloco da Ansiedade has recreated the *frevo* tradition since 1997 and provides a reference for the style in Rio during pre-carnival weekend.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Bloco da ansiedade: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2Etea\\_ceM8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2Etea_ceM8)



The Bloco da Ansiedade in Rio de Janeiro with the characteristic rainbow parasols of Recife. Photo by author on January 31, 2016.

The preference for the “traditional” presentation of *frevo* and *forró* in the brass *bloco* revival, as opposed to what are perceived as low-brow and inauthentic contemporary manifestations like *forró estilizado*, mirrors the resistance to *pagode*, contemporary *samba-enredo*, and *axé*. Such preferences accord with an *MPB* aesthetic that prizes the “folkloric” and “authentic” over the “commercial,” an alternative to contemporary commercialized genres that are viewed as dominating expressions of Brazilian carnivals today. Finishing the parade with a reassertion of the traditions of Rio, both Céu na Terra and Boitató close with triumphant renditions celebrating Rio de Janeiro with the *marchinha* “Cidade Maravilhosa,” which sings of the diverse beauties and enchantments of the “Marvelous City.”

### **Expansions of the Brass *Bloco* Revival**

On a warm night in preparation for the annual parade at the end of 2015, brass and percussion musicians of the Cordão do Prata Preta warm up in the Praça da Harmonia of the central port-side Gamboa neighborhood, filled with lovely but dilapidated older houses. There aren’t many people—only those in the know have been invited in order to avoid the extreme crowding that will be unavoidable during carnival. We begin to walk up the hilly streets of the neighborhood, playing through many of the *marchinhas* and *sambas* well known to those who also play in Boitató and Céu na Terra. As we go from song to song, leading musicians let out a screaming long tone to cue everyone to the next song. At one point, a trombonist notices an older couple looking from a balcony above. He stops the *bloco* by playing the first phrase of Pixinguinha’s “Carinhoso” (“dear one”) up to the couple. One of Rio’s most famous love songs, “Carinhoso” (1917) is a *choro-canção* (a “choro song”). While the first phrases of well-known songs are invitations to Cariocas to engage in collective singing, this is particularly true of



“Carinhoso.” I witnessed this ritual of stopping the parade to play “Carinhoso” to an older person or couple looking down from a balcony many times in the brass *bloco* parades of Rio.<sup>61</sup>

The Cordão do Prata Preta, along with several other newer brass *blocos*, represents an expansion and multiplication of the brass *bloco* revival, in this case into the historic port neighborhood of Gamboa in central Rio, an area much poorer, blacker, and more working class than the neighborhoods home to most of the “alternative” south zone of the Boitátá and Céu na Terra scene. A short portrait of this *bloco* shows some of the class and race politics at play in the brass *bloco* revival and the sometimes tense process of expanding the project of cultural rescue to newer *blocos* that would follow in their footsteps.

Prata Preta, founded in 2004, is a brass and percussion *bloco* that plays many of the same *marchinhas* and *sambas* played by Céu na Terra and Boitátá, as well as a few original *marchinhas* and *enredos*. Like those earlier brass *blocos*, a central team of musicians leads the ensemble, but it is open for all who want to show up and play. The producers of Prata Preta explain the genesis of the *bloco* as an outgrowth of Boitátá. They drew inspiration, in particular, from the protests against the federal government’s health campaigns led by Horácio José da Silva, better known as “Prata Preta:”

The *bloco* started with two friends going to Cordão do Boitátá. It was the carnival of 2004. Arriving there at eight in the morning, Boitátá had already left, and they lost the locale and didn’t find the *bloco*. Prata Preta was born because of the carnival of Boitátá... Having not found the *bloco*, they said, hell, let’s found our own *bloco*...As it was one hundred years since the revolt against the vaccine, some historian friends suggested to call it Cordão do Prata Preta in homage to the capoeirista Horácio José da Silva.<sup>62</sup>

Prata Preta led the revolt in the Gamboa neighborhood against the imposition of obligatory pox vaccines for the working classes (Meade 1997). Whether or not this was sensible from a public health standpoint, the event is remembered as a proud moment of popular resistance. The Cordão do Prata Preta has developed a larger preoccupation with memorializing particular Brazilian leaders and movements of popular resistance, including the Pernambucan *cangaceiros*, populist cowboy-like figures that challenged government rule in the northeastern *sertão*. In 2016, for example, the *bloco*’s carnival theme memorialized one hundred and twenty years since Canudos, a racially diverse religious settlement in the northeast that the federal government perceived as a threat to its legitimacy and destroyed in 1897.

Prata Preta’s producers view their cultural mission as one of revitalization, not only of the repertoire and ensembles of street carnival, but of the neighborhood in which they live. Producer Bruno Muller explains that the *bloco* values “the preoccupation with the cultural revitalization of this region, [as] it was always very abandoned.” The area had been well known for street carnival until the 1970s and declined with the larger cultural, economic, and political challenges of the 1970s to the 1990s. Producer Fábio Sarol relates, “we try to maintain the root, the essence of carnival.” Associating the prevalence of *funk carioca* in the area with the violence and urban decadence of the 1990s, he recounts, “we suffered a lot. I grew up in the world of *funk* in the nineties, in the *favelas*, in dances with fights and gang conflicts. That was my culture. I came to know *samba* in Prata Preta. I came to know culture in Prata Preta. If it weren’t for Prata Preta, I would be screwed today.”

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<sup>61</sup> Prata Preta in carnival: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Bab4GVSgek>

<sup>62</sup> All quotes of Prata Preta producers Loyola, Muller, and Sarol from personal interview on 11/18/15.



Such comments reveal the perception that the revitalization of “authentic” and “traditional” street carnival culture is opposed to “low-brow” manifestations of Brazilian popular music and culture, especially the *funk carioca* genre much maligned by the middle class. In this sense, Prata Preta “brings culture here, to present culture for those who don’t have it or don’t have access [to it].” The repertoires of street carnival in this context are presented as an acculturating force in an environment that the producers see as disconnected from the cultural institutions and benefits of richer parts of the city.

In contrast to the alternative middle-class scene of Céu na Terra and Boitató, the musicians of the core of Prata Preta are more working class and predominantly black, and some hail even from military bands. However, Prata Preta has become a well-known stop on the circuit of middle-class brass *blocos* and is frequented by many of the “alternative” south zone carnival scene. One of the great challenges for the *bloco* has been to appeal to the neighborhood dwellers themselves when the brass *bloco* tradition has been so associated with the middle classes. The passing of the band to play “Carinhoso” for the older couple, then, represents an awareness of the cultural footprint the *bloco* leaves on the neighborhood, as the alternative traditionalism of the middle-class brass *bloco* revival expands throughout Rio de Janeiro.



The pre-carnival parade of the Cordão do Prata Preta. Photo by author on January 23, 2016.

## Conclusions

Boitató and Céu na Terra set out to “rescue” Brazilian popular music, expanding the characteristic carnival genres in Rio to a musically eclectic embrace of a variety of Brazilian traditions. They did not, however, set out to “rescue” just anything Brazilian. Embracing a

folkloric mission, the repertoire they canonized for brass musicians playing in street carnival reflects strategies, aesthetics, and discourses that can be understood within longer histories of leftist cultural nationalism. In particular, they drew on the rationale of *MPB*, a genre through which artists of the southeastern middle class have historically policed the “authenticity” and “quality” of Brazilian popular music. The repertoire of these *blocos* represents a lineage of defense of a particular conception of *brasilidade* constructed during the Vargas era that asserted Carioca urban genres and northeastern regional folkloric and urban genres as authentic national expressions. This construction of *brasilidade* proved an important resource for the alternative middle class’s re-entry into Rio’s carnival in the post-dictatorship years. Through it, these musicians rejected what they perceived to be a commodified, homogenous, and overly controlled carnival culture, as well as the predominance of North American cultural forms, like rock, amongst urban youth at the turn of the millennium.

This case study shows that “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) need not be old and can indeed be invented in the post-modern era. To be perceived as traditional, they need only to resonate with longer standing notions of authenticity and traditionality. Despite their strategies of diversifying cultural nationalism, these *blocos* did not challenge long-established conceptions of cultural authenticity in which particular genres and regions were understood to be more “authentically Brazilian” than others. By achieving this balance between diversification and the maintenance of tropes of authenticity, they have been able to carry the mantle of tradition and cultural rescue in the alternative brass movement.

The revivalism of the brass *blocos*, as well as the broader revivals of traditional culture in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Latin America during the Pink Tide more broadly, complicate any narrative of musical change that moves simply from the national to the global. It complicates the tendency to treat revivalism as a knee-jerk or conservative reaction to cultural change. Cultural nationalism and rescue are rather strategies that can be articulated as alternative or hegemonic in relation to what are perceived as the dominant cultural forms in a given period.

Mixing together these diverse genres, these *blocos* did not offer a form of cultural rescue that would presume to revive genres as any kind of static or pure representation of the past or the regional other. Céu na Terra producer Jean de Beyssac even decries the prevalence of the word “rescue:” “I don’t think we have to have a traditionalist stance. I think we need to reinvent in the sense of carrying tradition and culture. There is a term that we hate, that we are a group of rescue. Rescue no! We want to carry the old but give it a new dress, give it another context. We don’t want to simply rescue” (1/30/15). The traditionalist impulse of these *blocos*, therefore, was not conceived as a reactionary conservative imposition of past tradition. Rather, it was a self-consciously “selective tradition,” a creative interpretation of resources from the past and outside of Rio that could articulate aesthetic critiques of the state of Rio’s carnival and the stability of *samba* as the sole signifier of *brasilidade*.

The contributions of Boitatá and Céu na Terra in diversifying carnival music opened the door to the idea that Rio’s carnival could offer more than the repertoire and performance practices of the *samba* schools or the established *blocos*. This idea would be pushed much further with the development of *neofanfarrismo*, which built off of this impulse and posited that *anything* could be played in Rio’s carnival. The alternative innovations of Boitatá and Céu na Terra seemed to be reaching their limits as an alternative critique by the mid-2000s. To the next generation of brass musicians, carnival’s ideology of freedom would seem to be in contradiction with the boundaries of tradition that these *blocos* had broadened but left intact. Ideas around musical authority, hierarchy, and officialdom, all clearly established in Céu na Terra and Boitatá,

would be questioned as well. This alternative musical movement had become a dominant tradition, and if the alternative carnivalesque is always seeking to push against hegemony and innovate, a new carnival music ideology would be necessary. The “old iron” of the brass *blocos* may have reinvented tradition as an alternative critique, but the next phase would in turn resignify this “old iron” again and move beyond the central preoccupation with tradition itself.

### **Bury Me on Wednesday, Revive Me on Saturday**

The brass *bloco* Me Enterra na Quarta (Bury me on [Ash] Wednesday) provides a last hurrah of carnival for Rio’s alternative brass movement. Drawing on *marchinhas* and repertoire learned in Boitató and Céu na Terra, as well as the eclectic repertoire of *neofanfarrismo*, the *bloco* snakes through the hills of Santa Teresa without a clear direction. The reference to burial implies the death of carnival on Ash Wednesday—in many carnival cultures, a personified king of carnival ritualistically dies, much like Jesus on Easter, only to return for the following carnival in an annual triumph of virtue over vice (Erickson 2008). In Rio, however, the *bloco* Me Ressuscita no Sábado (“Revive me on Saturday”), with many of the same musicians and repertoire and also in Santa Teresa, “revives” carnival the following Saturday. These *blocos* are part of an extended season of post-carnival “hangover” events (*ressaca*) that can last up to a month after carnival.

The implied joke of these related *blocos* is that carnival only dies between Ash Wednesday and the following Saturday and is alive throughout the rest of the year. As *neofanfarrismo* emerged as an independent movement from carnival, the brass ensembles began creating massive parties in the streets outside of the pre-Lenten season, and the alternative carnivalesque became a mode of expression beyond carnival. Instead of dispensing with carnival, the festivity would come to be viewed by many brass musicians and *foliões* as an all-year event, aesthetic, and life style—a marked transition from the *blocos* of Céu na Terra and Boitató which only exist for carnival. Though brass musicians would expand the repertoires and uses of brass ensembles beyond the carnival season in the next stage of *neofanfarrismo*, the associations of brass ensembles with carnival and its aesthetics and ethics would not be shaken, as *neofanfarristas* would seek to “carnivalize” the entire year. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear the performative quip “It’s already carnival!” (“já é carnaval!”) at brass band events in April, soon after the last carnival has passed.

### 3. “To Play Anything:” Musical Eclecticism and the Cannibalist Brass Band

After the organized rehearsal of Orquestra Voadora’s *bloco* in the park around the Museum of Modern Art (*MAM*), the hierarchy of the band’s leadership dissolves. Around three hundred brass musicians launch into an extended jam that will last for hours. Musical sources vary widely from the Romanian band Fanfare Ciocarlia to Rebirth Brass Band from New Orleans, Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti, Mario Brothers video games, Rage Against the Machine, and songs from Brazil’s *tropicália* and *mangue beat* movements. I play songs from around the world that I have played with brass bands in the United States.

Fans gather around the *roda* (circle), drinking and socializing. The rehearsal itself is a free performance and a mass event, and sometimes up to two thousand people come for just the rehearsal, commonly referred to as “Woodstock carioca.” After a couple hours, a trumpet player begins the opening of the *marchinha* “Ó Abre Alas” (“Open the Wings”), and the musicians begin to move, beginning an unpermitted parade to nearby Lapa that will last for two hours. The musicians start to scatter in the crowd and separate bands develop, as Brazilian *marchinhas* mix with brass repertoires from around the world. As we walk towards the pavilion of the museum, musicians take advantage of the intense acoustics underneath the ceiling to play even louder with collective intensity. The act always reminds me of how in New Orleans, second line bands often similarly play with the acoustics under the I-10 freeway (Sakakeeny 2013). Indeed, this sonic practice resounds from Rio de Janeiro to New Orleans and back, as some participants and many foreign musicians have traveled between the cities and are aware of emergent translocalisms within the ever more connected international brass band community.



Left: *Foliões* emerge from under the museum awning where brass musicians take advantage of the intensely loud acoustics. February 15, 2015.

Right: Brass bands in New Orleans also take the volume up a notch when passing under the I-10 freeway. March 22, 2015. Photos by author.

Many of the repertoires the Voadora *bloco* plays are relatively obscure except to those listening to brass repertoires throughout the world. Trombonist Gustavo Machado describes *neofanfarrismo* as part of an “international subculture. These are people that have various affinities only separated by geography, such that you arrived and heard some of the same music

[as in the United States]” (12/19/14). Like the “affinity intercultural” (Slobin 1993) of the internationalization of *choro* (Stanyek 2011), Rio’s *roda pequena* of brass musicians, or the small open circle of musical exchange, has expanded into a “transregional and planetary *roda grande*” of global encounters, one that has expanded repertoires beyond the local and national frames (113). While Orquestra Voadora’s name (the Flying Orchestra) implies that because of its mobile format it could play anywhere, the band also proposed it could play any repertoire (“tocar qualquer coisa”), linking physical and aesthetic mobilities. How had this musical eclecticism become common in the streets of Rio de Janeiro? What do the particular genres referenced say about the contemporary aesthetic preoccupations, channels of communication, and cultural affiliations of Rio’s alternative middle class?

When I asked a saxophonist from the band Os Siderais, which has toured internationally to France, Scotland, and the United States, about the band’s international experience, he laughed and responded, “our international experience started in Rio” (Fromm 1/8/15). Orquestra Voadora’s trumpet player, reacting against my use of the word “globalization,” likewise situates these international affiliations from the position of Rio de Janeiro rather than the global north:

We have always felt very colonized by the United States in the last century. When this word globalization came into fashion, it came as something cool, but in fact it was a disguise of American domination—American globalization. I prefer “internationalism” in the sense being for all sides: everyone sharing culture or information... We are consuming the same music. This Balkan repertoire, everyone plays it. All the *fanfarras* play at least one Afrobeat song. (Paiva 10/28/14)

These comments reveal the priority of these musicians to engage with international styles from a horizontal position of equality and exchange, a broader concern of artists from the “global periphery” to articulate “world music” on their terms (Guilbault 1993; Feld 2015). In embracing a role for Brazilian artists to radically transform international influences, rather than being dominated by them, *neofanfarristas* have engaged in a dialogue with longer standing Brazilian cultural debates regarding the relationship of Brazil to the world, especially “cannibalism.”

By the mid-2000s, the brass *bloco* revival had entered a phase of “post-revival,” the point at which “the motivation behind the original revival impulse may in any case have lost much of its potency as the core revivalists have either achieved their objectives or moved on... Post-revival sows the seeds for new beginnings” (Bithell and Hill 2016: 28). The rise of *neofanfarrismo* shifted the movement’s focus from the rescue paradigm and its obsession with authenticity and the past, as musicians entered in conversation with an international brass community. Rather than simply imitating global trends, Rio’s bands became part of a rhizomatic map of a global brass movement, in which any point can connect to any other and no point is the origin of any other as in the arborescent model. In this sense, *neofanfarrismo* was a shift to a more cosmopolitan framework as musicians began to view “themselves as part of a world, a circle of belonging that transcends the limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of humanity” (Cheah 2008: 26). Writing of the emergent musical diversity in international brass bands, Charles Keil suggests that “jazz can begin all over again, but this time with a mix of Balkan, klezmer, Caribbean and NOLA foundations” (2013: xx).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> While this explicit orientation towards eclecticism and international genres is part of a wave of an internationally connected alternative brass band aesthetic, Josh Kun has argued that the history of brass band music has always been a global one:

This chapter is, therefore, an examination of a larger, growing, dispersed, “alternative,” and internationally-networked brass band movement, an “imagined community” that transcends the city and the nation state, as heard and manifested by brass musicians in Rio de Janeiro. I examine the emergent musical eclecticism of *neofanfarrismo* as an alternative critique of the cultural nationalism of the brass *blocos*. I explore the mediations that have allowed *neofanfarristas* to expand their repertoires. Though I argue that their internationalist aesthetics have radically transformed carnival from a rite of tradition and cultural nationalism, I also understand the repertoires, motivations, and cultural affinities expressed as forming a new invented and selective tradition that constructs different aesthetic boundaries in the consolidation of the *neofanfarrismo* movement.

### Mediations of Musical Eclecticism

Rio de Janeiro, in contrast to the larger and more “globalized” São Paulo, is often portrayed by Cariocas and other Brazilians as a provincial metropolis, a megacity infatuated with its own cultural manifestations. But Rio today, as percussionist Thaís Bezerra told me, is a “musical cauldron,” an ever more musically eclectic city with many different local and global musical styles mixing together, especially in the vibrant street carnival (Oakland, 5/10/16). Not only had Brazilian *neofanfarristas* started traveling internationally, the Olympic city of Rio de Janeiro had itself become a more international city in the 2000s. In the international brass band community, the city had become a major stop for brass bands from throughout the world, attracted to the city’s vibrant street music culture and its resurgent street carnival.

The political and economic attempt to raise Rio de Janeiro to the status of a “global city” (see chapter one) has entailed situating the metropolis not only as a cultural mediator of the nation, as the brass *bloco* revival may have positioned it, but also as a mediation point, or node, of “global culture.”<sup>64</sup> Saxophonist Thiago Queiroz, director of Boitatá and professional saxophonist in several *neofanfarrista* bands, explains that in the past decade “Rio became much more cosmopolitan. There were more foreigners here. We started to travel much more. Ten years ago, it was much more difficult. It became much more international on account of the phenomenon of capitalism.” Pedro Pamplona, a founder of Boitatá and Fanfarrada, suggests that the role of the internet in this diversification cannot be underestimated: “We started to hear whatever kind of music from anywhere in the world with much more ease. Balkan music became closer. The universe of music of Latin America became closer. And I heard some things, and damn, I thought this music would be great in carnival!” (Queiroz and Pamplona 12/16/14).

These musicians’ view that Rio was becoming more cosmopolitan resonates with Martin Stokes’ (2007) understanding of cosmopolitanism as reflecting a particular class position that seeks to transcend the nation state. Rio’s alternative middle classes are “Burgeoning (but

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Listen to enough brass band music—whether a slice of Mexican banda or the Romanian group Fanfare Ciocarlia pulling the trigger on a dizzying blast of high-velocity trumpets—and you start to hear the history of the world handed back to you in a horn section. Suddenly, Serbia and Romania could be the alternative birthplace of Brazilian frevo; brass flurries from Gypsy bands in Macedonia and Bulgaria could be lost cousins of the Jaipur Kawa Brass Band from India, the Gangbé Brass Band from Benin or any New Orleans jazz troupe. (2006)

<sup>64</sup> Frederick Moehn (2012) has described “the technologies of mixing in a Brazilian music scene” in the south zone, with Carioca *MPB* artists now engaging with a variety of Brazilian and global music styles. Moehn does not consider, however, the extent to which this mixing has infiltrated carnival and street music.



unstable and vulnerable) middle-classes who perceive themselves at a distance from the old nation-state modernizing projects, and in search for new means of cultural distinction” (8). Cosmopolitanism is in this sense an alternative in a city that has been traditionally viewed as the principal point of mediation of Brazilian culture. As we will see in the case of *neofanfarrismo*, however, as Thomas Turino (2000) has suggested, cosmopolitanism does not necessarily involve a rejection of the national frame but rather, as I argue, an expansion of it.

Such an open aesthetic attitude towards repertoire that has emerged in Rio de Janeiro I call “musical eclecticism,” a “cosmopolitan value” (Turino 2008) that reflects the hunger for diverse musical genres and the explicit belief that one can “play anything” with a brass ensemble. Their belief was not necessarily an obvious stance to take, and perhaps not an inevitable one. Many carnivals of the West, despite the “carnavalesque ethic” of spontaneity and experimentation, are rituals of traditionality, and we have seen that heritage can become more rather than less entrenched during heightened globalization. It is no understatement to claim, therefore, that the musical eclecticism of Voadora ushered in a new era within the history of Rio de Janeiro’s carnival. Voadora popularized the very idea that “any music” could be carnivalesque and has unleashed a huge variety of experimentation, an alternative to the “official” carnival of the *sambódromo*, the larger predominance of *samba* and *marchinha* in Rio, and the carnivals of Céu na Terra and Boitató from which *neofanfarrismo* was born.<sup>65</sup> The band designated new mediated “sites” of reference, both geographic and thematic, beyond the local and national frames of the earlier brass *bloco* revival.

These musicians call attention to the ascendance of new forms of mediation and circulation that have provided the conditions of possibility for a new musical eclecticism. In exploring the mediations that have made this possible, I draw on Antoine Hennoin’s definition of mediation as “the reciprocal, local, heterogeneous relations between art and public through precise devices, places, institutions, objects and human abilities, constructing identities, bodies and subjectivities” (2003: 1). A study of mediation in music emphasizes “moments, places, and opportunities” (7) in the construction of art.

Accordingly, in this chapter, I focus on the encounters, channels, networks, and media through which *neofanfarristas* have expanded their repertoires. These musicians actively work through the many mediations that inform their lives and musical products, rather than responding to them passively as many portraits of globalization imply (Taylor 2007). While most studies of mediation in the post-modern age focus on the rise of new media, technology, and the internet, I view the apparently traditional brass band itself as a mediation or a “contact zone” (Greenblatt 2010: 251) of diverse musical styles and as global and contemporary as any other instrumental formation. Like electronic media of sound reproduction, the brass band is “a network—a whole set of relations, practices, people, and technologies” (Sterne 2003: 225).

### ***Neofanfarrismo* Mediating the Lineage of Cannibalism**

Before we settled on the central focus of activism for the first HONK! festival in Rio, an early title idea for its Carioca version was the “Honk Rio! Festival of Cannibalist Fanfarras” (*Honk Rio! Festival de Fanfarras Antropofágicas*), an idea quickly discarded due to its obscurity for an international festival. The term cannibalism (*antropofagia*) is a reference to the important modernist and post-colonial argument of Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928).

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<sup>65</sup> Parallel movements to diversifying carnival musics beyond those codified by the nation state might be seen in the new carnival genres of Trinidad (Guilbault 2007).

For Andrade, active engagement and reformulation, or cannibalization, of both Brazilian and international forms and ideas is Brazil's greatest artistic strength.

This rather gruesome metaphor was based on post-colonial romanticization of indigenous practices of cannibalism that were historically feared by colonizers. Michael Taussig (1991) writes that in Colombia,

Cannibalism summed up all that was perceived as grotesquely different about the Indian...Otherness was not dealt with here by simple negation, a quick finishing off...On the contrary, everything hinged on a drawn-out, ritualized death in which every body part took its place embellished in a memory-theater of vengeance paid and repaid, honors upheld and denigrated, territories distinguished in a feast of difference. In eating the transgressor of those differences, the consumption of otherness was not so much an event as a process, from the void erupting at the moment of death to the reconstituting of oneself, the consumer, with still-warm otherness. In this manner colonization was itself effected. (1991: 105)

As a metaphor for artistic production that resignified this colonial fear, cannibalism was “a complete reversal of the consumption of colonized subjects...not any act of submission but rather a transculturation” (Rocha 2015: 45-46). Cannibalism puts Brazilian musicians in a position of agency regarding the transformation of international influences, rather than passivity as in the globalization paradigm. Instead of being “eaten” by systems of Western imperialism, cannibalism turns imperialism on its head and celebrates Brazil's capacity to “eat,” digest, and transform imperial others.

In this dissertation, I have often positioned cannibalism as “internationalist” both in relationship to the nationalist project of cultural rescue and because the trope of cannibalism is often about eating “others.” A cannibalist approach to music also, however, dispenses with the aesthetic boundaries of the rescue project and theoretically engages with any form of Brazilian popular music, including mass, “low-quality,” and “kitsch” genres rejected by the *MPB* rationale. The musical eclecticism of *neofanfarrismo* too is not only about engagements with Balkan and New Orleans music, but *funk carioca*, *axé*, *brega*, and other Brazilian genres written out of the brass *bloco* revival. Cannibalism is not only a transformation of the international but a radical resignification of the national.

In contrast to the brass *bloco* revival which articulated clear boundaries of permissible authentic Brazilian popular music, *neofanfarristas* celebrate through the metaphor of cannibalism the fusion of ostensibly any musical mixture. Steven Feld has argued that attitudes towards fusion and hybridity are often articulated through “anxious” and “celebratory” narratives:

The anxious narrative...fuels a kind of policing of the locations of musical authenticity and traditions...In response, celebratory narratives counter these anxieties by stressing the reappropriation of Western pop, emphasizing fusion forms as rejections of bounded, fixed, or essentialized identities...They place a positive emphasis on fluid identities, sometimes edging toward romantic equations of hybridity with overt resistance. (2000: 152)

Using Feld's terminology, I map the "anxious" narrative in Brazilian cultural discourse onto the lineage I traced in the last chapter from the frame of cultural nationalism forged in the 1920s through *MPB* and the brass *bloco* revival. I situate the lineage of cannibalism formulated in the 1920s through *tropicália*, *mangue beat*, and *neofanfarrismo* as a "celebratory" narrative of musical mixture (see graph on page 60). Like Feld, I view the anxious and celebratory narratives as in dialogue with one another, a dialogue that, as we have seen, has a long history in Brazil (Dunn and Perrone 2001).

While Orquestra Voadora plays many *tropicália* songs, such as the band's version of the song "Panis et Circensis" (1968) by Os Mutantes, *tropicália* is not only a musical reference. Conceptions behind *tropicália* are at the foundation of the aesthetic logic of *neofanfarrismo*. The *tropicalistas* critiqued *MPB*'s leftist nationalist dogma by embracing international trends of the day, proposing a "universal sound" (*som universal*) and engaging with international countercultures. They invoked cannibalism as a strategy to articulate an adventurous artistic counterculture that critiqued the nationalism of both the dictatorship and *MPB*. Advocating for what Caetano Veloso called an "aggressive nationalism" rather than *MPB*'s "defensive nationalism," *tropicalistas* did not view themselves as denying the heritage of Brazilian music but as reformulating Brazilian musicians' agency in transforming "any" potential influences. While *MPB* purists decried *tropicália* and portrayed it as an expression of cultural imperialism, *tropicália* artists view themselves as expressing a cosmopolitan and anti-colonialist relationship to the rest of the world. Neither friends of the "disciplined" left or right, *tropicália* artists were exiled by the dictatorship (Dunn 2001).

Orquestra Voadora's trombonist and cofounder Juba situates *neofanfarrismo* in the heritage of *tropicália* and makes the parallel with *MPB* and the brass *blocos* explicit:

*Tropicalismo* is my biggest influence... The *tropicalistas* would put rock n' roll guitar in Brazilian music, mix traditional folklore, *MPB* and other genres from various places in the world—mambo, jazz, psychedelic rock, several different genres in the same song. They created this movement when many people in *MPB* held marches against the electric guitar that was [supposedly] polluting Brazilian music... They used cannibalism because they created something with Brazilian music and global music. I think that musically this is also *neofanfarrismo*, a cannibalism of the format of horns and percussion—not that we were the beginning of it all, but because of what we knew before of *fanfarras* that played only one type of genre, only *frevo*, only *samba*. You can create all kinds of sounds [with a *fanfarra*]. (Pires 10/12/14)

The *mangue beat* movement of the 1990s from the northeastern city of Recife, Pernambuco is for *neofanfarristas* another important musical, cultural, and theoretical reference based in cannibalism. *Mangue beat* was a musical movement that challenged the marginalized status of Recife within the landscape of cultural production in Brazil and the economic stagnation of Recife. The movement drew on local traditions in Recife and the state of Pernambuco, such as *maracatú* and *coco*, as well as rock, hip-hop, and electronic music. Like *tropicália*, these artists embraced a cannibalist discourse to situate the fusion of local traditions with contemporary global popular music.

*Mangue beat* artists displaced the southeastern metropolises as the primary mediation nodes of Brazilian music, embracing an internationalization that circumvented the nation state itself and placing the regional and the global in a new dynamic relationship. Phillip Galinsky

argues that “mangue represents a postmodern shift in emphasis away from the nation-state and toward the region or city as the primary vessel of cultural identity in Brazil” (Galinsky 2002: xv). Likewise, in the case of *neofanfarrismo*, the relationship articulated was not only the relationship of Rio, as a national city, to Brazil, as was the case in the brass *bloco* revival, but the relation of Rio, as a global city, to the world.

Like *tropicália*, *mangue beat* has not only served as a conceptual foundation for *neofanfarrismo* but a musical one as well. For example, Orquestra Voadora’s version of “Praieira” (1994) by Chico Science e Nação Zumbi (CSNZ), which integrates *maracatú* instruments and rhythms in its brass band rendition of the song, never fails to incite *foliões* into chanting the song’s popular refrain: “Drink a beer before lunch. It’s great. You’ll be thinking better.” Miguel Maron, percussionist of the *neofanfarrista* band Os Siderais, explains the importance of CSNZ and *mangue beat* to *neofanfarrismo*:

CSNZ created a stylization of *maracatú*. They aren’t working with pure *maracatú*. They mixed it with funk and other genres, and the *fanfarras* took this. *Mangue beat* is there in *neofanfarrismo*. Os Siderais does this a lot. We adapt. Sometimes I do a rock groove and the other percussionists are doing a traditional *alfaia* groove and we try to make it work. Sometimes it doesn’t work, but when it does, we are creating something new. It’s kind of a modernist logic really...It creates a language. Os Siderais is a *fanfarra* that searches for its own language in this sense. (12/20/14)

The self-positionings of *neofanfarrismo* within the Brazilian cultural histories of *tropicália* and *mangue beat*, therefore, situate the movement within a cannibalist cultural lineage that has historically sought to destabilize notions of the national and authentic in its voracious search for diverse mixtures and references, an alternative to the lineage of *MPB*. The use of the metaphor and the mediations to which these musicians have access reflect the privileged class status of the movement’s practitioners, as well as the privileged positions of cannibalist musicians and theorists historically. In this sense, we might see musical eclecticism, the belief that one can and should play anything, as an expression of whiteness, cosmopolitanism, and the middle class itself (though *mangue beat*’s marginal class status complicates any strict divisions). I will engage with the moral considerations involved in cultural appropriation further in chapter six.

The rest of this chapter explores the mediations, processes, and references of *neofanfarrismo*’s cannibalizations in relation to the particular genres and musical traditions with which the movement engages. I pivot this chapter around Orquestra Voadora and its repertoire because of the central role the band has played in the birth of *neofanfarrismo* from the brass *bloco* revival. I use my exploration of the band as a prism to understand the tendencies of musical eclecticism in the larger *neofanfarrismo* movement as emergent alternatives to the earlier dominance of nationalist rescue.

### **The Birth of *Neofanfarrismo* with Orquestra Voadora and New Sites of Musical Mediation**

Orquestra Voadora has provoked, but also reflected, a growth of interest in diverse repertoires in Rio de Janeiro since the middle of the 2000s. Daniel Paiva, a Voadora trumpeter, recounts how alternative brass musicians began to experiment with new repertoires:

We came from Céu na Terra and Boitató... The majority of us were meeting in these *blocos*, but we were also listening to American brass bands and European *fanfarras*, Afrobeat too—Youngblood Brass Band, Fanfare Ciocarlia. Everyone loves the New Orleans bands— Rebirth, Dirty Dozen. Carnival links us with carnivals in other places. We have our carnival but we also hear the carnivals of New Orleans and of Colombia. We went looking for these kinds of sounds as much through carnival as through the [instrumental] formation of the “brass band” or *fanfarra*. We had spent four or five days playing the same songs in carnival. In the beginning, it’s cool but after playing the same songs...At least, I would get to the end and couldn’t stand anymore to play “Mamãe eu quero” [*marchinha*]. The *marchinha* is great, and we have a profound respect for the carnival of the *marchinha*, but after four days of playing the same songs we would like to play something else. (10/28/14)

Beyond the growing orientation towards musical eclecticism, musicians simply tired of playing the same carnival marches on repeat (which, I can attest, is indeed exhausting!). Daniel positions carnival traditions in other places and the brass band instrumental formation as “sites” of reference beyond the local or national frames of reference of the brass *bloco* revival. Carnival and carnivalesque musical traditions are, for Daniel, not only a link to Rio’s or Brazil’s past, but a multi-sited musical map from which to draw on other carnival traditions to enrich Rio’s carnival.



Orquestra Voadora performing in Circo Voador. Photo by author on September 6, 2014.

The tendency to explore other repertoires in the brass *blocos* of carnival had already begun before Orquestra Voadora with Songoro Cosongo, which played Hispanic Latin American

music and was founded in 2005, and the “anarchist” *bloco* Boi Tolo, founded in 2007, which has no set repertoire and unfolds in an improvised manner. With these experiences and the larger opening to international sounds and exchanges, trombonist Juba called a meeting of brass musicians after the carnival of 2008. They founded Orquestra Voadora in order to explore diverse repertoires and play throughout the year. The band started as an amateur project and had no expectation that in 2017 its members would be organizing four hundred musicians to play for 120,000 people. In 2012, the band won the city ministry of culture prize (*Prêmio de Cultura da Secretaria de Cultura do Estado do Rio de Janeiro*) in the category of popular music, and in 2016 the *Globo* network’s *Serpentina de Ouro* prize in the category of best *bloco*. Voadora’s eclecticism owes much to its travels and meetings with other international bands—the band has toured through Western Europe, Brazil, and Colombia and hosted bands from France, the United States, Chile, and Benin. As brass bands became popular in Rio, other professional level bands emerged engaging with international repertoires including Balkan and New Orleans music.

With the rise of these brass bands, Cariocas began to distinguish between the terms *fanfarra* and *bloco* as a distinct *fanfarra*/brass band movement arose. The increased visiting of French and American brass bands to Rio provided cultural examples of brass and drum formations that were different from the expansive *bloco* tradition. Often the term “fanfarra” is used in distinction to “bloco” to describe a smaller formation, but this term has some pejorative connotations because it is associated with civic and military band culture. Participants also use the English term “brass band” to refer to bands of the newer *neofanfarrismo* movement, in reference to the New Orleans style.<sup>66</sup> While *blocos*, generally associated just with carnival season, are organized by a central membership committee, they are often expandable and open musical ensembles, though the degree of openness varies. In many of the open brass *blocos*, musicians play common repertoire from memory and thus the arrangements are not necessarily ambitious (though some, like Boitató, are very ambitious). A brass band or *fanfarra*, on the other hand, plays all year long and generally has a closed membership structure, allowing for the development of richer arrangements of distinct repertoire with independent bass lines, percussion breaks, and horn harmonies. Nevertheless, the boundaries between *bloco* and *fanfarra* are fluid and somewhat arbitrary, as trumpeter Bruno de Nicola’s comment suggests: “I can’t say what the difference is in the division between *fanfarra* and *bloco*...I think it’s more the repertoire really in peoples’ heads because *marchinha* belongs to the history of Rio de Janeiro [and the *bloco*]. So in this sense you can see *neofanfarrismo* as an evolution of the *fanfarra* [that had before been] called ‘*bloco*’” (1/15/16).

Orquestra Voadora codified an instrumental formation that would become a standard for Carioca *fanfarras*, mixing trumpets, saxophones, trombones, and tubas with a particular formation of Brazilian percussion: *surdos* from *samba*, *alfaias* and *xekerés* from *maracatú*, and a rock-based snare/hi-hat/cowbell harness. In this percussion formation, musicians frequently noted the influence of *mangue beat*, which incorporated instruments from *maracatú* into a rock band format. The absence of most of the percussion instruments of the *samba* tradition, on the other hand, is notable in the city that is the birth place of *samba*—*tamborim*, *agogô*, *ganzá*, and *repique* are nowhere to be found in *neofanfarrismo*. Percussionist Miguel Maron explains,

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<sup>66</sup> The cosmopolitan orientation of using an English term in this context is not limited to Rio’s brass movement. Benin’s Gangbé Brass Band, which had a particularly strong influence from New Orleans’ Rebirth Brass Band, also uses the term “brass band” in a similar distinction to the more traditional Beninois bands called *fanfares* in French (Politz 2017).



We took the foreign model of the *fanfarra* but we adapted it with percussion of carnival. We don't use bass drum. We use the *alfaia* and *surdo* of carnival, and a huge amount [*porrada*] of percussion. That's carnival. But it's not just any kind of Brazilian percussion. Maybe an *agogô* is ok, but *tamborim* not really because there is a language here. We came to create these sections, of *alfaia*, *surdos*, snare, and *xekeré*. (12/20/14)



Left: Rehearsal of Voadora *bloco* with *xekerés* adapted from *maracatú*. Photo by author on January 10, 2016. Right: Schematic for arrangement of the 2015 carnival performance of Orquestra Voadora's *bloco* showing sections by instrument.

Following Voadora's examples, most of the *neofanfarrista* bands of Rio have begun creating their own *blocos* for carnival in which they teach music generally unassociated with carnival to anyone interested. These brass bands and *blocos* adopted the use of standards and free use of *fantasias* of the brass *bloco* revival (see chapter one). The wide popularity of Voadora's *bloco* led to demands to create an *oficina* in 2013, a band-led weekly class in the band's eclectic style for those interested to learn brass and percussion and participate in the *bloco*.<sup>67</sup> The *oficina* opened the door to people who had never thought of learning a brass instrument before but suddenly found themselves wanting to be amidst Voadora's *bloco*. In 2013, Orquestra Voadora released its first album *Ferro Velho*, which encapsulated its diverse approach of covering Fela Kuti, Roberto Carlos, Rage against the Machine, and *tropicália* songs, as well as original songs that fuse a variety of genres. The chart below shows a selection of the diverse range of the band's repertoire in contrast to the graph of Boitatá's and Céu na Terra's repertoire on pages 62-64, though some of the same songs from the earlier movement are included (in bold). The rest of this

<sup>67</sup> *Oficinas* are band-led music classes or workshops, often devoted to preparing students to play in carnival with the band that teaches a given *oficina*. The popularity of *oficinas* in Rio de Janeiro has exploded along with the revival of street carnival. Voadora's *oficina* is one of many potential options Cariocas have to participate in street carnival.

chapter explores the motivations behind the particular repertoires “cannibalized” in the *neofanfarrismo* movement.

<b>Selected OV Repertoire</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Composer</b>	<b>Year</b>
Thus Spake Zarathustra--funk version	Classical/Funk	Germany	Richard Strauss/Deodata	1974
My Lady Frustration	Afrobeat	Nigeria	Fela Kuti	1969
Expensive Shit	Afrobeat	Nigeria	Fela Kuti	1975
African Battle	Afropop	Cameroon	Manu Dibango	1974
Misirlou	Balkan	Balkans	Traditional	
Bubamara	Balkan	Balkans	Goran Bregovic	1998
Rumba Tziganeasca	Balkan	Romania	Fanfare Ciocarlia	1997
Montserrat Serrat	Balkan/American	NYC, USA	Hungry March Band	2005
No Mundo Deserto	Brazilian rock	Brazil	Erasmus Carlos/Roberto Carlos	1971
Todos Estão Surdos	Brazilian rock	Brazil	Roberto Carlos	1971
<b>Canto de Xangô</b>	Candomble/MPB	Brazil	Baden Powell	1966
<b>Coisas numero 4</b>	Candomblé/MPB	Brazil	Moacir Santos	1965
Sonido Amazonico	Chicha-cumbia	Peru	Los Mirlos	1975
<b>Santa Morena</b>	Choro	Rio de Janeiro	Jacob Bandolim	1954
<b>Cabelo de Fogo</b>	Frevo	Pernambuco	Maestro Nunes	
Jungle Boogie	Funk	USA	Kool and the Gang	1973
Superstition	Funk	USA	Stevie Wonder	1972
Guiné Bissau, Moçambique e Angola	Black Music	Brazil	Tim Maia	1976
<b>Frevo Mulher</b>	Galope/Forró	Brazil	Zé Ramalho	1972
Moliendo Café	Latin	Venezuela	Hugo Blanco	1958
Afro Blue	Latin Jazz	USA/Cuba	Mongo Santamaría	1959
<b>Praieira</b>	Mangue beat	Pernambuco	Chico Science e Nação Zumbi	1994
<b>Verde Mar de Navegar</b>	Maracatu	Pernambuco	Capiba	1967
Elefante	Original	Brazil	Orquestra Voadora	2013
Pra Viagem	Original	Brazil	Orquestra Voadora	2013
Tá na Hora	Original	Brazil	Orquestra Voadora	2013
Ferro Velho	Original	Brazil/USA	Tim Malik/Orquestra Voadra	2013

Beat It	Pop	USA	Michael Jackson	1982
Billie Jean	Pop	USA	Michael Jackson	1982
Pagode Russo	Quadrilha/forró	Pernambuco	Luís Gonzaga and João Silva	1984
Kaya	Reggae	Jamaica	Bob Marley	1978
Good Times Bad Times	Rock	England	Led Zeppelin	1969
Know Your Enemy	Rock	USA	Rage Against the Machine	1992
Purple Haze	Rock	USA	Jimi Hendrix	1967
<b>Maracangalha</b>	Samba	Brazil	Dorival Caymmi	1956
<b>O Morro Não Tem Vez</b>	Bossa Nova	Brazil	Tom Jobim	1962
Do Whatcha Wanna	Second Line	New Orleans	Rebirth Brass Band	1991
The Dawning of the Age of Aquarius	Soul	USA	The Fifth Dimension	1969
Sossego	Soul/Black Music	Brazil	Tim Maia	1978
Top Top	Tropicália	Brazil	Os Mutantes	1971
Panis et Circensis	Tropicália	Brazil	Os Mutantes	1968
Amor	Tropicália	Brazil	Secos e Molhados	1973
Back in Bahia	Tropicália	Brazil	Gilberto Gil	1972
Haricots verts	Unknown	France/Italy	Unknown	

Selection of repertoire played by Orquestra Voadora's band and *bloco* collected in 2015 and 2016.

### Mediating “Latin” Music in Rio de Janeiro

Caetano Veloso's 1968 song “Soy Loco Por Ti América” (“I'm crazy about you, America”), sung in Spanish and Portuguese, imagines a unified Latin America. But such an “audiotopic” vision stands in contrast to the strong cultural divisions that stand between Portuguese and Spanish-speaking Latin Americans. In Rio, the term *música latina* generally refers to Hispanic-American music and does not necessarily include *música brasileira*; rather these are two separate categories. With a relatively insular national music industry, Brazil is known for its cultural provincialism relative to the rest of Latin America.

The excited reception of Voadora's brass band version of “Sonido Amazônico” (1975), with its steady bass line played by nine tubas in the 2016 parade, reveals, however, the growing popularity of *cumbia* in Rio de Janeiro. The song is by Los Mirlos of the 1970s' Peruvian *chicha* movement, a psychedelic rock and countercultural interpretation of the Colombian genre.<sup>68</sup> While the genres of much of Hispanic Latin America have specific local origin stories, they have often circulated beyond national borders to other Hispanic American nations. Medellín,

<sup>68</sup> *Cumbia*, originally a folkloric genre from the Colombian Atlantic coast, is frequently celebrated for its fusion of indigenous, African, and Spanish music. The genre has spread throughout the Americas and adopted a diversity of manifestations throughout Latin America (L'Hoeste and Vila 2013).

Colombia, for example, is famously known for its love of Argentine *tango*, while Buenos Aires has its own variant of *cumbia* associated with its poorer peripheries (*cumbia villera*). Brazil, on the other hand, is often cut off from this larger inter-Latin American circulation. In the post-war era, the triumphant genre of *samba-canção* drew on *bolero* and *mambo* in ways that *bossa nova* musicians would later deride as kitsch (*cafona*), associating Hispanic-American music with “bad taste.” *Tropicalistas* would later play with this sensibility in their celebrations of kitsch, such as Veloso’s and Gil’s “Lindonéia” (1964) or their celebratory reappropriation of Carmen Miranda as a kitsch Pan-Latin American symbol.

The term “gringo” in Spanish America generally refers to the Yankee American or European imperial other and implies pan-Latin American solidarity. In Brazil, however, “gringo” refers to any non-Brazilian, including Hispanic Latin-Americans, much to the chagrin of Hispanic-Americans who have made Rio their home. Many of my collaborators argued that historically and culturally, Brazil’s cultural elite has oriented itself more towards Europe, especially France and later the United States, rather than towards its neighbors. Trumpet player Ana Martins claims,

The media disseminates music from the United States and Europe. We don’t hear much Latin American music on the radio. These *fanfarras* could research more, but I think it’s a question of a paradigm. They don’t even look. We don’t know it. We need to preoccupy ourselves with researching. Music from the United States and France is great but we have lots of great music near here [from the rest of South America] as well. It has more to do with our taste, our musical ancestry. (12/17/15)

While language, differing national colonization stories, and the sheer size of Brazil are certainly principal reasons for the cultural distance from Hispanic America, this disassociation also reveals a history of distinct cultural priorities. Despite the relatively little effort required for a Portuguese speaker to learn Spanish and its high level of utility, I found most middle-class Cariocas had learned English and secondarily French before Spanish. Musically this lack of cultural contact with the rest of Latin America is reflected by Brazilians’ relatively “insular” interest in Brazilian popular music, and secondarily music from the United States. According to my collaborators, before the 2000s, *cumbia*, *salsa*, and other Latin American genres had very little presence in Rio.<sup>69</sup> For Ana, the lack of cultural contact with the rest of Latin America reflects an imperialist strategy. She suggests that “In all of this there is the tendency to fracture Latin America. We have complete dependency. It’s complicated because even after the military dictatorship the media was not demilitarized. It’s not by accident that you only see news from the United States” (12/17/15). Indeed, during the military dictatorship, President Médici suggested that “Brazil and the United States were in the same boat when it came to being non-Spanish speakers in the Americas” (Harmer 2011: 149).

In opposition to this sense of fracture and cultural dependency on the United States and Europe, a current of the Brazilian left ties itself culturally to the desire to culturally integrate more with Hispanic Latin America, an interest shared by many *neofanfarristas*. Immigration of musicians from around Latin America in the 2000s provided more opportunities for international collaborations in Rio. Saxophonist Pedro Pamplona recounts that “The international events started to transform the city a long time ago. Speculators and investors came. Rio became a good

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<sup>69</sup> In Dunn and Perrone’s volume on Brazilian popular music and globalization (2001), no chapter investigates Brazil’s musical relationship to the rest of Latin America.

option to live from art. A lot of friends I made say that Rio is great because there is intense cultural exchange... There was a boom of Latinos” (Queiroz and Pamplona 12/16/14).

Italian trumpeter Bruno de Nicola recounts how the opening to non-Brazilian music began with Songoro Cosongo (2005-2015), the first major *bloco* to play non-Brazilian music in Rio’s street carnival.

For me it all started with Songoro Cosongo. It was a *bloco* of gringos. The influence came from abroad, Latin American inspiration from outside Brazil. I think that change never comes from the center. It comes always from the periphery, always from outside. In terms of the *fanfarras* of Rio, it came from outside, from people who came together and resolved that in carnival you could play other things. It’s not just *marchinha*. I swear that until 2006 you only heard *marchinha* in the street, at least from the *fanfarras*. Songoro Cosongo comes and says no, you can play *cumbia*, *merengue*. They arrived playing music from other places, other countries, which is super cool because really for a long time my foreign perception was that Carioca culture is very provincial. It feeds on itself. [Bruno sings] “Don’t let *samba* die!” And there is little opening to the outside. However, things are changing in this sense. People are more open. There was a big revolution that came along with all the drivers of progress, the ease of travel, and the internet. This came even here, a city in which things are very much from Rio. Songoro Cosongo was the match and Orquestra Voadora—boom—lit the fire. (1/15/16)

Interestingly, Bruno opposes the cannibalistic engagement with other genres to feeding on oneself, a strategy that for him does not foster innovation.

Songoro Cosongo was a band from Santa Teresa formed by musicians from Brazil (including Pedro Pamplona, one of the founders of Boitatá), Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, and Chile. The name of the band references the book of poetry by Cuban writer Nicolás Guillén (1931) which plays with Afro-Cuban musical expressions, as well as the *salsa* song by Héctor Lavoe of the same name (1978). The closed band integrated various different popular musical styles from Latin America, including Brazil, and composed new songs. It also held a *bloco* during carnival which became an open space for horn players to engage with non-Brazilian music.<sup>70</sup> The band’s saxophonist Pedro Pamplona recounts:

The Voadora crowd speaks of Songoro Cosongo as an inspiration. In street carnival, we could play a different repertoire from the traditional one—because Boitatá and Céu na Terra are traditional. But in Songoro Cosongo there was original music, music from carnivals of Latin American, things that weren’t played here, *mambo*, *merengue*. In Songoro Cosongo we played our own [original] music, which was Latin, but ours, and this meeting of Latin American musicians was great. We wanted to share our experiences. We created a salad with references from Venezuela, Chile, and Argentina. We researched many things. I had never heard instrumental *candombe*.<sup>71</sup> Here Latin rhythms are familiar but exotic... But we are all united by the street, united by the traditions of music in the street. (Queiroz and Pamplona 12/16/14)

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<sup>70</sup> The Songoro Cosongo *bloco*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6i-30Nurdk>.

<sup>71</sup> *Candombe* is a black percussion tradition associated with carnival from Montevideo, Uruguay.

The statement that their original music was “Latin, *but* ours,” reveals at once the cultural separation between Brazil and the rest of Latin America and the explicit attempt to establish their fusions with Latin American music as part of an integrated musical identity. Songoro Cosongo called itself the first band of a new style of “psicotropical musik,” making reference to the psychedelic *tropicália* movement and the many “tropical” origins of the musicians and styles used. Their original song “Maracuyá,” for example, names multiple tropical fruits in Spanish and Portuguese over an extended *montuno* (an ostinato section in Cuban *son* and *salsa*). The band extended musical identity and relations beyond *brasilidade* or Carioca identity to other multi-local sites of influence, such as the street, fruit, Afro-diasporic rhythms, or carnivals beyond Brazil’s.

Songoro Cosongo grew into Pedro’s next project Fanfarrada (founded in 2009 soon after Voadora in 2008), a highly skilled *fanfarra* devoted to playing a diversity of genres, mostly from Latin America, including *mambo*, *cumbia*, *samba*, *tango*, *baião*, *candombe*, as well as Afrobeat, jazz, and Balkan music.<sup>72</sup> In 2013, deepening its exploration of Colombian music in particular, the band toured to Colombia to play in a leftist theater festival. Fanfarrada bills itself as “the courageous Orquestra of strange rhythms and savage musics of the post-vanguardist tradition.” Its repertoire includes

famous and unknown composers, creative and plagiarized arrangements, celestial and doubtful harmonies, hot and crossed rhythms, sound in movement without equal, the crest of the wave, an urban and rural intervention. It has its repertoire based in the futurist traditions of Latin America, the Balkans, Africa, Mississippi, Caruarú, and Tijuca. (Fanfarrada 2016)

In the carnival of 2015, I played with Songoro Cosongo and Fanfarrada when Pedro united the groups to play a joint repertoire in carnival that he called a “Bolivarian repertoire” (*seleção bolivariana*). In Hispanic America, *bolivarianismo* refers to a political ideology of anti-imperialism and cultural solidarity with the rest of Latin America. Simón Bolívar led many of the wars of independence from the Spanish throughout South America in the beginning of the nineteenth century. His anti-imperialism also articulated a strategy of unification of some South American territories into the large political federation of Gran Colombia. The political disintegration of this federation into separate countries is often blamed on foreign imperialism. Hugo Chavez called his coming into power in Venezuela in 2002 the “Bolivarian revolution,” and the term continues to inspire anti-imperialists in Latin America. Pedro explained, “It’s a joke because the local right wing is very worried about the leftist leaders, like Chavez... Brazilians are very ignorant of neighboring culture of South America. It’s already a political posture when we arrive playing *mambo* and *cumbia*. People find it exotic. The repertoire is already political without playing music of the left” (Queiroz and Pamplona 12/16/14).

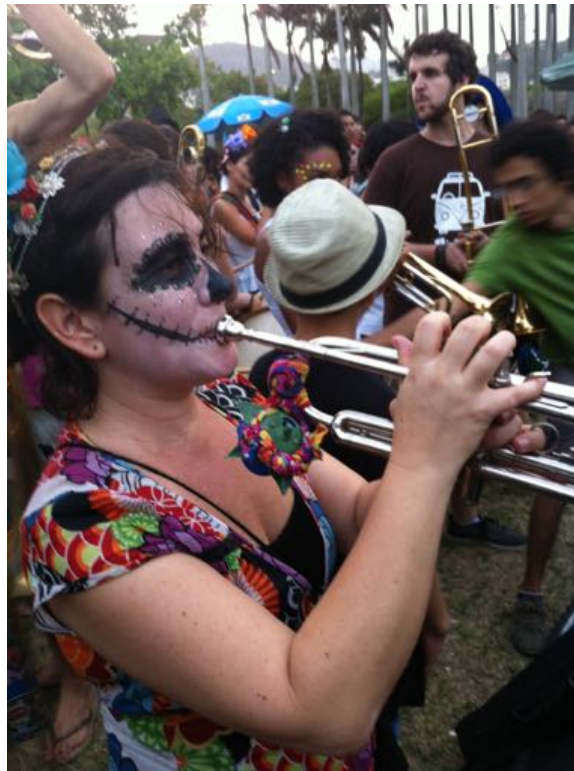
Today, Latin musical genres are references for Voadora and many other *neofanfarrista* bands. The *bloco* Besame Mucho, founded in 2012, carries on Songoro Cosongo’s tradition of playing Latin music in carnival and unites many immigrants from Hispanic America in Santa Teresa. “Moliendo Café,” a song from Venezuela, is played by brass bands across the world and in Voadora’s carnival *bloco*. In the carnival of 2014 and Honk Rio! of 2015, Rim Bam Bum, an

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<sup>72</sup> Fanfarrada playing an original composition based on a *funk carioca* rhythm: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1V3p1LGhKw>



excellent brass band from Santiago, Chile, was hosted by the *neofanfarrismo* community.<sup>73</sup> The Chilean band's repertoire includes *cumbia*, Andean music, Balkan music, *mambo*, and other Latin genres. With inspiration from Voadora, they brought the concept of a brass band-led participatory *bloco* back to Santiago, openly organizing all levels of musicians in the South American spring to play for festivals in January. Rather than using the Spanish term *comparsa* for a carnival procession, they call the ensemble a *bloque*, based on the Portuguese *bloco*. *Neofanfarrismo*'s interest in promoting Hispanic Latin American music is part of a push against provincialism and disintegration from the rest of Latin America. *Neofanfarrismo* articulates Rio, therefore, not only as a more multicultural city, not only as a global city, but also as a Latin American city.



Mexican Day of the Dead-themed rehearsal of Voadora's *bloco*. November 2, 2014. Photo by author.

### **Mediating New Orleans Second Line and Mardi Gras Traditions**

Like the influence of Hispanic Latin Americans, an influx of American and English musician residents in Rio has helped propel New Orleans brass music in Rio. When I began teaching in Orquestra Voadora's *oficina*, the band immediately asked me to teach a class on brass music of "my culture." When I asked what they were referring to, they said I could teach a New Orleans second line or a jazz funeral song. While it is problematic that I, as a white American, was seen as representing this black American cultural manifestation from a city I have never lived in, it is telling that in the *neofanfarrismo* community to be associated with the United States is to be associated with the brass band music of New Orleans. I suggested teaching

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<sup>73</sup> Rim Bam Bum at Honk Rio in 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfNRproJ28I>

Rebirth Brass Band's famous Mardi Gras hit "Do Whatcha Wanna," and soon I would hear brass bands playing the call and response riffs of the song all over Rio de Janeiro.

It is not uncommon to compare Rio de Janeiro and New Orleans. Both are port cities that brought in a tremendous number of slaves whose musical styles mixed and were disseminated to other major Atlantic port cities, such as Havana, Barranquilla, and Buenos Aires. Both Rio and New Orleans assume foundational narratives of national musical origins as the birth places of jazz and *samba* in their respective countries. These are both genres associated with marginalized ex-slave communities that moved to the center of respective national identity in the twentieth century. In his project Favela Brass, Tom Ashe focuses on teaching, in addition to the traditional repertoire of street carnival, "New Orleans traditional jazz, which was very similar in terms of vibe and social function to traditional *samba* music" (10/23/14). As New Orleans is the only major North American city known for its celebration of pre-Lenten carnival, it was not uncommon for Cariocas to ask me about Mardi Gras.<sup>74</sup>

It is New Orleans' second line tradition that has been a primary reference for *neofanfarrismo* as well as alternative brass band movements in the United States and Europe.<sup>75</sup> Second line brass bands in New Orleans are so called in reference to the participatory second line that forms behind the brass band musicians who constitute the "first line" and parade through the city (Burns 2006). The contribution of the tradition to the birth of jazz has frequently been noted, as black musicians adapted, "ragged," and syncopated European marches, dances, and hymns to their own rhythmic sensibilities in the parades. Second line parades continue to be organized throughout most of the year every Sunday in New Orleans by Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs.<sup>76</sup> The jazz funeral remains a distinctive element of New Orleans culture in which brass bands propel burial processions with "jazzed-up" dirges and celebratory hymns (Regis 2001).

Second lines for much of the twentieth century have been primarily associated with the older style of jazz known as "Dixieland," characterized by polyphony between melodic instruments, "walking bass," and a steady "four-on-the-floor" beat. The second line style was revolutionized with the birth of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band (1977), which integrated more recent black music styles such as funk and bebop. Rebirth Brass Band (1983) developed a sound based in call and response lines and riff-based polyrhythmic grooves that had more in common with Afro-Caribbean music and the *tresillo*<sup>77</sup> than the traditional swing beat of Dixieland. Dialoguing with funk, soul, American popular music, and hip-hop, as well as traditional New Orleans music, Rebirth's music has become a canon of contemporary second line music, in New Orleans, its school music programs, in the US, and abroad (Sakakeeny 2013).

In relation to the older style of brass band music, Rebirth presided over a musical transformation that one might compare to *neofanfarrismo*, from a traditionalist orientation to a

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<sup>74</sup> Roberto DaMatta (1979 [1991]), in his famous study of Rio de Janeiro's carnival, compares the Carioca manifestation with New Orleans Mardi Gras. He problematically concludes that Rio's carnival represents an "egalitarian and inclusive" ideal in relation to the "segregated and exclusive carnival in New Orleans." Annie Gibson (2015) suggests that Brazilian immigrants in New Orleans are "perhaps unique among immigrant groups there, [as] they have found moments in which they do not need a cultural translation dictionary" (146).

<sup>75</sup> Herschmann and Fernandes (2012) have explored the increasing presence of jazz and specifically New Orleans-themed events in Rio, such as the Bourbon Street Fest, in their article "Nova Orleans não é aqui?" ("Is New Orleans not Here?").

<sup>76</sup> These are mutual aid societies that have existed in different forms since slavery and have commonalities with slave societies in other countries in the Americas, such as *nações* in Brazil and *cabildos* in Cuba.

<sup>77</sup> The *tresillo* is a Spanish-Caribbean term referring the division of a 4/4 measure by 3+3+2 eighth-note accents. It can be heard in many US African-American traditions as well, such as the ring shout, which is often suggested to be a root of New Orleans jazz and second line (Sakakeeny 2011; 2013).

musically eclectic dialogue with other musical styles, especially American black genres. The variety of younger black second line bands that have followed in this aesthetic—the Soul Rebels, Hot 8, the Original Pinettes, the Stooges, To Be Continued, and many others—is staggering. While New Orleans is the principal reference for this style, other bands, such as Wisconsin’s all-white Youngblood Brass Band, have also become standard bearers in brass band scenes abroad. I found that Youngblood songs, such as “Brooklyn” and “New Blood” were sometimes more well-known in Rio de Janeiro than Rebirth’s songs. Given the precariousness of the lives of black second-line musicians, who form a part of New Orleans’ most oppressed classes, Youngblood’s role in popularizing this music is perhaps problematic.

Rebirth, Dirty Dozen, and other bands have visited Rio de Janeiro through large festivals that helped introduced the style. In the case of Orquestra Voadora, however, it was the band’s original tuba player, Tim Malik, who became a principal mediator of New Orleans music in Rio de Janeiro. Tim is an American musician who had lived in New Orleans and moved to Rio with his Brazilian wife. Voadora’s saxophonist André Ramos remarks, “the strongest international experience that we had was with Tim. He brought a lot to us in [terms of] the type of [musical] conception that developed in New Orleans” (1/9/15). Commenting on his own sense of parallels between the cities, Tim relates that “Sometimes I feel like New Orleans is Rio ‘light’...A lot of the same things that I used to say about New Orleans you can also say about Rio but to a much greater extent, whether it be the lawlessness, or the pervasiveness of music, or the party atmosphere, or how big carnival is, or race relations, or the corrupt police” (6/12/15).

As a tubist, Tim is credited with bringing a strong sense of the harmonic function of an improvisatory and independent low bass line to Rio’s street music scene. André explains in Rio’s traditional brass *blocos*, “we often play the bass without tuba, but with trombone or saxophone. And I think that it doesn’t work really...*Samba* schools don’t have any bass. The bass is all percussive. [Due to Tim’s influence] in Orquestra Voadora, we always were based in the tuba” (1/9/15). Describing how he came to meld Brazilian rhythmic conceptions with the American independent bass line, Tim explains that in New Orleans,

I became a rhythm fanatic, and when I went to Brazil I wanted to absorb rhythm as much as possible. Your level of basic rhythmic talent in Rio is really high. That was something that was built into Orquestra Voadora but I grooved on it by getting really into the groove with the percussion guys. If I have a little special place in the history of brass bands in Rio, it was that I got really into the groove on the tuba which wasn’t something that was really in Rio before. (6/12/15)

Tim also participated in the formation of Rio’s professional Dixieland jazz band, Monte Alegre Hot Jazz Band.<sup>78</sup> The band’s trumpet player, Leandro Joaquim, explains how Tim helped the band develop the instincts for American collective improvisation: “Tim was an essential figure in giving us this way of thinking, of getting out of the book, of the arrangement, to create our own freedom. That’s the true root of street jazz” (6/4/15). While New Orleans Dixieland songs like “The Saints Go Marching In” and “Just a Closer Walk with Thee” are now played on the streets of Rio, some more modern jazz songs also make it into *neofanfarrista* repertoire. These songs tend towards modal/funk jazz, especially Herbie Hancock standards like “Chameleon” and “Cantaloupe Island,” songs also played by New Orleans brass bands.

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<sup>78</sup> Monte Alegre Hot Jazz Band: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTYbKRJBDF4>.

English jazz musician, trumpeter, and Rio resident Tom Ashe has been another important influence in popularizing New Orleans music in Rio. His São Jorge Brass Band has devoted itself to playing contemporary second-line music in Rio, and the style features prominently in his Favela Brass project (see chapter six). In 2017, he founded the Riorleans *oficina* devoted to teaching New Orleans brass music to interested brass musicians. The presence of New Orleans brass band music has exploded in Rio as the *neofanfarrismo* movement has positioned the style at the forefront of its aesthetic. While it would nevertheless have likely been a reference through internet access, the influence of North American and British musicians with knowledge of the style, as well as French brass bands who had already incorporated it, shows the role of international immigration and individual musicians in diffusing it.



São Jorge Brass Band performing in carnival and dressed up in New Orleans traditional fashion. Photo by author on February 8, 2016.

### **Double Mediations: French Musical Eclecticism Translated to *Neofanfarrismo***

When I first arrived in Rio and was learning the repertoire of Orquestra Voadora, I thought that the first section of the band’s rendition of the *frevo* “Cabelo de fogo” was in fact the first section of the song. In fact, the first section is a French song, “Haricots verts,” that Voadora learned from the visit of the Globe Note, a French brass band that toured to Rio in 2008. The Brazilian band simply created a medley of the French song with the well-known *frevo*. It was one of many songs that was learned through a series of encounters with French brass bands. Voadora’s saxophonist, André Ramos, recounts that “The French brass bands played a large role in our history. We started to have contact with French bands early in the beginning [of the band.]”

Voadora already existed—we didn't copy—but we exchanged a lot with them. It's even hard to say what we exchanged. It's something more conceptual than technical" (1/9/15).

The love affair between Rio de Janeiro and Paris in particular has a long history, and it lives on strongly in the *neofanfarrismo* movement. In the year and a half that I lived in Rio de Janeiro, I saw perhaps more than ten brass bands from France. French trends and intellectual artistic currents have long been primary cultural models for “sophisticated” Cariocas, as well as many other Latin American cities, since the nineteenth century (Magaldi 2004). Much of Rio de Janeiro at the turn of the twentieth century was modelled on Haussmann's designs for Paris in the 1860s (Carvalho 2013). While Carioca composers such as Villa-Lobos and Jobim were known for their Francophilia, the French too have long been interested in Brazilian music, with early *maxixe* and *samba* having made a splash in Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century.

As Rio became known as a great city to show up and play in the streets, French brass bands (*fanfares*) started visiting the city as Voadora was just forming and have come frequently ever since. When the French band Ottokar arrived in Rio, one of its members described their reception as akin to entering a previously established channel of French musical “immigration,” part of a larger musical network between Rio de Janeiro and France:

It really surprised me, obviously among a certain milieu, but that this milieu in Rio already knew us when we arrived. Two days later, we were programmed in a show. It made me think about the migration system and migratory fluxes. It works through this system of networks. In the migratory fluxes, you have migratory routes. Everyone goes to a place because there is the network of experience. From that, links are created. The Globe Note met Orchestra Voadora. Then Orquestra Voadora went to France. Now we are here. (Prune 5/23/15)

Many French brass bands are tied to particular schools and universities often distinguished by profession—such as the bands of architects, engineers, or doctors—an association that originates with the Fanfare des Beaux-Arts following World War II (Flanet 2015). Distinct from American university marching bands, the formation is closer to a New Orleans second line band with trumpets, sax, tuba, marching bass drum, and snare, numbering from about eight to twenty members. French trombonist Clément Mombereau, who now lives in Rio, explains that historically,

The idea [of the student bands] was to mock the military *fanfares*, which were very square. Now it's very divided between these university institutions, but the origin is the School of Fine Arts [Beaux-Arts] and the *fanfare* movement is part of this original institution. In the beginning, they played traditional French songs, repertoire from the beginning of the century, popular repertoire, like Edith Piaf, old songs. Now the *fanfares* play almost nothing that is French. The style is always imported, from *salsa*, New Orleans, or electronic music in *fanfare* version. (11/11/14)

The French brass band community, therefore, had already established an eclectic approach. The aesthetic preferences of these bands, as well as particular songs, are a direct influence on *neofanfarrismo*.<sup>79</sup> A French journalist (Boudjadja 2017) has even referred to these musically

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<sup>79</sup> Much of the repertoire shares the range of eclecticism of the American HONK! movement, to be further explored in chapter seven on the HONK! Festivals.



eclectic French brass bands in French as “*néofanfaires*,” though I had never heard this word in French, nor was it ever credited as relating to the Portuguese term *neofanfarrismo*.

The French student brass bands, with more time flexibility given their student-based membership, have developed a tradition of taking long tours of several months and up to a year throughout the world. The Globe Note brass band, for example, was formed out of this student brass network and spent a year in 2008 traveling around the world to do workshops with children in poor areas of poor countries. Playing off of the name of the organization Doctors without Borders (Médecins sans frontières), they called the organization “Fanfares sans Frontières” and were the first French brass band to come to Rio remembered by *neofanfarristas*. They played in *favelas* and made contact with Orquestra Voadora during the Carioca band’s first carnival rehearsals, establishing a link that would be reinforced by many other French bands thereafter. In the mission statement for the voyage, celebrating its post-nationalist ethics, the band expressed the desire to “increase access to culture and move beyond borders that should no longer exist in the 21st century” (Globe Note 2008).

The level of French influence in translating a set of musical references to Rio’s brass bands is impressive. When French trombonist Clément arrived in Rio in 2011, he was struck by the musical similarities between *neofanfarrismo* and the brass bands in France, hearing songs he knew from France that had been passed on by Globe Note to Orquestra Voadora: “When I arrived here the first night I hallucinated a bit, because there was a Balkan brass band and Orquestra Voadora that played French hits and was almost a Beaux-Arts *fanfare*. Well that’s great, we already had returned to France! But then you see quickly that the *jeito brasileiro*<sup>80</sup> is very present” (11/11/14).<sup>81</sup>

French brass bands share a large collection of repertoire with each other due especially to the established networks of brass band festivals throughout France that turn the squares of small sleepy towns into crowded festive spaces. As part of my fieldwork, I went on tour throughout France with the Franco-Brazilian *fanfarra* Bagunço for six weeks in 2016. As in Rio, songs are shared through jam sessions that last long after programmed performances. When these French bands travel to Rio, they share a repertoire and set of musical references with each other, what the French call “saucissons” (“sausages,” or well-known songs), that have been and are continually being incorporated into Rio’s brass band scene. In turn, French bands have learned popular songs in Rio that I heard in France, such as Dorival Caymmi’s “Maracangalha” (1956), a favorite in Rio’s street carnival. As with the influx of Hispanic Latin Americans and North Americans to Rio de Janeiro since the 2000s, contact with French bands and musicians and even French immigration to Rio have diffused a diversity of aesthetic references, if not generally of French songs themselves.

Many of the songs and genres that became standards in *neofanfarrismo* were learned, therefore, not from members related to the culture of origin (broadly defined), but mediated through other channels: international encounters with bands that themselves played international repertoires, the internet, or global popular music. The French brass bands, for instance, have been a primary model for generating interest in using the brass formation to play a diverse set of genres, including Balkan music, New Orleans second line, American popular music, techno, and Afrobeat. Trumpet player Ana Martins explains that

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<sup>80</sup> “Jeito brasileiro” could be translated as the “Brazilian way,” “trick,” or “element.”

<sup>81</sup> Clément’s French brass band Dumb n’ Brass collaborating with *maracatú* percussionists in Recife <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZwcoioRt7Q>



French *fanfarras* play a lot of music by American bands. Balkan music [also] had a lot of success in France. France absorbs these two sides. There are a lot of French people coming to Rio. They love Rio. Certainly Brazil takes these influences from the United States that influence the entire world. But it takes the influences from France too, and I think that it takes Balkan influence, for example, through France, not directly. (12/17/15)

The French brass bands, therefore, act as a kind of “double mediation” of some of the genres considered in this chapter that are performed by Carioca brass bands.



A French band in Rio sets up its trombones in the colors of the French flag. December 12, 2014. Photo by author.

### **Balkan Music: Mediating “Oriental” Others**

The song “Misirlou” (“The Egyptian”) is most known by its surf-rock version popularized by Dick Dale (1962), later included in *Pulp Fiction* (1994), but the actual origin story of the song is unknown. It seems to have originated in Greece or Turkey, is claimed by both nationalities, and spread throughout the Balkans and the Middle East (*National Public Radio* 2006). Based on the fifth mode of the harmonic minor scale (known as *hijaz* in Middle Eastern music), it generally evokes an “oriental otherness” to Western ears. In Rio de Janeiro, brass musicians have adapted the song as their own, as they take a respite from their brass instruments and sing the melody with the well-known nonsense refrain commonly used in *samba* songs, “laia laia laia laia la.”

The repertoire associated with and popularized by the brass bands of the Balkans has a strong presence in Rio de Janeiro. Eastern European bands—including Fanfare Ciocarlia, Kocani Orkestar, Taraf de Haidouks, Boban Markovic, and Goran Bregovic—are well-known and

admired by *neofanfarristas*. Balkan brass music has been disseminated through the Western world through the films of Serbian director Emir Kusturica and the soundtracks of the white Yugoslavian composer and arranger Goran Bregovic. Much of the repertoire known in Rio de Janeiro, such as “Bubamara,” “Mesacina,” and “Kalashnikov,” was heard first through their films—such as *Black Cat*, *White Cat* (1998) and *Underground* (1995)—which became popular as Eastern Europe opened to the West after the end of the Cold War. These songs are also widely played by European and American brass bands, and much of this music is sampled by European and North American DJs and electronic musicians, such as Shantel and Balkan Beat Box.

Unlike the cases of Latin American and New Orleans music, Carioca musicians have had little contact with Balkan musicians or populations. Rather, the connection has occurred through the mediated presence of Balkan music as an element of orientalist and countercultural cosmopolitanism in the Western world, especially as translated to Rio by French bands. Ioana Szeman argues that the diffusion of Balkan music has helped establish “The region situated at the margins of Europe...as familiar and threatening, exotic, yet close” (2009: 103). Mirjana Lausevic (2006) explores how this “Balkan fascination” reaches back much further than the wave that began in the 1990s with the international folk dance movements in the United States and Europe of the 1960s. She argues that Balkan music has figured as an “alternative music culture” that essentialized the Balkans as a place of folk authenticity uncorrupted by capitalism and “civilization.”

The interest in cultural expressions associated with marginalized bodies, while problematic, is a common mode of expressing “alternative identity,” especially for alternative whiter middle-class listeners in relation to the bourgeois cultural worlds around them. Much of the Balkan music that circulates around the world is associated with the Romani populations (also known, sometimes derogatively, as “Gypsies”) within the Balkans. While Romani are well represented as professional musicians throughout the Balkans, often performing at weddings and other major social events, they are also perceived as threatening “oriental” others within their own societies. Romani are frequently depicted through the global diffusion of Balkan music as wild and free, but also as dangerous and criminal, similar to racist essentialisms experienced by Afro-diasporic people in Brazil and the United States. Trombonist Carol Schavarosk, who runs Rio’s all-female brass band Damas de Ferro, explains that much of her attraction to Balkan music was based on her impression of the Romani as a kind of exotic folk other: “When I thought about “folk music” I already thought of Romani music, music of people who lived in certain areas but at the same time are responsible for populating many different countries. I saw *Latcho Drom*<sup>82</sup> and I went crazy. I started to research [Romani] music...until I arrived at Balkan music” (11/5/14).

Rio’s professional Balkan brass band, Go East Orkestar (2010), has been one of the main conduits for popularizing Balkan brass music in the city. The band started as the resident live music act of a preexistent series of electronic Balkan-themed dance parties called Go East Festas beginning in 2007, where scenes of Kusturica films were projected while Cariocas danced to remixed Balkan songs. The English name “Go East” at once shows the preoccupation with oriental otherness as well as the cosmopolitan origin of this orientalism. The Brazilian band even travelled to the Guca Balkan brass festival competition in Serbia in 2012. Go East was the first band from Latin America at the festival and impressively won second place in the best foreign band competition. The band can be seen in videos of their performances on the main stage in

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<sup>82</sup> *Latcho Drom* (1993) is a film that depicts the movement of the Romani from India to Spain through the diverse musical genres associated with them.

Guca dressed in the national colors of yellow and green and playing mashups of the famous *samba* “Aquarela do Brasil” with Balkan standards.<sup>83</sup>



From Go East’s tour to the Serbian brass band festival. Photo by Militsa Trajkovic.

Balkan-themed electronic music parties have continued to gain space in Rio de Janeiro, held in streets or in clubs, where the city’s *neofanfarrista* bands are often featured. Even bands that do not play Balkan music often participate due to the association of brass with the Balkans and the alternative status of both Balkan music and *neofanfarrismo* within Rio’s cultural landscape. Rio’s brass bands play direct covers of Balkan songs and also use musical modes associated with the Balkans, especially permutations of harmonic minor, to suggest a kind of musical otherness, such as Os Siderais’ song, “Blues cigano” (“cigano” means “gypsy” in Portuguese). Some non-Balkan songs have, however, been learned through recorded versions by Balkan bands, like Fanfare Ciocarlia’s version of the Venezuelan song “Moliendo Café” and Goran Bregovic’s version of the Italian anti-fascist anthem “Bella Ciao.” The map of mediations and musical origins within the international brass band network has become increasingly complex.

The diffusion of Balkan music through the West and globally has resulted in a collection of Balkan standards well-known to international brass band musicians and passed on to Rio de Janeiro where such models and caricatures have taken on similar meanings and manifestations of exoticism as in Europe and the United States. These forms of exoticism are often consumed in the West as modes of identification with “wild” others and as articulations of countercultural identity. Szeman argues that this diffusion ultimately results in harmful essentialization of both Romani and the Balkans as permanent others. She suggests that these musical manifestations “will continue to perpetuate the romantic Gypsy stereotypes, ultimately failing to bring either the Roma or the Balkans—in their diversity and complexity—closer” (2009: 114). Playing Balkan

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<sup>83</sup> Go East performing at Guca: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmOH7DC8jf8>

music in Rio de Janeiro should perhaps raise problematic questions for *neofanfarristas* and their responsibilities in mediating the music of excluded others. Regarding the perpetuation of Romani stereotypes, however, I have witnessed little reflection on this topic.

### **Mediations of Global Popular Culture in Rio de Janeiro**

To the ire of the *MPB* left-wing, Caetano Veloso sang in “Alegria, Alegria” (1967) of walking in a Rio de Janeiro saturated with television and Coca Cola. São Paulo may be more known as a global city where Brazilian youth have long been more infatuated with rock than *samba*. However, Cariocas have also long been surrounded with global popular influences that have been channeled into the aesthetics of *neofanfarrismo*.

The brass *bloco* revival articulated a preoccupation with “popular culture,” but this formulation had been primarily based around a conception of the popular as folkloric, a manifestation of the “people” (*o povo*). *Neofanfarristas*, on the other hand, like *tropicalistas*, also celebrate the term “popular” in the sense of mass culture. While Orquestra Voadora’s repertoire has included second line music, it was perhaps the New Orleans practice of playing mediatized popular songs in the brass band instrumental formation that was New Orleans’ larger influence on *neofanfarrismo*. Songs like the Soul Rebels’ version of the Eurythmics’ “Sweet Dreams” (1983), played by Rio’s all-women brass band Damas de Ferro, have become brass band standards in the US, Europe, and Brazil. Orquestra Voadora and other *neofanfarrista* bands have adapted a variety of American, Brazilian, and European pop songs to brass bands and mixed them with Brazilian rhythms such as *maracatú*.

*Neofanfarristas* reach into Brazilian youth culture’s long history of infatuation with American rock (Hernandez, L’Hoeste, and Zolov 2004), though interest in rock in Brazil has been primarily limited to the whiter middle class. Brass versions of songs like “Know your Enemy” (1991) by Rage Against the Machine, “Blitzkrieg Pop” (1976) by the Ramones, “Purple Haze” (1970) by Jimi Hendrix, and Nirvana’s “Smells like Teen Spirit” (1991) reveal an identification with some of the most iconic American and British rock bands of the 1960s to the 1990s. Brass musicians have generally drawn on the “heavier” and more politically “resistant” side of rock history, such as psychedelic rock, punk, grunge, and heavy metal. Os Siderais, formed out of Voadora’s *bloco* and one of the main *neofanfarrista* bands that participated heavily in the 2013 protests, developed a repertoire that would be “heavier” and more intense than Voadora’s own engagements with American rock. With these repertoire choices, Os Siderais aimed to cement the band’s status as more “underground” and politically critical than Voadora. The name of “Metais Pesados” (literally “Heavy Metals”), a band formed in the Voadora *oficina* that plays rock covers, is a word play on the “heaviness” of their brass instruments as well as the genre they adapt.

*Neofanfarrismo*’s engagements with global popular music is not limited, however, to “musics of resistance” and can range towards the very “poppy,” such as brass band versions of Britney Spears’ “Toxic” (2003), Michael Jackson’s “Billie Jean” (1982), and Daft Punk’s “Get Lucky” (2013). In 2016, French brass musicians brought the French tradition of playing covers of techno songs to Rio de Janeiro in the first manifestation of Technobloco, initiating a new cult phenomenon to which Clément jokingly refers as *technofanfarrismo*. With *foliões* dressed up with LEDs, tubas playing hypnotic low quarter notes, and percussion playing an incessant



“boom-kat-boom-kat” beat over well-known techno songs, the *bloco* first paraded through the deserted night streets of the center of Rio on carnival Tuesday morning from 1 to 4 AM.<sup>84</sup>



Technobloco in carnival. Photo by author on February 9, 2016.

A rise of “thematic *blocos*” has expanded the dominant themes of the carnivalesque often by drawing on global pop culture. Since 2012, the brass band Cinebloco has adapted versions of well-known film music from mostly American films and mixed these songs with Brazilian percussion. Film songs are also played by other brass bands, such as Voadora’s funk version of “Thus Spake Zarathustra” (adapted from the version by Brazilian band Deodata). This music reaches into the nostalgic memory of Cariocas who have also been inundated by American media and films. The Super Mário Bloco (2012-16) has translated the affection of *neofanfarrista* adults for the music of video games from their youth. Musicians dress up as Marios, princesses, Luigis, and Yoshis and play New Orleans-style brass band versions of famous Mario video game songs. The *bloco*’s director Marco explains that the music of Mario

is an aesthetic. I was obsessed with video game music from the eighties, which was unique. They had few resources to make the music. It’s a bass and two voices—the *bloco*’s already ready! The songs are loops. The biggest loop is fifty seconds—very short. These are songs meant to cause sensations, happiness, sadness, danger, death. The little star in the game, this song lasts four or five seconds, because if you hear this song for

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<sup>84</sup> Technobloco in carnival: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8\\_JrzFLxzQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8_JrzFLxzQ) Out of the *bloco* would emerge the professional group Technobrass. Their song “Dark Brejo:” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHdJ7L9FLB4>

three minutes you'll go crazy. You'll get agitated, it will change your body, it will be bad for you. All the songs of the game are in the same key. You stay inside the universe. It's very well thought out. Then you see that the songs are all almost variations of the same theme. It's a work of art [*obra*] really. (12/11/15)

Marco has attempted to translate this aesthetic unity to a brass band parade. The sensations of the songs are also dramatized in the *bloco*—one of the high points of the parade occurs when trumpeter Leandro Joaquim runs through the crowd in a yellow star costume while the band plays the star theme, only to settle back down quickly into a different theme, imitating the pace, shifts, and experiences of playing Mario.<sup>85</sup>



Super Mario bloco. Photo by author on February 4, 2016.

Interest in well-known global pop music shows that *neofanfarrismo* has moved far beyond the preoccupation with folk authenticity and anxieties regarding the global “cultural industries” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1999 [1944]) of the brass *bloco* movement. While bands incorporate elements of global genres understood as “resistant,” the movement, like *tropicália*, is not bound by an aesthetics of resistance. *Neofanfarrismo* dialogues with some of the most pervasive global sounds to which Cariocas have had access, whether at raves and rock shows, or through the media of film and video games. In *neofanfarrismo*, the global popular references and experiences of individuals who grow up in a global city are voiced through the brass ensemble.

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<sup>85</sup> Super Mário Bloco in carnival: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzzQGqvQ5zQ&t=1s>.



## Mediations of Global Blackness

*Neofanfarristas* are drawn to a diversity of African and Afro-diasporic styles, using them flexibly and conveniently. They romanticize global blackness as a culture of resistance within the racism of global imperialism. With *samba* having lost its critical edge through government-sponsored nationalization since the 1930s, black music genres from other parts of the world are reinscribed within the trope of “blackness as resistance” in Brazil. This is especially true of genres like reggae and Afrobeat that are viewed as archetypally resistant.

Reggae, in particular, has long had a presence in Brazil, particularly in the Northeast. São Luís is known as the home of Brazilian reggae, while reggae in Salvador became a major reference for *blocos afro* and their creation of *samba-reggae* (see below). Osmundo Pinho argues that “As Afro-Brazilians assimilated black culture and politics on a global scale, they entered into dialogue with international critiques of capitalism and oppression while at the same time critiquing the structures of racial politics in local and national contexts” (2001: 196). Originating in Jamaica in the 1970s out of ska and rocksteady, reggae has frequently denounced racism and unjust histories of the transnational black experience.

The genre is equally well-known for musicians’ use of marijuana considered by Rastafari to be sacred (Veal 2007), and *neofanfarristas* too consume their share. The Marofas Grass Band, for example, was formed by a group of musicians associated with Orquestra Voadora who first called themselves Orquestra Vegetal (“Vegetable Orchestra”) and played for the annual protest march for the legalization of marijuana. In Brazil, the reference of using the English term “grass” (slang for marijuana) as a rhyme for brass would be only fully understood by the *neofanfarrismo* community. In the original lyrics of Bob Marley’s song “Kaya” (a Jamaican slang for marijuana), played by Orquestra Voadora’s *bloco*, Marley sings “Got to have kaya now... I feel so high, I even touch the sky” (1978). Voadora’s trumpet player, also Marofas’ tuba player, often dresses up for the carnival parade as a kind of green marijuana super hero playing on stilts to direct the trumpet section.

Afrobeat songs are popular references for alternative brass bands in Rio, France, and the United States. The style originated in Nigeria and Ghana as a fusion of Ghanaian Highlife, jazz, and other black American styles. Fela Kuti, Afrobeat’s musical pioneer, is viewed as a revolutionary figure for his anti-colonialist lyrics as well as for his attempted run for president of Nigeria and resulting exile (Veal 2000). Perhaps Voadora’s most enthusiastically received song is a version of Fela Kuti’s “Expensive Shit.”<sup>86</sup> Voadora also medleys Fela Kuti’s “My Lady Frustration” with “O Morro Não Tem Vez” (1962, “The favela has no luck”), mixing the black resistant politics of Afrobeat with a Brazilian *samba*, the lyrics of which claim that if the *favela* were given a chance, the entire city would sing.

In Rio, Afrobeat has had considerably less mediatized presence than reggae and has recently been popularized by the *neofanfarrismo* community as well as by the city’s Abayomy Afrobeat Orquestra. While not a brass band, Abayomy, founded in 2009 around the same time as Voadora and other brass bands exploring new repertoires, reflected the growing influence of the internet and accessibility of new music genres. Abayomy’s trumpet player, Leandro Joaquim, relates,

Carnival was a Brazilian thing, but then we started to have access to the internet. Before it was only a DJ who would know a disk of Afrobeat. People heard it only at a dance.

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<sup>86</sup> Orquestra Voadora *bloco* playing Fela Kuti’s “Expensive Shit.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8tz9acztS4>.

Now with the internet you can download the discography of Fela Kuti. You hear everything from the whole world. Abayomy came from this desire to do different styles of music. (6/4/15)

In Brazil, Africa is often romanticized as the fount of Brazilian music and as a place of origin, even for white Brazilians. Encounters, therefore, with African bands have been based on strengthening the supposed shared heritage of Brazilians and Sub-Saharan Africans. International encounters with African brass bands and musicians have brought particular songs and genres to Rio's brass movement. For example, the visit of Gangbé Brass Band from Benin in 2009 brought their version of Fela Kuti's "Colonial Mentality" to Boitató and Fanfarrada.<sup>87</sup> Sarah Politz (2017) shows how the Beninois brass band has also adopted a musically eclectic approach to the brass band, mixing traditional Beninois music with Afrobeat and New Orleans music.

In the carnival of 2016, interest in African popular musics was even reflected in Céu na Terra's *bloco*, which had never before played non-Brazilian music in carnival. The *bloco* crowd-funded to bring saxophonist and professor Timóteo Cucho from the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique to teach several songs of the Mozambican genre *marrabenta*.<sup>88</sup> Céu na Terra's crowdfunding explains the exchange as an encounter of solidarity between two countries colonized by the Portuguese:

The idea is to use the parades of Céu na Terra in the streets of Santa Teresa to create a moment of dialogue between these countries, playing music from Mozambique with a Brazilian accent. In this carnival, *marrabenta*...will function as a kind of conducting wire so that through this music we can strengthen the ties between the countries and learn other rhythms from the African country (Carnaval Céu Na Terra Brasil Moçambique 2016).

Interest in black diasporic popular genres is growing in Rio de Janeiro, emerging out of Brazil's preoccupation with its own Afro-Brazilian populations, the transnationalism of the black diasporic experience, and a celebratory politics of black resistance. While *neofanfarrismo* is a whiter movement, interest in global black genres, as with interest in Balkan music, represents an "alternative" cultural desire to affiliate with the cultural expressions of marginalized others, especially with genres of African and Afro-diasporic popular music viewed as rebellious.

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<sup>87</sup> Battle of the bands between Gangbé and Orquestra Voadora: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jkCd07Q\\_yo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jkCd07Q_yo).

<sup>88</sup> Mozambican exchange of Céu na Terra: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSFb0TN4hTQ>.



Flag of Mozambique displayed during carnival march of Cêu na Terra in which musicians played Mozambican genre *marrabenta*. Photo by author on January 30, 2016.

### Mediating “Aggressive Nationalism” and Non-*MPB* Brazilian Music

While the genres of Brazilian black music like *samba* were largely valorized during the Vargas regime as authentic expressions of the nation, many other Brazilian genres, especially those that dialogued with global black music or American black music, have been kept at the margins of the *MPB* rationale. *Samba-reggae*, for example, receives little play time in Boitató and Cêu na Terra; the genre’s embrace of reggae and other non-Brazilian Afro-diasporic genre explicitly places it outside of the national frame that the brass *bloco* revival sought to authenticate.

In the past decade, however, *neofanfarrismo*’s opening to international genres has also produced an opening to Brazilian genres excluded by the boundaries of cultural nationalism that prized some Brazilian genres as more “authentically” Brazilian than others. *Neofanfarrismo*’s engagements with other Brazilian popular music genres, especially *funk carioca*, 1950s rock, *samba-reggae*, *axé*, and what is known in Portuguese as *black music* (italicized when used in Portuguese) decenter the aesthetic boundaries around Brazilian popular music created by the brass *bloco* revival. Like *tropicália* and *mangue beat*, *neofanfarrismo* is not only a Brazilian cannibalization of what comes from outside Brazilian borders but an ostensible attempt at engaging with a much broader diversity of genres within its borders as well. Rather than adhering to what Caetano Veloso called *MPB*’s “defensive nationalism,” which seeks to rescue and protect certain genres of Brazilian nationalism, *neofanfarristas* embrace *tropicália*’s “aggressive nationalism.”

Hermano Vianna (2011) has argued that the music industry of Brazilian popular music, which owes much to the aesthetic boundaries created by the *MPB* aesthetic, has undergone a process of destabilization in the past three decades, due especially to new technologies and the decentralization of recording and distribution. According to Vianna, “peripheral” Brazilian popular musics, such as *technobrega*, *funk carioca*, and *lambada*, historically written out of the canon of the “official culture industry,” have been decentering the cultural primacy of *MPB* since the 1990s. Calling these genres the “parallel music of Brazil,” Vianna argues that their introduction to the Brazilian popular music landscape “is the product of social inclusion conquered by force... Brazil will have to get used to this forced, messy, and bottom-up “inclusion” (2011: 248).

As I have shown, the *MPB* movement arose as a direct aesthetic response to certain genres prevalent in the 1950s in Brazil that were viewed as overly American influenced and therefore “imperialist,” such as *bossa nova* and the *jovem guarda* (the “young guard”). *Jovem guarda* refers to the Brazilian rock movement of the 1960s, sometimes called *iê-iê-iê*, and is often viewed as a derivative copy of American 1950s rock. As Elvis rose to the position of the king of rock in the United States, Roberto Carlos occupied a similar position as the “rei” (king) of the *jovem guarda*. *Tropicália* has been portrayed as a reconciliation between, or cannibalization of, *MPB* and the *jovem guarda* (Dunn 2001). Voadora’s renditions of Carlos’ music, therefore, articulate a particular stance in relation to the history of Brazilian rock, long viewed as a product of American imperialism by *MPB* adherents. Carlos’ song “Todos estão surdos” (1971) refers to those deaf to peace and love and has been covered by the *mangue beat* band Nação Zumbi. Voadora’s brass band version of it, therefore, constructs a double lineage to *jovem guarda* and *mangue beat*.

If Roberto Carlos is portrayed as an Elvis, Tim Maia is regarded as the “Little Richard” of Brazilian music and is the primary association with the Portuguese genre term “black music” (McCann 2004b; Dunn 2016). *Black music* in Brazil refers not to the various Afro-diasporic traditions of Brazil, which are generally known as “músicas negras,” but rather to genres that dialogue with American black popular music genres, especially funk, soul, hip-hop, and black pop musicians. While *música negra* is foundational to the *MPB* narrative of Brazilian music and the leftist cultural nationalism of the brass *bloco* revival, it is *black music*, that is also a primary reference in *neofanfarrismo*. *Black music* is itself a kind of cannibalization of black American popular music. While Voadora’s repertoire includes many of Tim Maia’s songs, Black Clube is the principal exponent of *black music* in *neofanfarrismo*. The band’s repertoire includes American and Brazilian black genres and artists, such as Michael Jackson, Gloria Gaynor, Stevie Wonder, Coolio, and Youngblood brass band, as well as Brazilian black music musicians, like Tim Maia, Jorge Ben Jor, and contemporary Carioca rap artist BNegão.<sup>89</sup>

Brazilian dialogues with American black music often result in conflating black American musicians, such as Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder, within the Brazilian category of *black music*. Michael Jackson is so beloved in Brazil that pictures and effigies of him are frequent sightings around the country. His song “They Don’t Really Care about Us” (1995)—shot in an American prison, a Carioca *favela*, and Salvador’s Pelourinho—is especially popular. The song portrays the neglect towards black populations as a global phenomenon and depicts the black experience as transnational. Similarly, *black music* in Brazil manifests a dialogue with black experience in the United States. Though the black American genres that influenced *black music* were in some cases, like funk and soul, explicitly political, *black music* was dismissed as a

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<sup>89</sup> Black Clube official video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnn3Qokev5w>



culturally and politically alienated manifestation of North American imperialism much like *tropicália* (Dunn 2016).



São Paulo's Ôncalo, particularly devoted to the music of Tim Maia, uses official band t-shirts displaying the musician's face. Photo by author on August 23, 2015.<sup>90</sup>

The embrace of non-Brazilian black music took on a different expression in Salvador with the birth of *samba-reggae* in the 1970s. Emerging at a time when countercultural Afro-Brazilians “viewed cherished symbols of national culture with skepticism” (Dunn 2016: 149), *samba-reggae* affirmed black identity beyond the nation state and called attention through carnival to the suffering of black Brazilians, critiquing the notion that the “racial democracy” had transcended racism (Dunn 1992; Armstrong 2001). Olodum, the most famous group associated with the style, makes transnational affiliations with Afro-diasporic cultures. The *bloco* uses the colors of Jamaican Rastafarianism, composes *enredos* that celebrate African nations, and uses a name that refers to the supreme deity of *candomblé*, Olodumaré. Olodum mixed *samba* instruments and rhythms with reggae's slower groove and upbeat skanks, creating a new characteristic drum groove. These “blocos afro” found in the ethic and aesthetics of reggae an inspiration of black power that critiqued racial oppression based in the international experiences of black people beyond the nation state. *Axé* music, commercial carnival music from Salvador that grew out of the *samba-reggae* movement, has been largely absent from the repertoire of Cêna na Terra and Boitatá. Many *axé* songs of Daniela Mercury and Ivete Sangalo are, however, widely known in Brazil, and some brass *blocos*—such as Desce mas Não Sobe, Amigos da Onça,

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<sup>90</sup> Footage of Ôncalo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cgilKvfl1w>.

and Vem ‘Ca Minha Flor—now prominently feature *axé* and *samba-reggae* songs in their repertoire.

A peripheral black popular music genre that is still making its way into the boundaries of *neofanfarrismo* is *funk carioca*. *Black music*, like *MPB* and other umbrella generic terms, is a broad category up for interpretation, but while Brazilian rap might be included as within the boundaries of *black music*, Rio’s own *funk carioca* is not. *Funk carioca*, or *baile funk*, bears little relationship to American funk of the 1970s (Yúdice 2003). A generally incessant electronic beat, reminiscent of 3-2 clave and perhaps related to the Afro-Brazilian genre *maculelê*, forms the rhythmic basis over which musicians rap. Lyrics are frequently noted for their portrayals of violence, drugs, life in the *favela*, social inequality, and pornographic sexuality. Associated with the rise in drug traffic and urban violence in the 1990s, *funk* was constructed by the media as a form of “moral panic” (Filho and Herschmann 2011).

Otherwise open-minded middle-class Cariocas often demonstrate little patience for *funk carioca*, decrying its “lack” of musical and lyrical value, as well as its glorification of violence. I have even seen Itiberê Zwarg, the chief exponent of Hermeto Pascoal’s “música universal” (universal music),<sup>91</sup> introduce a concert celebrating the need to incorporate “all” kinds of music in experimental composition *except* for *funk*, which he then denigrated as proof of the cultural impoverishment of the contemporary *favela*. Indeed, percussionist Chico Oliveira remarks that “Hermeto Pascoal created a musical style that he self-declared as universal—that is, that captures rhythms from everywhere, jazz, *samba*, *forró*, *frevo*, Brazilian, and international. But this is more spoken than practiced... It’s a very prejudiced atmosphere where funk is not seen as music” (11/13/14).

Despite the genre’s status as a music of protest and resistance, or at least of the marginalized in Rio de Janeiro, I found that many *neofanfarristas* shared the middle-class view that *funk* was not a “legitimate” form of Brazilian music. *Funk carioca* is notably absent in the repertoire of Orquestra Voadora, and I have heard members disparage its musical value. One of the most influential musicians in the *neofanfarrismo* movement openly proclaims “I hate *funk carioca*. Can’t stand it.” Some groups within the *neofanfarrismo* movement have reclaimed *funk* as a music of protest, both as a protest against exclusion of Rio’s most marginalized music and as a repertoire of protest and social movements. BlocAto (discussed in chapter four), for example, has assembled a repertoire that mixes the protest songs of *MPB* with *funk* songs and beats. The co-founder of BlocAto, Tomás Ramos, laments *funk*’s absence in Rio’s carnival: “When the *neofanfarrismo* movement began, people started to stay in Rio and carnival transformed into a marvelous event full of new bands. Only the absence of funk was obvious because funk was the most Carioca music.” (11/13/14).

The marginal status of *funk* within *neofanfarrismo* shows some of the limits of the movement’s cannibalist discourse and aggressive nationalism. Common middle-class prejudices regarding musical quality resonate despite the movement’s stated universalism, revealing aesthetic limits and gaps between theory and practice. While many “parallel” Brazilian genres are entering the movement’s repertoire and decentering the canon of the earlier brass *blocos*, it is clear that *neofanfarristas* are not immune from attitudes towards certain genres like *funk*. Like *tropicália* and *mangue beat*, *neofanfarrismo* establishes a particular series of references and

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<sup>91</sup> Progressive jazz musician Hermeto Pascoal’s notion of universal music is a cannibalist theory and practice of mixing musical genres ostensibly without prejudice. A popular *oficina* in Rio taught by Itiberê teaches composition and performance in the tradition and is an influence on several *neofanfarristas*.



constructs a lineage to Brazilian musical movements that is distinct from the lineage of the brass *bloco* revival, but it is not entirely capacious.

### Mediations of Diverse Resources through Composition in Rio's Street Carnival

While composition has long been a part of Rio's carnival, it has mostly been limited to composing within a particular genre and often as part of a competition for the best song of that genre, such as the competitions of *marchinhas* and *samba-enredos*. Original music has, however, not been a prominent part of the alternative brass movement, as its origins were based in a movement of cultural "rescue" and "revival." There was little need within such a cultural program to compose original music, though even Céu na Terra and Boitatá do have some original *marchinhas*. While *neofanfarrismo* extended the diversity of what could be played in street carnival and throughout the year in the brass band formation, the movement has been somewhat limited to covers and arrangements of a variety of musical material. The participatory nature of *neofanfarrismo* reinforces the tendency to play well-known songs. Playing covers and traditional music is common to many brass bands outside Rio as well—even the most professional brass bands of New Orleans and the Balkans commonly play arrangements of popular and traditional songs.

Original music is, however, a growing part of *neofanfarrismo*, and many of the bands and *blocos* include in their repertoire original songs along with the various repertoires they play. Orquestra Voadora has composed several original songs and teaches them in its *oficina* and *bloco*, creating new genre-crossing carnival repertoire. The band's original song "Elefante," named after the elephant *fantasia* of saxophonist André Ramos who composed it, mixes many *neofanfarrista* influences, such as *afoxé* percussion, American bass grooves, New Orleans second line, and rock. Amigos da Onça (Friends of the Jaguar), an almost cultish brass *bloco*, has composed new street carnival standards with collectively known choreography, such as "Cobra" and "Hoje tu não vai jantar" ("Tonight you will not dine").<sup>92</sup>

The *neofanfarrista* band that has recently led the movement towards promoting a repertoire of original music is the Franco-Brazilian band Bagunço. Founded in 2013 by French trombonist Clément Mombereau, who first came to Brazil with the French band Octopus in 2011, Bagunço seeks to defy genre categories. The band creates sophisticated original compositions that draw on many of the musical influences of *neofanfarrismo*, including *forró*, *samba*, *maracatú*, American funk, Afrobeat, second line, rock, and progressive jazz. Clément, attempting to say the feminine Portuguese word "bagunça," meaning a mess or general disorder, mistakenly and frequently said the word in the masculine "bagunço," and the name stuck along with the notion that the band was itself "mispronouncing" Brazilian music.

Adding a keytar (an electronic instrument that crosses a guitar with a keyboard) and electric guitar to the formation, the band challenges the notion that a mobile *fanfarra* must be limited to acoustic instruments. Bagunço accesses sounds and textures unavailable to an ensemble limited to wind instruments and percussion. The band's saxophonist, Mathias Mafort, explains, "it's kind of a chameleon band. It takes different forms and different colors. Sometimes we are formed as a *fanfarra*, [others] as jazz or as *forró*. In our heads, everything is possible" (6/9/15). Many of the band's songs move seamlessly through several different genres—"Gordona," for example, shifts between waltz, *rumba*, *ciranda* and *frevó*. During the *ciranda* the

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<sup>92</sup> Amigos da Onça in carnival: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-B8vuKykMw>

band brings audience members in for the traditional circle dance before the frenetic release of the *frevo*.

Bagunço's carnival *bloco* was, as of 2016, the only brass *bloco* to significantly focus on teaching its own music. Like Voadora, the band holds open rehearsals for those who want to learn the music. Because of the band's French connections, many French musicians arrive for carnival to amplify the numbers. Leaving from the entry of the exclusive Urca neighborhood and moseying to one of Rio's most beautiful beaches, the band has not asked for official authorization in order to maintain the event as uncrowded as possible. While Bagunço has not yet exploded in popularity as Orquestra Voadora has, the movement to add original music in carnival is growing. Musicians and fans are growing dissatisfied with the emphasis on covers and traditional music in carnival, and original music is a new alternative in relation to the aesthetic dominance of Orquestra Voadora's musical eclecticism and its emphasis on covers. Bagunço's songs have become part of the cauldron of references for *neofanfarristas*. In other words, musical eclecticism has grown beyond learning alternative genres towards spreading one's own music through a participatory *bloco*.<sup>93</sup>

The emphasis on original music has helped Bagunço grow past the limits of the *neofanfarrismo* scene towards participating in major events like Rock in Rio and jazz festivals, as well as embarking internationally. Having toured as Bagunço's trumpet player during the band's first international tour in France, I found that the band's originality distinguished it from most of the brass bands we heard. Original music brought far more opportunities in festivals and booking, even above more "professional" or technically skilled bands.<sup>94</sup> Clément's comment regarding his own experience of being forced to develop original material in an earlier brass band illustrates why this approach can be successful:

The director of the group prohibited covers. At first, I didn't want to do this. I was a student *fanfare* guy. I wanted to play Britney Spears! But in fact, it gives you lots of advantages, especially when you travel. If you play your own compositions you are going to meet the best musicians in the world, but you still play your own songs better than they do because they don't know the songs. (11/11/14)

The embrace of original music has been, therefore, an entrepreneurial strategy in a carnival that has emerged beyond the state project of reproducing national authenticity (Guilbault 2007). The emerging interest in composing original music could further revolutionize Rio's street carnival towards becoming a space in which original composition not bounded by genre requirements becomes a primary element of this gigantic musical festival. Original music composed by *neofanfarrista* bands draws on many of the musical references examined throughout this chapter as well as those of the brass *bloco* revival, freely mixed, juxtaposed, and fused into new musical experiments.

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<sup>93</sup> Bagunço's carnival *bloco*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIWBWxw6Rro>.

<sup>94</sup> Bagunço in France: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HU7ms8vLw58&t=1s>. Bagunço's original song "Retirante" recorded during 2016 tour in France and Italy: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Iix6HtShQg&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Iix6HtShQg&feature=youtu.be).



Left: Author playing Bagunço's carnival bloco in Urca. Photo by Ana Carvalho on February 5, 2016.  
 Right: Bagunço leading a parade in Sumène, France at a festival, Les Transes Cévenoles: musique et arts de la rue.  
 Photo by author on July 24, 2016.

### Conclusions

In this chapter, I have examined the diversity of musical references and modes of mediation of *neofanfarrismo* as the movement has articulated a new stage in the history of Rio de Janeiro's street carnival and grown into a musical movement that exists all year. The interest in promoting musical eclecticism represents a marked departure from the aesthetic boundaries established by the earlier brass *bloco* revival. International immigration, increased access to travel, and spread of internet access have all helped bring new genres to the city. Changing patterns of access cannot, however, be viewed as the only reason for this shift. *Neofanfarristas* also reach into Brazil's countercultural history and employ the discourse of cannibalism to justify and theorize their engagements with diverse musical forms. In doing so, they have constructed a series of references and positioned themselves within a particular Brazilian lineage.

Designating new thematic sites of influence—such as carnival, resistance, the street, African diaspora, and the instrumental formation of the brass band—*neofanfarrismo* reached beyond the local and national frames of reference of the brass *bloco* revival. While interest in some genres is often based on an “alternative” cultural affiliation with marginalized others or with an aesthetics of “resistance,” the movement is not limited to these preoccupations. It also embraces global popular music references that have no relation to stereotypically alternative or resistant culture, but are rather directly configured as mainstream global popular culture, an alternative to the boundaries of the brass *bloco* revival which focused on Brazilian “folk authenticity.” Like *tropicália*, *neofanfarrismo* has eschewed such boundaries.

The desire to “play anything” is, however, still limited by particular cultural desires and affiliations, an expression of whiter, middle-class cosmopolitanism. I have shown, for example, that prejudices towards particular Brazilian genres, such as *pagode* and *funk carioca*, are still prominent in *neofanfarrismo*. These disparagements show that the cannibalism of *neofanfarrismo* has limits to its appetite. Voadora's North American tubist explains that despite their universalist rhetoric,

It's a certain crowd [*galera*] that has a set of particular tastes based in a historical time and place. They were children in the tail end of the dictatorship and they have baggage from that era. They felt ultra repressed and are really skeptical and rebellious against the state, the military, and authoritarian rule. They're into the stories of those heroes like Caetano or Gilberto who were imprisoned or fled the country because of their protests against the government. That's like their retro connection to what in the States was the 60s era. And then there's whatever pop culture of those formative years, Spectroman and super random stuff from television. (6/12/15)

Cannibalism, in its theoretical embrace of universality, obscures its own lineage and influences.

While *tropicália* was at first openly decried by the *MPB* scene, it quickly became a part of the *MPB* repertoire and canon. Though it represented a different approach in relation to international trends and styles, it was not fundamentally opposed to *MPB*, but rather in dialogue with it. Similarly, Boitatá, Céu na Terra, Voadora, and the *neofanfarrista* bands are of a shared musical world of the larger alternative brass movement, even if they manifest different aesthetic priorities. They share many of the same musicians, and Voadora's *bloco* frequently reverts to *marchinhas* when it has exhausted its own eclectic repertoire. While the band engages with diverse repertoires from around the world, *samba*, *candomblé*, *frevo*, and other references of the brass *bloco* revival are never far away and are frequently mixed in with these new influences. In turn, Boitatá and Céu na Terra have begun engaging with international repertoires as well. *Neofanfarristas* do not view themselves as wholly rejecting the project of cultural rescue—they expand it. Like *tropicália* in relation to *MPB*, then, *neofanfarrismo* is an alternative resignification of its heritage. In other words, rather than representing a stark division of aesthetics, the brass *bloco* revival and *neofanfarrismo* are poles on a musical spectrum of rescue to cannibalism.

As Rio de Janeiro opens increasingly to the world with the internet, mega-events, and mass tourism, *neofanfarristas* aim to show that globalization needs to be based on cultural exchange and dialogue on their own terms and values. For these musicians, *brasilidade*—what it is to be Brazilian—remains connected to a strong sense of roots, while they voraciously explore, consume, and transform the diversity of musics of the world.

### Subverting Official Carnival

Soon after the carnival of 2017, Technobloco invaded the *sambódromo* late at night filling it with thousands of bodies lit up with LEDs. In the video of the procession, a huge crowd is seen crouching in the *sambódromo* shouting “Fora Crivella” (“Down with Crivella,” referring to the conservative mayor of Rio since 2016) over the melodic backdrop of Robert Miles’ “Children” (1996). As the snare roll crescendos, they ready themselves to jump up at the “beat drop” when the drum section will enter. When it does, mass euphoria ensues—thousands of people run through the *sambódromo* as acoustic boom-kat beats resound through the structure.<sup>95</sup>

The invasion of the *sambódromo* with acoustic techno music represents the appropriation of the most symbolic site of Brazil's carnival, one that, as we have seen, has been much critiqued

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<sup>95</sup> Technobloco invading the *sambódromo*:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzSf3u7cGw8&t=4s&list=PLRQoHIZqP8oVii6NGs975fjnJuvCb6L2D&index=2>

as the primary symbol of the commodification and homogenization of Rio's carnival (chapter one). "Cannibalizing" the space with contemporary, international pop music and "rescuing" it from commercialism and the political status quo, the unruly street carnival *bloco* strikes a clear contrast with the disciplined parades of the *samba* schools. In taking over the parade route with this sonic vandalism, the alternative carnivalesque performs the triumph of street carnival over the state's official carnival. Following "carnavalesque ethics," the ultimate carnival act is to subvert the officialdom of carnival itself. In the next part of this dissertation, I explore further the ethical dimensions of *neofanfarrismo* and how the socio-musical movement enacts diverse forms of musical activism.



## Part II: Instrumental Activism in an Olympic City



Musicians helping to keep crowds mobilized to prevent the confiscation of working-class ambulatory drink vendors' equipment. Photo by author. January 3, 2016.



#### 4. “Nothing Should Seem Impossible to Change”: Instrumental Protest, Repertoires of Contention, and Politicizing a Musical Movement

There was a good bit of discussion about what songs we should play [in the 2013 protests], because if you play too much carnival [music] it creates too much of a party. There were lots of carnival songs that were reprised with changed words to create political slogans. But once I launched into ‘Carinhoso,’ and the shaker player told me ‘quiet, we can’t play that!’ (Clément Mombereau 11/11/14)

As French trombonist Clément notes, musicians playing in the protests of June 2013 adapted the musical repertoires of carnival, often changing the words to themes of protest to suit more militant occasions. He also relates that there was a concern to restrain carnivalesque elements in the protests of a city well accustomed to large festive crowds in the streets. In this case, “Carinhoso,” a classic *choro* love song by Pixinguinha commonly played by the brass community in carnival (see chapter two), was heard by some to be inappropriate during some of the intense and militant protests. Nevertheless, the story of trumpeter Leo Adler shows that “Carinhoso” might not always be remiss in a protest. He relates a moment in a June 2013 protest in which “The police arrived unnecessarily, rather brutish and ignorant. They took my ID...and it came into my head this idea of playing ‘Carinhoso,’ which is a love song...The police left looking ashamed” (11/19/14). On another occasion, Clément played “Carinhoso” for the police at five AM at the end of a long night of Technobloco procession (see chapter three) shortly after the 2016 carnival. On that occasion, the police perceived the song as a provocation and responded with gas bombs that dispersed the crowd.<sup>96</sup>

These three stories of “Carinhoso” used in protests and confrontations with the police show that musicians strategize, sometimes unsuccessfully, about the role and effectiveness of particular songs and ways of playing music in moments and spaces of contention. While it is often important for protest musicians to underline a distinction between a street protest and a street party, the appropriateness of certain festive songs in spaces of protest may also vary substantially. “Carinhoso,” a slow love song, might be used to pacify a situation in an intense confrontation with the police, but if the desired effect is militancy, it may not be the favored choice. In another case, the song might be heard by the police as mocking and an invitation for attack. While the appropriateness of a given song in a protest may vary, so too may the police response.

Evoking the military’s uses of brass and drum instruments, trumpeter Leo Adler aspires for the *neofanfarrismo* movement to gain “the consciousness that an instrument is a weapon. Music has the capacity to change the dynamic of any social space” (11/19/14). Charles Tilly (2010) has used the term “repertoire of contention” to refer to a given set of protest tools available to social movement actors. But despite the musical resonance of the term “repertoire,” the musical choices of protestors have rarely been interpreted as repertoires of contention by music or social movement scholars.

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<sup>96</sup> “Carinhoso” played for police by Leo Adler: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9fk3q347IY>; at the end of Technobloco: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkmT7HYWOz0>.

In this chapter, I expand on Tilly’s concept by examining the musical choices, strategies, and tactics of the *neofanfarrismo* community in the context of public street protests. I focus on the musical and tactical repertoires of brass bands that participate in protests and on the participation and mobilization of brass bands for political campaigns and protests. My goal is to understand the repertoires, motivations, and modes of expression of political action in the *neofanfarrismo* community and how such political action affects the range of discourses regarding activism in the movement. In particular, I examine the political engagements of two brass bands, BlocAto do Nada and Os Siderais, and the distinction between “participatory” and “presentational” modes of protest (Turino 2008) in relation to the musical repertoires chosen, as well as “spontaneous” protest repertoires that are played “on the spot.” I then examine the role of these musical actions in consolidating this street-based instrumental musical community as a self-defined “activist” socio-musical movement in the context of a volatile political climate in Brazil, including the hosting of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, economic crisis, and the parliamentary coup against Workers Party president Rousseff in 2016.

What musical repertoires and practices are employed in situations of contention with the forces of the state, and what are the relations between musical repertoires of carnival and musical repertoires of contention? What constitutes a specifically political or protest action in a community of bands already committed to practices of subversion, occupations of public space, and general disregard for laws regarding use of public space? Around what issues are *neofanfarristas* politicized and how do they organize in order to protest? Here I show how musical repertoires circulate between street carnival and street protests and back again. I argue that an examination of musical protest in relation to the sonic force of instrumental ensembles and their strategic musical choices enriches the ways we understand music to express opposition and political power. In neoliberal urban contexts, in which notions of the urban public are being eroded through refashioning city space in favor of global private interests, these ensembles sonically militate in urban public spaces for a more democratic and public city and provide tools for political mobilization.



Poster for class on appropriate political repertoire for brass bands to play in protests offered by Ju Bones (“Juba” or Juliano Pires). Art by Rafaella Goi.

## Instrumental Protest and Activism

When instrumental musicians use music strategically to achieve an explicit political change and confront state and corporate regimes to do so, they engage in what I call “instrumental protest.” I use this term not only to call attention to the particular musical efficacies of instrumental ensembles, but also to evaluate their instrumentality in activating and pushing forward political struggles. Relatively little attention has been paid to the workings of instrumental music in the acts of protest. This is odd because the word protest generally refers first and foremost to public demonstrations, rather than semantically driven denunciations. These are moments of confrontation and contestation in which the senses of belonging and control of urban space that loud, mobile, instrumental ensembles can transform are paramount.<sup>97</sup> Orquestra Voadora trombonist Juba likens the tactical roles of a brass band to other groups that organize to enable the success of a protest: “In protests, there are various groups that help a lot in the street: the groups overseeing the security of the people, the activist media, the lawyers, the Red Cross people, and the street artists who do the ludic part. Each one has a function of protecting the people” (Pires 10/12/14). This chapter examines the brass band as a tactical and strategic element of protest, creatively represented by Erik Drooker’s famous illustration in the context of the United States.



*People vs Military.* Artwork by Erik Drooker. Available at <http://www.drooker.com/original-art/>

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<sup>97</sup> George McKay’s (2007) theorization of acts of “sonic territorialization” in protests practiced by marching bands, Jonathon Sterne’s (2012) examination of participatory discrepancies in the Casserole protests of Quebec, and Noriko Manabe’s (2015) research on music in Japanese anti-nuclear protests indicate some methods for examining how music interacts with such moments of confrontation. Elsewhere, I have shown how brass bands involved in protest use musical practices as political tactics to engage in direct action (Snyder 2015).

This chapter begins part two of this dissertation, which is focused on practices and discourses of instrumental activism in *neofanfarrismo*. Many scholars of music, activism, and protest make no particular distinction between the terms “protest” and “activism.” In the *neofanfarrismo* community, however, participating in a protest (*protesto* or *manifestação*) is generally understood to be a distinct kind of musical action within the larger senses of the word activism (*ativismo*). Saxophonist Mathias Mafort, for example, defines activism much more broadly: “Activism is a confrontation with reality. You can show another person that other things are possible beyond their closed reality. Everyone has their closed reality. And this reality can be opened up for something bigger” (6/9/15). Building on this definition, I view *neofanfarrismo*’s theorizing of instrumental activism as a broad array of expressions of the alternative carnivalesque—practices aimed at social, political, and musical transformation of reality. Instrumental protest, the focus of this chapter, is only one element of a much broader debate.

Academic considerations of protest music have predominantly focused on lyrics to understand politicization and oppositional stances.<sup>98</sup> Lyrics, for many scholars, provide a window for understanding the “cognitive praxis,” or how music diffuses ideas, frames, and knowledge to incite participation in social movements (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). Considerations of musical protest have then focused primarily on protest song traditions and the political content of the songs of popular musicians. In theorizing instrumental protest, and more broadly instrumental activism, I build on a broader shift in social movement theory that has turned away from the “rationality” of social movement actors, represented in music studies by lyrics, towards emphasis on the roles of creativity, play, and emotion (Shepard et al. 2008; Jasper 1997 and 2011). While lyrics are not irrelevant in consideration of instrumental protest—many bands play songs with well-known melodies that invite protestors to sing politicized lyrics—an analysis of instrumental protest focuses on how sound itself mobilizes protestors in public space.

In the case of Brazilian music, scholars have frequently focused on protest music especially in relation to 1960s musicians and the *MPB* festivals (Perrone 1989; Dunn 2001; Stroud 2008; et al.).<sup>99</sup> Trombonist Carol Schavarosk stresses, however, that the existence of explosive street protests in contemporary Brazil makes the context for interpreting protest music very different from the models of the 1960s. “The context in the 60s and 70s was different. There were the great music festivals during the dictatorship. You couldn’t have a protest. Musicians had to create lyrics with double meanings. Even then, they were arrested. . . There was no protest. You would die” (11/5/14).<sup>100</sup> With *neofanfarrismo*’s international orientation, Rio’s brass bands have been inspired by larger networks of instrumental protest bands, such as Seattle’s Infernal Noise Brigade, which claimed, “Because humans have too long bleated slogans and carried signs, the aesthetic of the INB is entirely post-textual; we provide tactical psychological support through a ‘propaganda of sound.’ The street is the venue for action and symbology, the domain of emotion and intuition; ideology is homework” (Whitney 2003: 221-2). Rio’s brass bands have become involved, in this sense, in a series of “post-textual” protests in which the street is their stage of political theater and enables revolt through sound itself.

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<sup>98</sup> Mattern 1998; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Fischlin 2003; Roy 2010; Rosenthal and Flacks 2011.

<sup>99</sup> Recent work by Brazilian scholars (Herschmann and Fernandes 2014; Martins 2015) has focused on the role of music in recent protests in Rio.

<sup>100</sup> This is not a completely factual statement. Rio’s March of 100,000 in 1968, for example, expressed mass dissent against the military dictatorship, though after the Fifth Institutional Act (1968) protesting became much more criminalized. The dictatorship’s repression of street gatherings, including protests and street carnival events, likely did stem the development of well-known musical repertoires of contention practiced in street protests.

## Street Carnival, Street Protest, and Tactical Performance

At first glance, a street protest and a carnival *bloco* in contemporary Rio share a lot in common. In both, people crowd the streets of the city with subversive and topical *fantasias*. Mobile vendors sell beer to protestors and *foliões* alike. Both use erected and mobile visual signs that proclaim the identity of the crowd, though standards are more common in *blocos* and large flags (*bandeiras*) more common in street protests. In many cases, sound trucks (*carros de som*) are used in both to lead marches and processions.

And, of course, there is music and a rhythmic pulse that drives the crowd forward in carnival and in protest. Music is a consistent element of many public gatherings in Rio, and protests are no different. Protests in Brazil are a kaleidoscopic cacophony with varying levels of coordination of syncopated chants, whistles, percussive beats, and, increasingly in Rio, brass bands. While carnival borders on the political, as we have seen, protests also incorporate the festive, and the repertoires of each blend as they are repurposed in different scenarios. As trombonist Gustavo Machado told me, “here in Brazil, everything turns into a party” (12/19/14).

Famed street carnival stilt-walker Raquel Potí suggests that the diverse street manifestations of Rio constitute a continuum between hierarchical street protests, street carnival events, and divisive street chaos. For her, the central difference between these events is based in the relationships between social actors in the street and the power of a particular discourse to unite or fragment them:

When we are in a protest we have a single established discourse... When we are in carnival, we have millions of discourses. These are discourses that are always latent—the discourse of diversity, equality, respect for difference, sexual diversity, feminism, social relations, and disparities... In a protest, we choose one and go deeply into it... In carnival, when there are so many voices, it turns into a party... Even when we have discourses that seem apparently different, we are together and strengthening each other. It becomes a party when we support each other. If we don't support each other, it becomes confusion [*confusão*]. A protest can become confusion when people are limited in their own discourse and don't accept the diversity of discourses of others. (1/19/16)

For Raquel, the difference between a protest and carnival is based on the varying levels of monologism and dialogism. In situations of antagonism, either between movement actors or with the police, a party or a protest in public space can become chaotic “confusion.”

*Neofanfarristas*' employment of the practices and repertoires of carnival in protest can be seen as expressions of what Larry Bogad (2016) calls “tactical performance,” or the “use of performance techniques, tactics, and aesthetics in social-movement campaigns” (2). Like Potí, Bogad makes the distinction between actions that “occupy” public space with a single defined discourse and those that “open” them to a carnivalesque multivocality. He suggests that leftist protest models have trended internationally since the 1990s, with the fall of institutional leftist governments and their “occupying” models, to increasingly “open” models that promote horizontalism, dialogism, and the aesthetics and ethics of carnival (see also Graeber 2009).

Bogad's terminology does not clearly map onto the terms used in Rio. I found that in Rio when social movements “occupied” (*ocupar*) a public space, the intent was to “open” (*abrir*) it to a multiplicity of uses and a diversity of voices. But as Raquel's comment above suggests, Cariocas also perceive a difference between street manifestations based around a single discourse



and those constituted by multivocality. Bogad claims that between the hierarchical protest that “occupies” public space and the ideal Bakhtinian, egalitarian carnival, is the “open” protest, suggesting that “the opening-space model [of protest] overlaps in many ways with the practice of carnival” (2016: 96). For him, the open protest uses Bakhtinian multivocality but is generally framed around established discourses and is less open to the spontaneous volatility of carnival.

The leftist movements with which *neofanfarristas* have engaged in Rio are broadly dialoguing with larger frames of the “global justice movement,” which Bogad describes as “a ‘movement of movements’ due to its great diversity in geography, identity, and ideology” (100). He claims,

It is unquestionable that the idea of carnival helped to inspire and galvanize the theory and action of a global, antiauthoritarian, and anti-capitalist movement. This global movement was determined to build and sustain its own cultures, in defiance of the homogenizing corporate monoculture that is spreading so rapidly. This concept, influenced by older ideas but moving beyond Bakhtin, developed new parameters and tactics through activist praxis. The movement aimed to reclaim the carnival for its own purposes and agendas...in pursuit of sustained, deeply oppositional, creative, and egalitarian activism. (108)

Likewise, writing about the Reclaim the Streets direct action collectives and “Carnivals against Capitalism” in Britain, Graham St. John views contemporary protests as strategically taking the form of a “protestival,” which appropriates the carnivalesque as a “critical tool in the activist repertoire” (2008: 171). The carnivalesque, in his view, transforms public spaces into “temporary autonomous zones” (TAZ) free of political authority (Bey 1991).

As Bogad’s and St. John’s research is primarily focused in the United States and Europe, however, in these cases the notion of carnival is mostly imagined and not based in local practices. In Rio de Janeiro, by contrast, the language and normative practices of the local carnival have been extended from the street carnival revival into diverse expressions within the practices of protest. Like the broader global justice movement, *neofanfarristas* also describe a shift away from institutionalized and hierarchical leftist movements towards more carnivalesque, horizontal, and “open” modes of engagement, or a shift from an “old” to a “new,” post-communist left. What Bogad and St. John argue in relation to the uses of carnival in protests in the Global North is all the more true, then, in places where communities have a vibrant history of carnival traditions on which to draw.

### **Why and how do *neofanfarristas* protest?**

For John Street, the question of music’s political potential is relevant when music “forms as a site of public deliberation” (2012: 8) and presents people with a choice of engagement. As we have seen, animated by carnivalesque ethics, *neofanfarristas* are politicized especially around issues relating to their own actions and discourses regarding the rights of playing in the street. In many cases, they also act in solidarity with other groups as tactical affinity or support groups. Moments of large-scale political campaigns have presented opportunities for brass bands to take part and energize massive crowds in the streets in opposition to particular policies or systems of inequality.

There exists no absolute mission statement regarding the politics of *neofanfarrismo*, but the movement is broadly part of Brazil’s middle-class urban left. Different bands, *blocos*, and



individual members come together to participate in mobilizing political actions around a diversity of leftist causes. Most voted for Dilma Rousseff and have supported the Workers Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* or *PT*) in some way, but many musicians express political views far left of the institutional *PT*. Many support the *PSoL* (Party of Socialism and Liberty) or eschew party politics altogether and embrace anarchist political philosophies. The general lack of uniformity and political doctrine presents serious challenges to interpreting the *neofanfarrismo* community itself as a unified social movement, but despite efforts to embrace unified messaging most social movements are animated by contentious debates.

Many of the more politicized *neofanfarristas* complain that much of the movement consists of “*fanfarrões*” (partiers with little sense of social responsibility). Trombonist Gustavo Machado worried that political priorities would be further lost as the movement was becoming more popular: “The people of this movement are free people that have a political orientation more of the left and fight for the integration of minorities generally... But I fear that some *fanfarras* are coming really with a feeling of ‘oba oba’ of carnival, just party. They are losing the political footprint [*pegada*]” (12/19/14). Indeed, more broadly, many Brazilian leftists portray Brazilians, especially in relation to other Latin American countries, as pacified and alienated from political action. They sometimes blame festive traditions like carnival as sapping popular energy away from political engagement.

In Portuguese (as well as other Romance languages), politicized leftists, including within the *neofanfarrismo* movement, often make a distinction between the politically engaged (*engajados*) and alienated (*alienados*). This distinction reflects a supposed divide between those concerned with the concerns of the people (*o povo*) and those who are “alienated” from them, more occupied with material comforts and international trends than the needs and culture of the local masses. Divides between “engaged” politicized leftists and “alienated” countercultural types have produced cleavages in the broader left in Brazil since at least the 1960s, as well as in many other places. A further distinction in Portuguese between “activism” (*ativismo*) and “militancy” (*militância*) stakes the level of one’s political engagement. The Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (*FARJ*) has suggested that militancy

presupposes a degree of seriousness and devotion that generally is not present in activism. It is the development of regular work that seeks to involve in the revolutionary fight [*luta*] the most diverse, exploited, and oppressed sectors of society... In [militancy], personal life is adapted to the fight. In [activism], militancy must fit into the personal life of the individual.

The distinction between militancy and activism in protest illuminates how so many *neofanfarrista* bands can define themselves as activist without engaging in protests or social movements as a first priority. Within the movement, however, some bands view themselves as a militant alternative, in relation to what they view as the “soft” activism, or outright hedonism, of others. Like other trends and questions in the *neofanfarrismo* movement, engaging in instrumental protest is to take part in a debate that puts at stake the fundamental priorities of a community broadly self-defined as alternative and activist.

The past five years in Brazilian politics have been some of the most tumultuous years of modern Brazilian political history. Many of my collaborators viewed the enormous protests of June 2013 as a watershed moment in moving towards the rejection of the hierarchical institutions of the “old left,” or what Bogard refers to as “occupying practices,” towards more democratic and

“open” practices. Saxophonist and activist Tomás Ramos believes that

In the future, they will analyze June 2013 for Brazil as having as big an importance as what happened in May of 1968 in France. I think that this is a turning point. A new political generation has been created since then. This is a generation coming after twelve years of government by the *PT* that managed to enter into power after twenty or thirty years of popular mobilization. And all the disenchantment with the limits of this project that the *PT* represented made a new stage of politics emerge. June represents the disenchantment with traditional forms of political representation and with the limits that the *PT* promoted. (11/13/14)

Examination into the political engagements of the *neofanfarrista* bands provides insights into the musical manifestations of these new forms of political engagement during pivotal years in Brazilian history.

When *neofanfarristas* engage in protests, they network with a variety of Brazilian leftist social movements and institutions. The Workers Party (*PT*), founded in 1980, originally emerged from a network of social movements, including radical trade unionists, Liberation Theologists, and left-wing intellectuals opposed to the military regime. The *PT* would capture the presidency in 2002 with the ascent of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, known as “Lula,” and his successor, Dilma Rousseff, in 2010. The *PT* presided over unprecedented economic growth while instituting progressive social welfare programs, keeping many on both the right and the left happy. With the boondoggle of expenses for the World Cup and Olympics and a host of corruption charges, however, many on the radical left would come to see the *PT* as having “sold out” from its leftist roots and thus challenged its priorities in the massive 2013 protests.

When the explosive June 2013 protests, initiated by the Free Pass Movement (*Movimento Passe Livre*), captured global attention, observers exclaimed that the “sleeping giant” of Brazil had awakened (“O gigante acordou”). The Free Pass Movement has demanded free access to public transportation (*Tarifa zero*) since 2005, but it gained prominence in 2013 when it launched a campaign against the raising of bus fares in São Paulo by twenty *centavos* (cents of the Brazilian *real*). The Free Pass Movement’s campaign proved a tipping point for the disenchantment of the urban left with the institutional left’s cozying up to neoliberal policies and institutions, launching waves of leftist protests across Brazilian cities.

While the protests were critiqued by the right and the media for their “lack of focus,” one of the principal ways that protest was expressed was by calling attention to the prioritizing of spending for the World Cup and the Olympics and their neoliberal trickle-down rationale. Protestors claimed they wanted education, health care, housing, and transportation for the people in the “FIFA standard” (*padrão FIFA*) because “the mega-events were sold as something that could bring benefits to the cities” (Ramos 11/13/14). Over the course of June, protests grew at exponential rates culminating with two million people in the streets in over one hundred Brazilian cities on June 20, after which movement energies faded, diversified, and were coopted.

As discussed in chapter one, Rio de Janeiro and other major urban centers bore the brunt of the impacts of the policies of hosting the World Cup and Olympics, including heightened militarization, housing speculation, rising costs of living, and the construction of massive stadiums, many of which stand today largely unused. Many of the protests of the past five years, and especially since June 2013, have been articulated, then, in relation to what I have called neoliberal urban governance, or the management of cities based primarily around the exigencies

of profit. Saxophonist Tomás Ramos credits the particularly urban character of the June 2013 protests as a response to the perfect storm of deprioritizing public services, the demands of mega-events, and the militarization of the police. James Holston argues that “what brought people together was the general demand for a different kind of city, one free and just...the crisis of urban mobility (20 cents), police violence, and evictions (especially in Rio due to demolitions for World Cup and Olympic facilities) revived the conceptual foundations of insurgent citizenship as protestors demanded radical equality (zero fare) and right to the city” (2014: 893-4). Many commentators and my collaborators also saw the Brazilian protests as part of an international wave of protests including the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street that were internationally oriented networked social movements and shared new repertoires of contention through the web (Castells 2012).

While the radical left may have accused the *PT* of bowing to neoliberal demands, the specter of a much more intense and austere form of neoliberalism became a reality with the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff by the right. Many of the radical left chose to realign themselves in defense of democracy and the right of the *PT* to rule, if not in support of the party itself. While it was the economic success under Lula that brought the Olympics to Brazil, it would be Michel Temer who would oversee them and Lula would find himself imprisoned by the new regime in 2018. Brazil now confronts a situation in which social movements no longer have a potential friend in the national government. After what many view as a coup, the Brazilian right has enforced measures of austerity that have worsened the economic crisis. The hopes of social movements and leftists to effect progressive social change in this political context have dimmed significantly, though intense forms of resistance like Brazil’s violent general strike on April 28, 2017 show that the left has not become entirely quiescent.

### **Effects and Roles of Brass Bands in Protests**

While the brass band may not be generally associated with acts of protest, it should not be surprising that these loud, mobile ensembles can help mobilize mass crowds to contest governing regimes. Emerging from the military, brass and drum ensembles have long been practical musical resources for groups engaged in militaristic activity. For many musicians, the military relationship with the use of brass bands in protest was explicit. Trumpeter Leo Adler, who frequently played in the June 2013 protests, recounts that

Many people came to tell me that they had gotten sick from the tear gas. They wanted to leave, but they heard me playing and felt the force to continue holding back the police. The police were dispersing people and throwing gas bombs all around and I would start a song. The protestors would group up again and would start to sing over the police. Music helps in the resistance. Every army has a trumpeter to play the call to advance, the call to retreat. (11/19/14)

Many *neofanfarristas* speak of the capacity of the brass ensemble to create audibility and visibility for an action and to call attention to a given cause. They have the capacity to “open” protests in Bogad’s sense by creating an inviting atmosphere for protestors and bystanders alike. Os Siderais’ snare player Miguel Maron suggests that the brass band “cries and calls people. It congregates them around something...It has power, a sonorous potential” (12/20/14). Musicians believe that a brass band can call attention to a protest in a way that dignifies and legitimates it.

Saxophonist Gabriel Fromm recounts, for example, that the 2011 tent occupation of Ocupa Rio (Occupy Rio), in solidarity with Occupy Wall Street, was viewed

from the beginning as heavy and violent. There was huge police presence, so keeping it light was fundamental. The arts had the function of giving equilibrium to the movement and a lightness for those who saw it from outside as a “favelization” of Cinelândia [square]. ... When a brass band comes into the mix, it brings flexibility and lightness. It transforms this person who is casting a prejudiced look and gives credibility to the movement. (1/8/15)

Due to its mobility, few musical ensembles are made for marching and mobilizing large crowds as well as the brass band. For saxophonist Tomás Ramos, brass ensembles are well suited for protests because they have “the mobility that protestors need in the streets” (11/13/14). While *baterias* are also loud and mobile, *neofanfarristas* argue that *baterias* do not have the capacity without amplification to project melodies that incite protestors to sing. While protest music throughout the Americas may be more associated with folk singers, it is much more difficult for folk songs, especially without amplification, to mobilize a protest march. Gabriel Fromm remarks that a musician “can come to an occupation and play guitar and five people will sing along. But s/he won’t be heard by all the movement” (1/8/15).

Tomás argues that the emergence of brass ensembles in protests also represents the ascendance of a more horizontal left-wing that Bogad (2016) has observed worldwide. For the BlocAto musicians, the traditional sound car (*carro de som*), used in carnival as well as in protests to lead crowds through the streets, represents a hierarchical model of the old left. While it allows a social movement to amplify its rhetoric and musical choices, the march leaders are high above the protestors and not much responsive to changing conditions on the ground. The brass band, on the other hand, is more agile, responsive, and horizontal—open for those around it who want to engage. Tomás explains,

We saw that we filled a role of education, security, and direction, the roles that the sound cars always filled. But the sound car is huge and has many limits. Someone tells the people what they must do from up high. It’s very vertical and I believe we have come to surpass the sound car... Just like Occupy Wall Street, the actions of June 2013 put in question the various forms of classical organization and representation on the left... [that] the sound car represented. (11/13/14)

For these musicians then, the brass band has the capacity to “open,” or decenter, music making in a protest in the ways that mic check<sup>101</sup> could decenter the discursive hierarchy of those who amplify a monologic left-wing discourse from a sound car. The opposition to sound cars in protests parallels the original brass *bloco* revival’s prizing of acoustic music making in the streets instead of sound cars in street carnival (see chapter one). In regard to these attempts to abolish hierarchies, several musicians use the language of “carnivalizing” protests. Os Siderais saxophonist Gabriel Fromm explains, “you come to a place and bring a party, make people dance and smile, carnivalize things, and bring lightness to the tension that is there” (1/8/15).

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<sup>101</sup> Mic check, or the people’s mic (“microfone humano” in Portuguese) is a decentralized call and response technique to project the voice of a single protestor (Castells 2012). Popularized by the Occupy Wall Street movement, it is frequently used in Rio de Janeiro by both protest and festive crowds.

*Neofanfarristas* suggest that brass ensembles have the capacity to alter the “climate” and “logic of violence” that typify encounters with the police. Gabriel recounts, “From the moment that a *fanfarra* arrives, it’s much harder for the police to confront because the climate is not confrontational. It’s celebratory” (1/8/15). While many *neofanfarristas* stress the role of security and pacification that a brass band can play in spaces of contention, in other cases, the brass band can heighten the militant intents of protestors. Highlighting its strategic potential, saxophonist Mathias Mafort argues that pacification is only one strategic choice of many that brass bands have available: “Protests are a bit like war...The *fanfarra* always has a function in this context. In some cases, the *fanfarra* is pacifying. In others, it is the heart of the movement as if it were its motor force. It can have many faces...It depends on the intention” (6/9/15).

### **Musical Repertoires of Contention**

When engaging in protests organized by some of these diverse social movements of the leftist landscape of Rio, bands adopt the repertoires of the *neofanfarrista* movement but use them with more strategic intent in relation to the aim of a given protest. Brass musicians reinterpret carnival *marchinhas*, international leftist hymns, punk music, *funk carioca*, Brazilian protest songs, and much more in order to sonically frame protest events as oppositional, rather than solely festive. This section examines the repertoire choices of BlocAto do Nada and Os Siderais, as well as spontaneous musical encounters in protests. The first band draws especially on Brazilian musical repertoires of protest and the oppressed, whereas the second band dialogues with international repertoires of protest. While this distinction is not wholly analogous to the cultural nationalism of the brass *bloco* revival (see chapter two) and the musical eclecticism of *neofanfarrismo* (see chapter three), the question of prioritizing national repertoires or international repertoires is a strategic one for brass bands engaging in protests.

These strategic repertoire choices have important repercussions for what kinds of roles and effects a brass band is able to achieve in a given protest. I argue, drawing on Thomas Turino’s consideration of participatory and presentational modes of music making (2008), that the choice of musical repertoires of contention has important strategic implications for the preference of fostering a participatory or presentational protest. By participatory musical protest, I mean that musicians strategically choose repertoires in order to involve the audience in the musical performance of protest. By presentational musical protest, I mean that the transgression involved in musicians’ performance is primarily an object of spectacle that is meant to change spectators’ political opinions, priorities, and actions (also see Snyder 2015).

#### **BlocAto do Nada: Participatory Strategies and Cultural Nationalism**

BlocAto do Nada (“Action *Bloco* of Nothing”) was founded in 2012 and is the only brass band of the *neofanfarrismo* movement that plays exclusively for protests. The name of the band itself, putting together the word “bloco” with the word “ato” (political act), fuses the political with the carnivalesque. The “nada” in the band’s name is a reference to a line of a Bertolt Brecht poem, “Nothing must seem impossible to change,” a phrase that adorns the *bloco*’s standard (“Nada deve parecer impossivel de mudar”). The use of the poem represents an invitation to actively imagine the possibility of constructing an alternative world. Brecht’s poem reads,

Don’t accept the habitual as a natural thing.



In times of disorder, of organized confusion, of de-humanized humanity, nothing should seem natural.

Nothing should seem impossible to change.

Saxophonist and professional activist Tomás Ramos had begun using the phrase “Nothing must seem impossible to change” as a YouTube teaser that became a meme and channel of communication for leftist news. Ramos was working with Marcelo Freixo, 2016 mayoral candidate in Rio of the Party of Socialism and Liberty (*PSoL*) and one of the principal figures of the left in Brazil. As the 2013 carnival approached, Ramos believed that carnival would be an optimal space to further spread the meme. To this end, he founded BlocAto in order to play throughout the year for social movements. Ramos organized within the *neofanfarrismo* movement and its major moment of mobilization in carnival to bring together left-wing musicians that would support and organize with social movements. The use of carnival resources was not intended, however,

to just stay in carnival, but to strengthen social movements...Carnival would only be an excuse to bring together musicians and organize the *bloco*...The traditional aesthetic of the left isn't having the same effect that different aesthetics can have. [The question was] what is there in Rio de Janeiro that mobilizes so many people in the streets? The *fanfarra bloco*...I put my faith in this a lot—in art as a method of action, in carnival as a strategy of struggle [*luta*]. (11/13/14)



BlocAto in demonstration against President Temer on May 18, 2017. Photo by Tomás Ramos.

Likewise, BlocAto percussionist Chico Oliveira believes the *fanfarra* could play the role of bringing “art to politics and politics to art” (11/13/14). Strategically using Brazilian protest music and music of the “oppressed masses,” the *bloco* chooses its repertoire to communicate

effectively with political actors in the street.<sup>102</sup> The following episode shows some of the ways music is used as a participatory tactic of a protest action.

On November 11, 2014, BlocAto do Nada was on its way to nearby São Gonçalo, a poor peripheral city near Niterói across the bay from Rio de Janeiro. The Homeless Workers Movement (*MTST*) had helped workers stage an occupation that had already lasted ten days to demand housing. Shabbily constructed huts had been set up with tarps held up by sticks—seven hundred barracks for seven hundred families. They were calling it *Ocupação Zumbi dos Palmares* in homage to the king Zumbi of the run-away slave maroon community Palmares that lasted for almost a century in the 1600s. References to Zumbi, Palmares, and the *quilombos* (free slave communities) are still mobilized in social movements today, especially those aimed at creating communities framed around radicalized black identity. Black workers were dancing the *jongo*, an Afro-Brazilian 6/8 genre from the southeast of Brazil, while BlocAto musicians handed out percussion instruments to children and let them experiment on horns. A box of *fantasias* had been brought for the parade, and the occupiers dressed in all sorts of clothes and masks, celebrating the occupation through the expressions of carnival. In this case, the carnivalesque practice of the poor taking on the identity of a king would take on a much more subversive undertone than simply a temporary inversion. The *bloco* readied its standard to lead the occupiers in a march through the encampment.

We marched through the community supporting the occupiers with Brazilian protest songs from the 1960s, *funk carioca* songs, and syncopated chants. When *MTST* organizers led the organizers in call and response chants like “Zumbi presente agora e sempre” (“Zumbi is present now and always”), the horn players stopped while the drummers provided a rhythmic back bone that further energized the chant:

Call: “MTST”

Response: “a luta é pra valer” (“The fight is for worthiness”)

Call: “pra criar pra criar” (“To create, to create”)

Response: “o poder popular” (“The people’s power”)

While these poorer protestors didn’t respond much to *MPB* protest song renditions, they did sing enthusiastically to BlocAto’s instrumental renditions of *funk* songs of Rio’s *favelas* like “Rap da Felicidade” (1995):

I just want to be happy,  
To walk freely in the *favela* where I was born  
And be able to have pride  
And have the consciousness that the poor have their place.

The occupation was nothing short of successful. The next day, Rio’s city government would sign an accord through the My House, My Life program (*Minha Casa, Minha Vida*) for the construction of one thousand houses for the occupiers.

The organizers of BlocAto believe that the practices of street carnival are more popular and mobilizing in Rio de Janeiro protests than traditional leftist songs like the “International” that had outlived the communist period. In this case, BlocAto did not only use the instrumentation of the *neofanfarrismo* and street carnival movements, but also its visual

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<sup>102</sup> BlocAto do Mada in 2013 protests: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9fqY5JooQM>

language like standards and *fantasias*. Critiquing the ways that the Orquestra Voadora *bloco* would show up to protests and play through commonly known repertoire without focus on the unfolding of the protest, Ramos explains that the BlocAto “is preoccupied with creating beats for the street chants. If someone yells ‘tarifa zero’ [no fees], we would do a beat for ‘tarifa zero.’ More important than us simply playing our music is that we be a great microphone for everyone” (11/13/14). Unlike most bands of *neofanfarrismo* that close membership outside of carnival, BlocAto is completely open for participation and allows any musician to join, either through open rehearsals or by joining up on the street. Because of this openness, it uses the term *bloco* rather than *banda* or *fanfarra* despite the connection of the term *bloco* to carnival.

Part of the calculation of how to strengthen a protest is the selection of repertoire based on what will facilitate mobilization in a protest. Just as I experienced in the occupation of São Gonçalo, Chico relates,

When we play “Rap da Felicidade,” which has very politicized lyrics, people always sing naturally. The choice of repertoire and songs is based in the imaginary of the people. We take care to propose things that make sense for others and not just for those who already think about politics. The choice of repertoire makes people come closer and feel something in common with us. The principal idea is that anyone can sing in the street. For this, BlocAto’s repertoire is based mostly on the Carioca aesthetic. (11/13/14)

Indeed, the band developed a repertoire that merges arrangements of Brazilian protest songs from the 1960s and 1970s with the contemporary Rio *funk* style of the *favelas*, fusing two divergent Brazilian musical repertoires perceived as “resistant” genres. These two repertoires facilitate the mobilization of middle-class leftist Cariocas and poorer Cariocas respectively, though many songs are appreciated by both. For Chico, *funk* is important “because it is from the marginalized culture and has a strong popular appeal. The idea emerged of bringing this together with the traditional songs of political struggle” (11/13/14).

In search of unifying the “aesthetic of the *fanfarra* with something close to *funk*” they used percussion instruments that might imitate the dry, electronic sounds of the *funk* beats. They wanted an acoustic rendering of the electronic *funk* beat to be at the foundation of their sound in order to “bring funk to the street” (11/13/14). The instrumentation of the *bloco* uses brass instruments of *neofanfarrismo* but does not, therefore, employ the popular percussion instrumentation codified by Orquestra Voadora (see chapter three). The band uses a variety of hand signals that represent some of the different *funk* rhythms in the repertoire and are used for different strategic purposes in a given protest, such as the most characteristic rhythm known as the *batidão*.

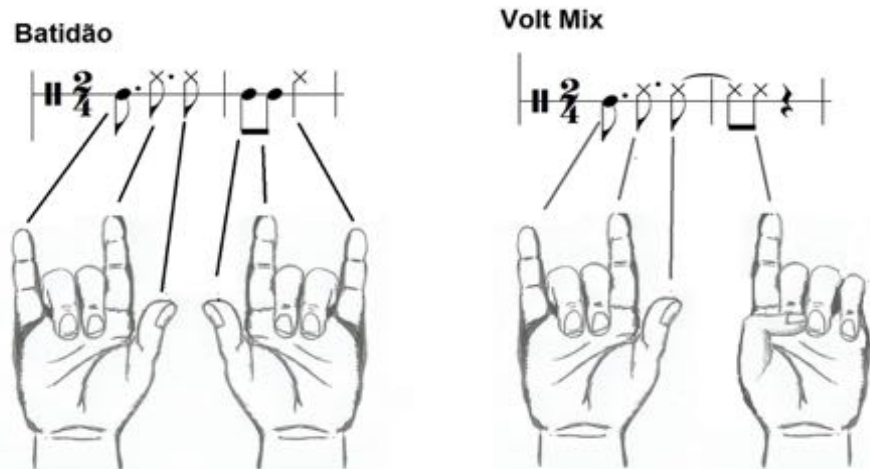


Illustration by Daniel Martins from his MA thesis on BlocAto (2017), used with permission.

The *funk* songs BlocAto has chosen are generally from the 1990s, early in the *funk* movement before the emergence of *funk proibidão*, which is often critiqued for glorifying violence, drugs, and misogyny. “Rap do Festival,” for example, played by BlocAto, denounces violence in the *funk* scene:

Let’s all make the world a place  
 Where peace and love can reign.  
 Why would we fight?...  
 Stop and think a bit more.  
 Violence, never again!  
*Funk* people, don’t take it badly.  
 Come with peace and love to enjoy the festival.

In chapter three, I showed that some *neofanfarristas* actively disparage funk, and the principal band of the movement, Orquestra Voadora, does not feature a single funk song despite its aesthetic of musical eclecticism. By privileging funk repertoire and organizing with social movements fighting for housing and other rights of the poor, BlocAto, despite its predominantly middle-class musicians, strategizes about how the band can use music to strengthen the political struggles of the poor. Tomás explains, “A challenge for *neofanfarrismo*, just like radical politics, is to construct bridges with places marginalized by capital, in the *favelas*, in distant places. To this end, it is very important that BlocAto be with these movements...to construct politics with those who suffer the most from capitalism” (11/13/14).

In protests that have a more middle-class profile, on the other hand, the band privileges songs based in the Brazilian protest tradition of the 1960s, such as Chico Buarque’s “Apesar de Você” (1970). Buarque’s subtle lyrics were intended for an apparent love song to get past the military censors, while fans viewed it as a stringent critique of the regime: “In spite of you, tomorrow must be another day.” BlocAto underlies a 12/8 *candomblé* beat to perhaps the most iconic Brazilian protest song of the 1960s, Geraldo Vandré’s “Caminhando:”

Marching and singing  
And following the song,  
We are all equal  
Arms given or not.

In using well-known national musical references, the strategic employment of musical repertoires of contention by BlocAto is, therefore, primarily participatory, oriented to mobilizing musical and political action by the protestors they musically support, be they richer or poorer political actors. Adopting a political strategy of cultural nationalism, the band takes a diverse interpretation of Brazilian political music traditions that is based especially in the local context of Rio de Janeiro. Chico reflects, “it’s interesting to see the accumulation of leftist social movements in our politics...[the tradition] of political struggles here in Brazil. [These are] songs that marked the struggle against the dictatorship, and many other struggles for rights” (11/13/14). Together, these songs tell a musical story of the Brazilian urban left since the emergence of politicized *MPB* and are employed to mobilize the “masses.” It is clearly easier to mobilize people after all through the repertoires they know.



Photo of author (center) playing with Bloco do Nada at March for Marijuana. Photo by Breno Crispino on May 9, 2015, originally published in MA thesis by Daniel Martins (2017).

### **Os Siderais: Presentational Strategies and Political Internationalism**

In contrast to BlocAto, Os Siderais has brought an internationalist and cannibalist musical eclecticism, in the tradition of Orquestra Voadora, to protests throughout the city. Os Siderais was founded in 2011 primarily by early participants in the Orquestra Voadora *bloco* who found Voadora’s general unwillingness to engage in protest to be an alienated stance.



Despite the various ways Orquestra Voadora sees itself as engaged in activism (see chapter five), the band generally refused to put its commercial success at stake to “raise the flag” (*levar a bandeira*) of social movements. Os Siderais, on the other hand, has prioritized playing in protests, though, unlike BlocAto, the band is not an open musical project and it does not exclusively engage in protests. Many of the members of the band consider themselves *militantes* within their chosen profession, including music, education, health, and psychiatry. They often use their links to radical sectors within these fields to organize the band to play at particular actions. The band’s snare player, Miguel Maron, explains that “We have a militant proposal within social movements and our own careers, so this priority emerged in the band around supporting social movements. We believe that beyond the *fanfarra* as a commercial format to sell a product, the *fanfarra* is an element of politics, of political transformation, of questioning. It can make an intervention” (12/20/14).

The band’s repertoire includes punk songs, Afrobeat, *mangue beat* and *tropicália* covers, and original songs, as well as songs from diverse international brass movements (see chapter three). Like Voadora, Os Siderais has travelled extensively and exchanged with other bands, including in France and Scotland in 2012, HONK! in Boston in 2013, and HONK!TX in Austin in 2017. With original songs entitled “Palmares in the Streets” (“Palmares nas Ruas”) and “Liberty Square” (“Praça da Liberdade”), the band’s repertoire includes original protest music, rather than only covers of protest songs. Its repertoire is generally less well known to the Brazilian “masses” than that of BlocAto. But its internationalist aesthetic has been well suited for engaging in protests that are explicitly internationally oriented or for audiences with awareness and interest in international protest traditions. The band’s internationalist orientation can thus be seen as a response to the increasing translocalism of international leftist protest culture (Hardt and Negri 2004; Graeber 2009; Castells 2012). The following protest performance held for striking teachers shows how a band may employ aesthetic strategies beyond cultural nationalism in order to mobilize other populations within the city.

On October 1, 2014 teachers in Rio de Janeiro held an anniversary commemoration for a repressed teachers’ strike, one of the bloodiest days in the protest movement in 2013.<sup>103</sup> Os Siderais’ snare player, Miguel Maron, is a high school teacher and union member, and he organized the band to play at the action in Cinelândia, a central square well-trod by protests. When I arrived trumpet in hand to play with the band, the entire square was already surrounded by armed riot police, looking like they could close in at any point. There were banners hanging all over the square with information on the strikes and recounting the violence that occurred the year before. Many young and mostly white protestors were dressed all in black as the internationally recognizable Black Bloc.<sup>104</sup> They waved giant black flags seemingly ready for a police attack. Amidst the menacing police presence, the mood seemed tense and subdued before the band began to play.

Os Siderais would transform a lackluster protest into an exuberant street party in defiance of the police. Brass band renditions of punk songs triggered a mosh pit; the Black Bloc yelled the English words “Hey Ho, Let’s Go” as the band played the Ramones song “Blitzkrieg Pop” (1976). The tuba player then led the dancers to chant “Occupy the streets” (“*Ocupa as ruas!*”) over a *maracatú* rhythm as the protestors danced around the square in a conga line. Over the drum groove of a Fela Kuti song, the tenor saxophonist came to the front to read a poem by

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<sup>103</sup> See Os Siderais perform at the action at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF6wwDEbQeU>.

<sup>104</sup> The Black Bloc is an internationally known tactic of dressing all in black to cover one’s identity while engaging in direct action. It is often portrayed as primarily middle-class and white.



Mário Quintana: “Who knows the day...that we will know how to love?” The band ended the protest performance with a rendition of the Italian leftist anthem, “Bella Ciao.” After singing the lyrics in Italian, Os Siderais began playing it over and over again at increasing speeds, again triggering a mosh pit. They sang,

This is the flower of the partisan,  
Oh bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao.  
This is the flower of the partisan  
Who died for freedom.

“Bella Ciao” is an Italian partisan song of uncertain origin that is most associated with the leftist Italian Resistance against fascism during World War II. The song spread across the world as an anthem of leftist resistance in leftist communities internationally following the war, but it is certainly not well known in Brazil beyond those communities (Bagini 2014). Trombonist Gustavo Machado explains, “[‘Bella Ciao’] is not known by the public in general, only those who have studied a bit to know that this is a resistance song from the second World War” (12/19/14). The use of this song, then, is in direct contrast to BlocAto’s strategy of playing well-known music to mobilize those who may not be educated in the history of leftist repertoires. While relatively unknown even within leftist circles, the song is popular with leftist brass bands in the United States and Europe, and I had played it numerous times in protests in the Bay Area.



Os Siderais playing at the original protests in defense of teachers. Photo by Gabriel Seibt on September 27, 2013.

Using poetry, international leftist anthems unknown to the audience, and an international repertoire of songs that appealed especially to the punk aesthetic of the Black Bloc, Os Siderais enabled a temporary musical occupation of the square in the face of police intimidation. Unlike the participatory and mass-oriented repertoire and tactics of BlocAto that are intended especially

to support marches and political chants, Os Siderais' engagement in this protest was presentational and intended to incite a middle-class audience to create a politicized street party that might diffuse the political tensions in the square.

With this international outlook, the band has engaged in translating elements of the international Occupy Movement to Rio de Janeiro. Before the June 2013 protests, which many in the global media referred to as the “Brazilian Occupy,” there was in 2011 an Ocupa Rio (Occupy Rio) tent occupation of the central square of Cinelândia in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement. Many of the tactics, including “mic check,” general assemblies, and tent-city occupations of public space, that were developed in New York were practiced in Rio, as well as in many other cities around the world (Holston 2014). According to my collaborators, the political meaning of *ocupar* (to occupy) and the word's prevalence were direct results of the American Occupy Movement and the Ocupa Rio protests that were spawned by it. Os Siderais saxophonist Gabriel Fromm explains that “we didn't use the word ‘occupy’ before the movement. ‘Ocupar’ was much more linked to physical occupation of space... Invasions of buildings were acts of occupation. The tendency to bring occupation to the street came from Occupy Wall Street. And [the word] gained this more political connotation, as in Ocupa carnaval and Ocupa Lapa” (1/8/15).



Tags referencing the international Occupy Movement at UNI-RIO. May 23, 2015. Photo by author.

The word “ocupar” and the ethic of occupation of public space are now extremely common in the vocabulary and repertoires of the social and music movements that stake claims on public space in Rio. Os Siderais and other *neofanfarrista* bands continue to ritualize these internationally derived repertoires. Os Siderais played early on at the Ocupa Rio protests, and the band incorporated certain symbols and practices from the protests, including the Guy Fawkes mask,<sup>105</sup> which was worn by a large tattooed male standard-bearer. The band's saxophonist Gabriel explains,

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<sup>105</sup> Guy Fawkes, who planned the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605 against the British Parliament, is a memorialized figure of revolutionary action. The iconic Guy Fawkes mask became an internationally recognized anti-capitalist symbol of the Occupy Movement and is a common *fantasia* in the streets of Rio.

I told Os Siderais that this man would be a great standard-bearer because we are a rock n' roll *fanfarra*, so as opposed to other *fanfarras* we don't need a pretty young girl with a cute standard. We need a rock n' roll guy and he is very rock n' roll, all tattooed, huge, with a face almost like an ogre. We followed the Occupy Movement against capitalism and the standard-bearer wanted to incorporate the symbol of Guy Fawkes. (1/8/15)

The band's associations with protest scenes that were internationally oriented and more middle-class led it, therefore, to make different, largely more presentational, strategic choices in selecting its musical repertoire of contention than those of BlocAto. The presentational tactics produce different, but no less tangible, effects on those they aim to mobilize.

### **“Spontaneous” Musical Repertoires of Contention**

While some bands prepare repertoires in order to provide specific roles of musical support within a protest, Carioca brass musicians are also well accustomed to playing with one another spontaneously, resorting to a vast collectively known repertoire available from street carnival and *neofanfarrismo*. In protests, brass and percussion musicians meet somewhat spontaneously and play through songs generally learned in other spaces. In such cases, it is easy to default to standard repertoire, but the strategic impact of music within a protest space is no less important. For example, brass musicians commonly play the Star Wars “Imperial March” during any police encroachment. They have adopted melodic soccer chants that are played collectively with protestors singing along, such as “O [Cabral, Cunha, Pezão, Temer or any name] é ditador...” (“[interchangeable right-wing politician] is a dictator”), which is adapted from “O campeão voltou” (“The champion has returned”).

Because they are so well known among the brass community and act as a kind of musical default repertoire, *marchinhas* are often adapted for protests. “Ó Abre Alas” (“Open the wings”), for example, is a famous *marchinha* that in carnival marches is often played first as a carnival *bloco* sets off (see chapter two). In protests, musicians use this song of movement to compel crowds to move and often to transgress barriers set by the police.<sup>106</sup> Tomás relates that on June 20, the day of the largest of the June 2013 protests, “Bandeira Branca” (“White Flag”), a slow *marcha-rancho*, helped calm a situation that might have otherwise ended in stampede:

With a million people in the streets, the police started to fight with a group that was trying to advance... There were a lot of people and the police arrived and everyone started running from gas bombs... [A trombonist] started to play “Bandeira Branca” [“White Flag”], which is a song that pleads for peace. It's very slow and when people started to hear the song they stopped running and went more slowly. Everyone started to play the song and people followed the standard. And we saw that we provide an incredible security role. (11/13/14)

At times, however, spontaneous decisions about protest repertoire taken from carnival are responsive rather than strategic. Trumpet player Leo Adler relates that in the 2013 protests,

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<sup>106</sup> “Ó Abre Alas” and other *marchinhas* used to invade Governor's Palace in Rio [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_dkqbKtU0I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_dkqbKtU0I)

There is a video of a policeman shooting and someone else shooting back and I am playing “Allah-la Ô,” which is a carnival *marchinha*. But it’s not the song that I would have liked to play at that moment. I think that there are songs that would be better suited, but in the moment of tear gas on all sides, the last thing you think about is what song you will play. Whatever comes out helps the people. (11/19/14)<sup>107</sup>

Beyond these stock songs, musicians who assemble together but may not play in the same bands also make particular contextual choices on the spot in order to animate a given protest. At the invitation of musicians from Orquestra Voadora’s *oficina*, I attended a protest calling for the release of Rafael Braga. Braga is a black man and the only arrestee who was imprisoned during the 2013 protests, though it is unclear that he had any relation to the protests themselves. Musicians and protestors assembled outside of Rio’s legislative assembly, as speakers denounced disparity in the justice system against black people. Even at this early point in the protest, there were more riot police than protestors. As the march began, the musicians began to play, providing a soundtrack of *marchinhas*, Voadora songs, Chico Buarque renditions, and “Bella Ciao.” Riot cops surrounded the march on either side.

The march was headed by a theatrical procession in which four black women were roped together acting as a chain of slaves at the front of the march. A man ceremoniously whipped them as he walked alongside. This theatrical enactment of slavery drew a performative link from contemporary black incarceration to the legacies of slavery in Brazil. The brass musicians, reacting to the performance, launched into Baden Powell’s “Berimbau” (1963).<sup>108</sup> Protestors sang as they recognized the song: “Capoeira has sent me to say that it has come—it has come to fight.” While the image of whipping the black women certainly created an acerbic critique of Braga’s imprisonment, the brass musicians reinterpreted this reference to slavery through choosing a song that memorialized the cultural traditions of struggle during slavery and mobilizing the protestors to sing.



Black women enacting images of slavery. September 23, 2014. Photo by author.

<sup>107</sup> Leo playing *marchinhas* in violent protests: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=it9zhuKzvk>

<sup>108</sup> The *berimbau* is a stringed instrument used in *capoeira*, the Afro-Brazilian dance and martial arts form that may have been used to disguise training for combat.

Such spontaneous uses of musical repertoires of contention are generally strategically intended for participation, as well-known repertoires from carnival, local brass bands, and popular music are repurposed for political priorities. In choosing what to play for a given action, it is the strategic impact of a given song and how it may communicate with and mobilize diverse groups of protestors that is at stake.

### **Politicizing a Musical Community**

These bands' strategic employment of musical repertoires for spaces of contention have played an important role in shifting the political priorities of the larger *neofanfarrismo* movement. While some of these musicians decry *neofanfarrismo* as alienated from political action, their actions have helped push questions and debates of politicization and musical militancy to the forefront of the movement. The shifting contexts of political engagement in Rio more largely, however, played an equal if not more important role. *Neofanfarristas* relate, for example, that the enormity of the June 2013 protests politicized broad swaths of society. Orquestra Voadora saxophonist André Ramos views the increasing politicization of the *neofanfarrismo* community as a response to the recent intensification of political and economic crises:

In the past seven years, we have lived through a time in which this crisis has intensified a lot...and this certainly influenced the work of Orquestra Voadora. These questions of privatization [and] of appropriation of public space became increasingly more intense, [especially] with the World Cup and the Olympics, which caused a speculative boom. ...The question of the protests changed the thinking of people and they started to see Orquestra Voadora as a way of thinking about alternatives...In the beginning, it was just fun. Simply show up, have fun, and play. With this intensification of the crisis, we started to see that we had a political role. (1/9/15)

In this section, I discuss the increasingly politicized discourses and actions of the *neofanfarrismo* community in relation to the urban crises Ramos describes, especially in relation to the June 2013 protests, the World Cup and Olympics, and musicians' positioning in relation to the Workers Party regime.

While many of the earliest brass *blocos* like Boitató and Céu na Terra expressed alternative stances towards the official carnival, the organizers of both groups never suggested to me that political action was itself a major orientation for the street carnival revival. Various questions of rights and uses of public spaces emerged that were indeed political, but explicit positioning around political questions did not seem to be a priority of any band until Os Siderais' founding in 2011. As the brass movement expanded beyond its carnival beginnings in 2008 with the founding of Orquestra Voadora and others (see chapter three), more opportunities for political action presented new ways for brass musicians to engage in protest. Some musicians complained, however, that it was impossible to unify a single band around engaging in political action before the founding of explicitly political bands. Orquestra Voadora trumpeter Daniel Paiva explains

We don't put Orquestra Voadora out supporting protests for various reasons. I go to many protests but Voadora doesn't go [as Voadora] because we have become an institution. We have a huge carnival event. We have sponsorship from the government. Some people in the group don't get along politically...As a band and institution in Rio we cannot be there with a [partisan] flag. (10/28/14)

Voadora musicians explain that in this period, many worried about the band's possibilities for wide commercial success if they were perceived as too politicized around particular issues. Daniel positions the band's institutionalization against its potential for political contestation. Select musicians from the band might participate in musical protests, but they would be careful not to associate themselves with their official band. For example, for the first protest for which Orquestra Voadora was asked to play, the yearly March for the Legalization of Marijuana (Marcha da Maconha), select Orquestra Voadora musicians organized the "Vegetable Orquestra" (Orquestra Vegetal) in order to participate. They put together a repertoire of reggae, *marchinha*, and other songs for the occasion. Some of these musicians would form Planta na Mente, or ("plant on the mind"), a brass *bloco* that would change the words of common *marchinhas* to commentaries on the drug war.

"It's kind of schizophrenic," Daniel observes, "the way that the band would change its identity in order to support a protest" (10/28/14). Voadora's tubist Tim Malik explains that "taking a public political stance in Brazil is not necessarily the thing to do. It can be hard core. There's people watching you. There's a complete lack of accountability. People can tend to appear complacent but there's just no protection. You get on someone's bad side and if they have power, they can make your life terrible" (6/12/15). In this context, Os Siderais' willingness to publicly support protests as a band was a notable alternative development within *neofanfarrismo* in 2011.

In June 2013, protest activity augmented quickly and exponentially in the so-called "June days" (*jornadas de junho*) around the demands for public services and social prioritization over the trickle-down logic of the sporting events. While political action may have been controversial in a band like Orquestra Voadora before, the band's tubist Tim Malik explains that in June 2013, "that discussion was out the window... We had to participate, obviously. This was something that speaks to what is going on in Brazilian society today and it was totally ubiquitous. I'm not sure if there was anyone in the band who didn't go to the protests" (6/12/15). Bands like Orquestra Voadora used social media to support the protests and organize musicians to come armed with instruments.

The police repression that met the protestors was extreme, with gas bombs, rubber bullets, and other forms of crowd dispersal, igniting even larger protests framed against the police response. Musicians describe playing in intense and violent situations. Juba relates that June 20, the largest day of protest, was "the biggest repression of all time. They managed to explode gas bombs in five neighborhoods at the same time—the center, Lapa, Catete, Gloria, Flamengo, Laranjeiras, Catumbí, even Flamengo...Bombs, bombs, smoke, smoke...And I was playing trombone" (Pires 10/12/14). Brass bands supported chants of thousands: "It hasn't stopped. It has to stop. I want the end of the military police" ("Não acabou. Tem que acabar. Eu quero o fim da polícia militar"). Musicians covered their instruments with stickers produced by social movements, such as "Nothing should seem impossible to change" ("Nada deve parecer impossível de mudar"), "There will be no World Cup" ("Não vai ter copa"), and "Whose Cup?" ("Copa pra quem?"). In international solidarity with the Brazilian protestors and their



*neofanfarrista* friends, the Chilean brass band Rim Bam Bum (see chapter three) later released a song called “Não vai ter copa” (2016) based on a *funk carioca* rhythm.



Left: Tag of “Whose Cup?” in Complexo do Alemão *favela*. December 15, 2014.  
Right: Sticker of same on Os Siderais’ tuba. October 13, 2014. Photos by author.

Trumpeter Bruno de Nicola suggests that widespread politicization of the *neofanfarrismo* community occurred during this period when it was difficult to remain unengaged, which contributed to reframing *neofanfarrismo* around protest and activism:

The *fanfarras* became a means of protest. There was a movement of mixing all the *fanfarras* called the “Surreals” [“*Surreais*”]...The *real* [Brazilian currency] had become “surreal” so the band was called the Surreals...just as the rise of the cost of public transport was surreal. I think the current engagement comes from this relationship with the protests of 2013 and from this they became more engaged bands. (1/15/16)

By July 2013, much of the police repression had produced effective results, and protest energies on such a mass scale diminished quickly. But many protest actions continued and musicians and bands still play for them. Cultural events and organizations were founded that maintained the activist energies of the city, such as *Ocupa Escola*—projects that occupied schools with art on Saturdays—and *Ocupa Lapa*—a series of cultural and political occupations of the Lapa entertainment neighborhood.<sup>109</sup> Social movements increasingly began to organize occupations of public space with cultural programming around particular issues and campaigns where *neofanfarrista* bands and other musical groups would play, such as “*Redução não é Solução*,” a campaign against the lowering of the age to be tried as an adult.

The desire to maintain the activist energies of June and translate them into the largest popular mobilization in Rio, the annual carnival, led to the *Ocupa Carnaval* movement. Changing the lyrics of popular *marchinha* lyrics, musical activists primarily from *BlocAto* aimed to politicize the street carnival around contemporary issues. These rewritten *marchinhas* were professionally recorded and broadcast on Sound Cloud and YouTube before carnival and then played and sung by brass musicians during carnival. Saxophonist and activist Tomás Ramos describes the *Ocupa Carnaval* movement as

<sup>109</sup> Os Siderais playing *Fela Kuti* at *Ocupa Lapa*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjkuYLuR5i8>

An attempt to construct a common campaign, a politics of communication with all these collectives and militants that were participating in this idea of using carnival as an opportunity to strengthen the platforms of social movements, principally those that were in the street during the protests. [The question initially was] how could we manage to take advantage of carnival to keep alive the energy of June until the World Cup?...[We used] what we have from carnival that already works: musicians, *fantasias*, allegories, and standards. (11/13/14)

These songs lambasted the political pretensions of the Olympic city and called attention to the corruption and inequalities of daily life in Rio de Janeiro. For example, Ocupa Carnaval rewrote the lyrics of “Cidade Maravilhosa,” a beloved *marchinha* that is often played at the end of carnival brass *blocos* like Boitatá and Céu na Terra. “Cidade maravilhosa” (“the marvelous city”) is a common nickname for Rio de Janeiro. It was emblemized in André Filho’s *marchinha*, which became a carnival hit in 1935. The lyrics speak of an enchanting city full of spectacular sights and sounds, the heart of Brazil and the cradle of *samba*. Popularized by Carmen Miranda in the United States, the song helped portray Brazil as a tropical paradise throughout the world, and it is now informally the anthem of Rio (Castro 2004). Below are the original lyrics of the song on the left and Ocupa Carnaval’s satirical rewrite on the right:

Marvelous city  
Full of a thousand enchantments.  
Marvelous city  
Heart of my Brazil.

Marvelous city  
Full of a Thousand Enchantments.  
Greedy City  
Removed 40,000!

Marvelous city  
Full of a thousand enchantments  
Marvelous city  
Heart of my Brazil.

Marvelous city  
Full of a thousand enchantments  
Mafia-run city  
Where Amarildo disappeared.

Cradle of samba and of pretty songs  
That live in the soul of the people  
You are the altar of our hearts  
That sing cheerfully.

Cradle of bullets and of tanks  
Stealing the souls of people  
You are the altar of great scorn  
Made violently.

Flourishing garden of love and nostalgia  
Land that seduces everyone  
May God bring you happiness  
Nest of dream and light.  
(my translations)

It is Brazil’s most expensive city  
Expelling your people.  
Prices only the rich can pay,  
The gringo sways contentedly.

When Rio de Janeiro was in the running for the 2016 Olympics in 2009, the director of *City of God*, Fernando Mirelles, released a video for the city’s candidacy with the city’s bid

slogan “live your passion.”<sup>110</sup> The video features a diverse set of Cariocas singing “Cidade maravilhosa,” but, rather than using the original track, this version features a variety of sounds from the city itself to create rhythm. Mirelles’ version does not use the traditional *marchinha* rhythm, but rather ranges from *funk carioca* to *samba*, creating an aural portrait of Rio as at once traditional and updated. The video captures a wide diversity of Rio sights and sounds, from Guanabara Bay to the ocean and Sugarloaf mountain. Local symbols—the Santa Teresa tram over the Lapa arches and images of *capoeira*, *samba* circles, and carnival—are prominent. The sung voice is itself a sonic collage of diverse voices singing the *marchinha*. At one point in the song a loose translation of verse one is sung by a female voice in English addressing the international onlooker. This plurality of voices presents a kind of consensus in the exaltation of Rio as a contender for host of the Olympics that cuts across gender, class, and race—what politicized *neofanfarristas* view as the dominating narrative of the Olympic City.

An “alternative” view might see this video as engaging in an unproblematic exaltation of Rio de Janeiro, creating a spectacular image that takes no account of the enormous social costs that hosting the Olympic games would entail. In this view, it is not what the video includes but what it leaves out: the evictions, the rising cost of living, *favela* pacifications, and the submission to FIFA and the IOC. In other words, the video celebrates the spectacle without examining the costs involved in producing it. In this version, the benefits flow to the gringo, who is the only one who sways to Rio’s *samba*.

The video of Ocupa Carnaval’s version<sup>111</sup> shows the famous Christ the Redeemer statue reimagined as a *choque de ordem* officer.<sup>112</sup> Scenes of violent police operations in destitute *favelas* contrast with rich city elites, while pacification police tanks roll through *favelas*. Police brutally repress protestors, and homes are destroyed to make way for golf courses. The lyrics refer to the 2013 protests and to the disappearance amidst pacification operations of Amarildo, the resident of Rio’s largest *favela* Rocinha, who never returned after being detained by the pacification police (Bowater 2013). The phrase “We must resist” (“Resistar é preciso”) is spray painted on a wall as the video closes to a dissonant chord, visually and aurally implying a lack of closure to the song.

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<sup>110</sup> This video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMLzB1fsSTc>. Mirelles was involved in creating other publicity for the Olympic bid, including the film *Unity*, which was shown in Copenhagen where the selection of Rio as host of the 2016 Olympics was announced (*Rio2016* 2009).

<sup>111</sup> This video can be viewed at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKQGJgxF\\_uU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKQGJgxF_uU)

<sup>112</sup> “*Choque de ordem*” (shock of order) is a term used to refer to police actions that violently and seemingly arbitrarily impose order, control, and pacification upon the urban population.



Left: Street art asks “Where is Amarildo” at Uni-Rio in Urca, Rio de Janeiro. December 25, 2014. Photo by author. Right: Ocupa Carnaval artwork with *commedia dell’arte*/carnival figure of Colombina reimaged as a Black Bloc protestor.

Ocupa Carnaval’s practice of changing the words of popular carnival tunes to suit protests drew on a practice that arose in the 2013 protests themselves. Cultural geography professor and percussionist Emerson Guerra explains:

In the [2013] protests, people took the themes of the protests and sang them in the rhythm of *marchinhas de carnaval*. I think that it’s almost natural because what people know how to do when they are together in the street is play and sing. And when they go to a protest, they will do this too. And, therefore, in the protests, there was carnival in the middle of it all...And I started to think, if the protests use carnival, will it be that in the next carnival they will put protest in carnival as well?...The carnival of this year, soon after the protests, had the *blocos* of carnival playing the traditional songs of carnival, but they used lyrics with political content that had been created in the protests with ironic lyrics about the rulers...So this happened on both sides. As the protest became carnival, the carnival became protest as well. (10/7/14)

Attempting to spread Ocupa Carnaval as a method for politicizing carnival, especially throughout the world of *neofanfarrismo*, the organizers passed out movement stickers that appeared all over the standards and instruments of their bands in solidarity with the movement. They produced a manifesto of Ocupa Carnaval, posted on its Facebook page, that overtly contests what many on the left see as the privatization, spectacle, and militarization of the city at the expense of the public. It positions an “alternative” and resistant vision of Rio de Janeiro in relation to a city portrayed as oppressive and neoliberal.

Carnival is the most beautiful cry of the people. We occupy the streets with banners, confetti, and coils to show that Rio is ours: its Colombinas and Pierrôs are alive and pulsate. Down with the ratchets that transform the city into a huge business, where profit



matters more than life, where money is freer than people. While they capitalize reality, we socialize the dream. Long live the energy of rebellion. Long live the creativity of the fantasy costumes. Long live Zé Pereira and Saci Pererê. The city is not for sale and our rights are not merchandise. (Ocupa Carnaval 2015)

In the 2014 carnival, Ocupa Carnaval created a large puppet of Fuleco, the official mascot of the 2014 World Cup, who is represented as a Brazilian armadillo called *tatu-bola*. Lambasting the image, Ocupa Carnaval portrayed him as a rich aristocrat and called him “Tatu derrado,” a play on the Portuguese “‘tá tudo errado,” or “it’s all wrong.”<sup>113</sup> Since 2014, Ocupa Carnaval has become a street carnival tradition. During the Ocupa Carnaval *bloco* parade in 2015, unlike any other *bloco* I participated in, armed riot police were on the scene before the event officially started, much as they are at official protests. Though the event differed little from other carnival events—the *bloco* played in place and then paraded through the center of the city—it was treated as a protest by the police who marched in single-file lines on either side of the parade. In 2016, Ocupa Carnaval billed the parade as “Olim piada,” a play on the word *Olimpíadas* (Olympics). “Piada” means joke in Portuguese, and musicians intended to highlight “the joke that is all this debate of the mega-events, of the sold city” (11/13/14).<sup>114</sup>



The World Cup mascot lampooned by Ocupa Carnaval in 2014 carnival. Available at <http://eatrío.net/2014/03/rio-carnival-2014-smiles-social-comment-and-drones.html>

The June 2013 protests were in large part an expression of disenchantment with the governing Workers Party (*PT*) regime by the radical left. At the beginning of my fieldwork in

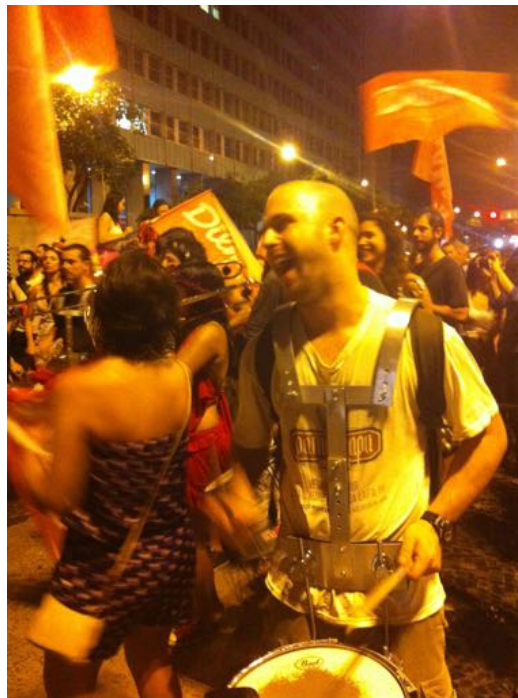
<sup>113</sup> Ocupa Carnaval parade in 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkpvdIJO5Y>.

<sup>114</sup> Musicians in BlocAto do Nada and Ocupa Carnaval have also been involved in organizing the Artistic Front of the Left (Bonde Frente Artística de Esquerda), made up of several *blocos* unified in the goal of using street music for political action (see Martins 2015).

August 2014, I arrived amidst the presidential election campaigns, which would see Dilma Rousseff prevailing over the right-wing candidate Aécio Neves on October 26, the fourth straight presidential win by the *PT*. The campaign produced schisms within the *neofanfarrismo* community, and the left more broadly, about whether to align with the *PT* in a moment in which there were only two choices for election. Some “anarchist” members of the movement did not want the movement to become a rallying point for an institutionalized governing political party and urged others to void their ballots, while *PT* supporters did the opposite.

Almost all *neofanfarristas* were united in their opposition to Aécio, but many did not feel that political content should be a part of *neofanfarrista* events outside of protests. In brass jam sessions in Lapa (see chapter five), *PT* supporters on occasion arrived to dance in the middle of the session to the visible irritation of some members. During a Voadora *bloco* rehearsal in September 2014, musicians replaced a defiant chant commonly yelled over their version of Jimi Hendrix’ “Purple Haze” of “No to masters” (“Não ao maestro”) with “No to Aécio” (“Não ao Aécio”). About half of the musicians chanted loudly while many others registered looks of disapproval. Those who wanted to openly celebrate and support the *PT* faced disagreement from the radical left as well as the depoliticized flanks of the movement.

These tensions mounted on the day of Dilma’s re-election, October 26, 2014. The “anarchist” *bloco* Boi Tolo, which expresses no party affiliations or political goals outside of its resistance to official carnival (see chapter five), was holding its first march of the long carnival season. While the intent of the parade was not to manifest any kind of celebration for Dilma, red banners flooded the march in celebration once her reelection had been announced, to the consternation of many musicians. With so many red banners, the visual appearance of the parade created what looked to be a Dilma celebration. Leftist Black Blocs arrived chanting “Dilma is a fascist,” and skirmishes arose between the anarchist and institutional lefts in a march intended to have no particular political platform.



Dilma supporters invade Boi Tolo march upon her reelection. October 26, 2014. Photo by author.



When the process of impeaching Dilma mounted just one year later as economic crises pervaded the Brazilian news, many *neofanfarristas* not particularly keen on the *PT* chose to realign themselves in defense of democracy and the right of the party to rule. Using the practices and repertoires of street carnival and *neofanfarrismo*, brass bands marched together in events they called Carnivals for Democracy (*carnavais pela democracia*). While huge right-wing protests also captured headlines, no *neofanfarrista* band would be seen at an event criticizing Dilma in 2016. Once Temer took charge of the presidency, he quickly attempted to abolish the Ministry of Culture, resulting in mass occupations of Ministry of Culture buildings throughout Brazil (known as Ocupa MinC). Many *neofanfarrista* bands were frequent musical participants at the ministry occupation in Rio, which lasted several months and also showcased popular leftist Brazilian musicians Caetano Veloso and Chico Buarque. These protests led the new government to back away from shutting down the Ministry.

“Fora Temer” (“down with Temer”) has become a rallying call and chant, often over brass band beats, for leftists now fighting what they view as an illegitimate president.<sup>115</sup> Tensions have heightened as Temer sought to reform social security and workers’ protections culminating in the first general strike in twenty-one years on April 28, 2017. Buses were burned as symbols of the lack of prioritizing social services, police reacted with violent repression, and *neofanfarristas* can be seen musically supporting the events. After the violence subsided later in the night, Technobloco roamed through the streets of central Rio in what appears to be a rave in an apocalyptic landscape, musically occupying burnt out buses with brass renditions of techno songs.<sup>116</sup> With the jailing in 2018 of former *PT* president Lula, beloved by the Brazilian left, the political convictions of *neofanfarristas* seem to have only hardened since I finished my fieldwork.

The period of mega-events and the fall of *PT* rule has created a heightened politicized atmosphere throughout Brazil. While *neofanfarrismo* may have emerged in the relatively less politicized boom time of the 2000s, the mounting political and economic crises of the 2010s have provided opportunities for musical engagement in popular protests that swept the country. These have been opportunities for *neofanfarristas* to theorize and act upon the potential that a socio-musical movement of the streets might have to mobilize street protests.

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<sup>115</sup> “Fora Temer” reinterpreted as part of “Carmina Burana” by orchestra musicians at Ocupa MinC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8-Y64oR5E4>

<sup>116</sup> See coverage of the general strike and brass bands’ participation here: <https://www.facebook.com/TheInterceptBr/videos/1913697938918245/>



Trombonist Cristiana Campanha at Orquestra Voadora rehearsal hangs a sign from her trombone saying “Justice without party” and a hashtag proclaiming the innocence of former president Lula after he was condemned in January 2018, potentially barring him from running for a third term as president.

## Conclusions

These questions of politicization, like the larger questions of what constitutes alternative culture or musical activism in *neofanfarrismo*, have been at the heart of contentious debates. No uniform political ideology or platform has emerged within the community. Its diverse musical manifestations in protests parallel the various factions and fractures within the left itself. While many *neofanfarristas* with whom I spoke view the last several years as a time of deepening political commitment, others saw the explosion of interest in the *neofanfarrismo* movement as resulting in watering down the levels of politicization, as less engaged people have joined the fashionable movement. Nevertheless, these diverse engagements in protest would be a major factor in the consolidation of the movement around activism in the Honk Rio! Festival of Activist *Fanfarras* in 2015.

Instrumental protest may not have been one of the initial aims of the brass *bloco* revival or the *neofanfarrismo* movement, but it has emerged as one of the foremost priorities of much of the movement in the past several years as musicians have responded to changing political realities. They have strategically adopted many of the diverse musical repertoires of the movement for moments of contestation. The repertoires, vocabularies, and ethics of carnival have been further translated into political action, while political actions have also come to permeate street carnival itself. Employing both participatory and presentational musical strategies, they creatively and strategically draw on repertoires that protestors may or may not know in order to animate them towards different kinds of political actions. These modes of musical engagement reflect, in large part, a desire for horizontal modes of political engagement,

romanticized in an idealized Bakhtinian carnival and shared by many contemporary leftist social movements around the world.

The activist desire of *neofanfarristas* to create a horizontal, participatory, and public musical culture goes far beyond, however, the specific acts of instrumental protest.

*Neofanfarrismo*'s instrumental activism is more broadly articulated around shifting cultural practices and assumptions about music making by seeking to construct a movement of "public participation in music." It is to these projects and their possibilities and limitations that I turn in the next two chapters.

## 5. Whose Rio?

### Possibilities, Limitations, and Contradictions of Public Participation in Music

The animated video of the “Hino da Orquestra Voadora”<sup>117</sup> (“Anthem of Orquestra Voadora”) presents the idea that participatory music making in public space is an effective mode of transforming neoliberal urban society. In the cartoon, a foreboding voice narrates over bleak urban images of trash, sanitary catastrophes, and urban chaos: “Like all metropolises, Rio de Janeiro meets the biggest enemy of humanity: pollution... Who will be able to intervene?” The beginning of a *marchinha* rhythm then accompanies a super hero image of Orquestra Voadora, occupying a Transformer robot who fights a monster character personifying pollution and urban chaos. Rio’s iconic Christ the Redeemer statue heads the transformer, and as the monster punches the transformer, musical instruments fly out of it into the hands of the terrorized people in the streets. As the people begin to play, the pollution monster is distracted and starts dancing, letting the Orquestra Voadora transformer easily dispatch him. The Christ statue retakes its place on Corcovado mountain and a new beautiful day dawns on Rio de Janeiro.

The video is in many ways an illustration of an instrumental protest of the citizenry who have taken up the arms of musical instruments against the monstrous personification of pollution and urban decay. Rejecting the safety-valve belief that carnival is a hedonistic distraction used by elites to maintain order, Orquestra Voadora positions carnivalesque musical participation as a form of political activism. The video also portrays the expansion of a musical movement led by Orquestra Voadora towards a musicalization of the entire city. Beyond an instrumental protest oriented towards a particular target, the video playfully presents city-wide collective music making in the public commons itself as a defiant and *effective* way to counter the challenges, corruption, and disintegration of urban life.

As noted in chapter four, the meanings of activism within *neofanfarrismo* are much broader than protest. The activism of *neofanfarrismo* is articulated around the construction of alternative models of musical and social engagement in a neoliberal city. Voadora’s saxophonist explains, “Our political transformation is much more about seeding and fomenting this kind of thought and experience, not about discourse. People experiment. I think this is much more important” (Ramos 2015). As shown below at the Festival of Public Art, these musical activist engagements form not only a critical protest, but a proposal for a different city.



“We are not a protest... We are a proposal” written on banner at the Festival of Public Art. Photo by author on June 20, 2015.

<sup>117</sup> “Hino da Orquestra Voadora” available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb7pALGpI3M>

Famed stilt-walker Raquel Potí claims that the activism of *neofanfarrismo* is oriented towards showing that the street “is a public space. It shouldn’t serve commercial interests. It shouldn’t serve the interests of politicians. It should preferentially serve the interests of the population. We come here to the street because it is also our house” (1/19/16). Professional trombonist Marco Serragrande affectionately refers to the street as a privileged pedagogical space for musicians: “My school was the street. The lesson [*aula*] was the street” (12/11/15). I argue in this chapter that the discourses of activism in *neofanfarrista* bands are broadly articulated around the fostering of a popular movement of “public participation in music.” This term unites the principal drives of much of the movement towards social inclusion and occupation of public space through music.

*Neofanfarristas* argue that musical participation in the public commons has the capacity to erode social barriers and the senses of exclusion that characterize life in a neoliberal and profoundly unequal city. They seek to create a “horizontal” musical movement that levels distinctions between leader and follower, musician and spectator, producer and consumer, as well as class distinctions among participants. These practices have allowed the movement to grow exponentially beyond the world of relatively more professional musicians, such as those who run Boitatá, Céu na Terra, and Voadora. They have fueled a discourse of musical populism that has led scores of Carioca adults to engage in music making in the streets for the first time. Trombonist Clément Mombereau recounts, “this is why I say that the *fanfarra* is the true popular music in the first meaning of the word [popular], more than pop music, in the sense of including everyone without exception” (11/11/14).

The ubiquitous graffiti and street art tag “Rio pra quem?” (“Whose Rio?” or “Rio for whom?”) puts at stake the question of what populations should benefit from the city’s economic and social rise. *Neofanfarristas* answer that Rio should be for “the people” (*o povo*). “The people,” though an intrinsic part of much left-wing and populist discourse, is, however, obviously a nebulous concept. In this discourse, “the people” is often constructed as the oppressed and potentially revolutionary majority as opposed to the ruling bourgeoisie.

*Neofanfarrismo* is, however, a movement with specific privileged social origins. It is a cultural product of the alternative middle class, and its practitioners are mostly university educated and whiter people of the Carioca south zone. How then are “the people” constructed and performed in a middle-class musical movement that espouses populist activism? What kinds of participation are fostered in these musical happenings in public space? Who is *neofanfarrismo*’s activism ultimately for? Through examination of a “radically open” brass *bloco*, Orquestra Voadora’s brass band class, and brass jam sessions in the streets, in this chapter I explore the discourses and practices of this articulation of musical activism, as well as its possibilities, limits, and contradictions.

### **Instrumental Activism and Participation in Music**

As I have argued elsewhere in this dissertation, much scholarship on musical activism has focused on lyrical content, using lyrics to understand how musicians explicitly position themselves on questions of social or political importance and value. Exclusive attention to semantic content misses, however, how the instrumental dynamics of musical performance themselves might be understood as activist, or aimed at ethical transformations of society. For *neofanfarristas*, this is a crucial point. They frame the discourses of activism around the specific musical capabilities of the *fanfarra*: its mobility, its volume, and its capacity to grow. Orquestra Voadora’s trombonist Juba remarks:



Wind instruments congregate [and grow in numbers], different from electric [instruments]. If you have several guitars, it doesn't work—you don't need them, nor several bass [guitars]. But with horns you can make sections and bring together many trumpets or trombones. This helps *fanfarras* have a different [element] from other arts and other music [formations]: the physical element that [makes it possible] to be in the street and make a live, horizontal, and mobile intervention. (Pires 10/12/14)

French trombonist Clément Mombereau echoes such sentiments regarding the “natural politics” of the *fanfarra* formation: “The only natural political claim [*revendication*] of the *fanfare* is that you occupy space. That is the innate politics of the *fanfarra*. You occupy a space and transform it into a party” (11/11/14).

I examine the practices of this instrumental musical movement in order to explore how sound itself may be understood as potentially instrumental to social and political change. Instrumental activism, as a concept, does not negate the relevance of lyrical and semantic meanings, nor is it divorced from them. Many of the songs in the alternative brass movement's repertoire have well-known lyrics that are sung by *foliões* (though many do not). Some of these lyrics are clearly “political” and “countercultural” and some are not. Lyrical analysis itself, however, does not show how we can understand musical activism from the perspective of participatory music making in the public commons where sound itself articulates a politics of belonging.

This chapter brings together theories of participatory music making with theories of music making in public spaces in order to show how in much of *neofanfarrismo* these two practices come together as an ethic of “public participation in music.” Much of the work on participatory music making and community music (Keil 1987; Turino 2008; Street 2012; Higgins 2012) relies strongly on a Marxist frame. In this perspective, capitalist society is understood as promoting specialized labor tasks and hierarchy, resulting in the production of art through spectacle (Debord 1970), commodification, and specialization of an elite class of artistic producers. The capitalist production of art in this model results in alienation from the product of one's labor and commodity fetishism (Taylor 2016).

For these authors, musical participation is proposed as a moral antidote to the specialization and divisions promoted by capitalist society. Keil claims that “participation is the opposite of alienation from nature, from society, from the body, from labor” (1987: 276). Turino asserts that “the participatory field is radical within the capitalist cosmopolitan formation in that it is *not for listening apart from doing*” (2008: 77). These normative values are largely shared by the practitioners of *neofanfarrismo* who situate musical participation as an almost revolutionary alternative to what they view as the dominant culture of spectacle in the *samba* schools and the Lapa entertainment district. For Turino, Keil, and *neofanfarristas*, participatory music is not simply a lesser or amateur form of music. It is a fundamentally different form of artistic production that should be valued as such. Turino portrays musical participation as akin to a revolutionary impulse that enables taking control of one's life from the forces of spectacle and division.

While I do not disagree that many participatory traditions may help dissolve social barriers and create a sense of agency among participants, I find problematic and one-sided the romanticization of participatory traditions as having intrinsically more social value than

presentational traditions, as popular music scholars would likely point out.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, much of *neofanfarrismo*'s ethics also promotes such ideas. As I argued that carnivalesque ethics do not necessarily embody what carnival necessarily and always accomplishes but rather the frames, ideologies, and actions they animate (chapter one), similarly I view beliefs about musical participation as ethical inspirations to action. *Neofanfarristas* have merged the discourses of carnivalesque egalitarianism with musical participation and street occupation, as they seek to foster a musically participatory movement that translates the ethics of carnival to the rest of the year. Why, *neofanfarristas* ask, should a social rite that envisions and enacts equality and musical participation be limited to a month or two-month season alone, merely a carnivalesque “inversion” of reality? Should this not be the world in which we should live all year around?

### **Playing in the Street: Occupying Public Space and The Right to the City**

For *neofanfarristas*, social inclusion and the occupation of public space cannot be conceptually divorced from each other. Public space is where the social other can be included, and this is indeed what makes public space public, the place where “horizontal” social relationships can be constructed. While many definitions of the word “public” have been offered, Renata Dias, an agent for several *neofanfarrista* bands, defines it simply: “The word already says it—public, it’s for everyone” (1/21/16).

Public spaces in Rio include the streets, squares, beaches, parks, and Lapa’s arches, but many people refer simply to the “street” (*a rua*) as an all-encompassing signifier of public space. In Rio, to be in the street (*estar na rua*) is itself a political and social act that is viewed as militating against a city trending towards privatization and militarization. As the street is a racialized space associated with blackness, violence, and the working classes, *neofanfarristas* appropriate various forms of otherness in asserting the ethic of being in the street. Trombonist Rodrigo Daniel claims “if you go to the street to make music you are already being political. The very act of occupying the street with culture and art is already political because there exists another political tendency contrary to this—to transform this, the arches of Lapa, into a shopping center” (5/2/15).

Such claims of the inherent politicalness of playing in the street are manifestations of an extreme conflict in Rio between what Theresa Williamson portrays as “two opposing visions of the city that can be observed in more subtle conflicts in cities around the world today,” between the commercial city wholly based around the interests of profit and “the city as fulfilling a human need for connection and social interaction” (2016: 145). She argues that

this is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is...a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the process of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is...one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights. (145)

Rodrigo’s claims that playing in the street with no particular political cause is “already political” (*já é político*) expands the contested notion that *neofanfarrismo*'s activism is limited to

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<sup>118</sup> Turino’s division between participatory and presentational fields reasserts divisions between “art” and “folk” traditions. The notion, for example, that listening is not a form of doing has been roundly critiqued (Ochoa Gautier 2014).

engagements in explicit protest. Arguing that the various street music movements in Rio indeed constitute a form of musical activism, Herschmann and Fernandes likewise suggest, “We can affirm that the errant music executed in the streets is *politics*, and puts—through the gaps—the *Other* in the urban scene: these creative initiatives, therefore, articulate and generate a tension with the “mediatized Rio de Janeiro, of globalized capitalism, of the logic of the big urban interventions” (2014: 42, my translation). Trumpeter Gert Wimmer similarly theorizes musical activism more broadly as encompassing actions that shift human relations and propose new models of existence in public space:

There are many quotidian activities that sometimes don’t seem like activism but that provoke profound changes in society. A community band for me is an activist band because it brings together human beings. It incites citizens to go to the street. It is an instrument of democratization of human space... All these *fanfarras* propose activist models when they occupy urban space in a collective way for free. Even if they don’t consider themselves activists, they are activists in another way. How can we forge the reconstruction of human relations? I believe that playing music in the streets is a possibility because it’s what brings the population together. (11/16/15)

Much of this activist discourse of *neofanfarrismo* is framed around what David Harvey (in reference to Henri Lefebvre) calls the “right to the city,” or the staking of claim to city spaces (Harvey 2012). Harvey views the right to the city as the major contemporary rationale of international urban social movements, including the June 2013 protests in Brazil, produced in response to neoliberalization and gentrification of global cities. Like Gert, Harvey argues that the right to the city is not based on waiting for a grand revolution. Rather, the revolution is based on practices, moments of “the spontaneous coming together in a moment of ‘irruption;’ when disparate heterotopic groups suddenly see, if only for a fleeting moment, the possibilities of collective action to create something radically different” (2012: Xvii). For Harvey, “the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold” (4). Similarly, *neofanfarristas* posit a rhetoric of practical musical activism that promotes alternative urban realities, not only for themselves but for the city politic itself, in opposition to gentrified, consumerist, and privatized urban spaces.

As central areas of Rio de Janeiro have gentrified, special forces such as Lapa Presente and *choque de ordem* (“shock of order”) police forces have focused their efforts on regulating the uses of public space in order to facilitate private interests. For critics, Lapa and other historical centers are at risk of becoming societies of spectacle (Debord 1970), in which the transformation of everything into a commodity replaces participation and broader access.<sup>119</sup> According to Carvalho et al. (2016), the city’s “Olympic urbanism” has only intensified these

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<sup>119</sup> Promoting a spectator culture in Lapa in which Brazilian music may be freely consumed is part of what George Yúdice calls the “expediency of culture.” In the age of globalization, global city elites have argued that “investment in culture will strengthen the fiber of civil society, which in turn serves as the ideal host for political and economic development” (2003: 2). Districts like Lapa are revitalized “by investing in cultural infrastructure that would attract tourists and lay the foundation for an economic complex of service, information, and culture industries” (19). While the contemporary instantiations of gentrification in Rio have parallels in global cities throughout the world, Rio has a long history of regulating public space as part of projects aimed at civilization, modernity, and progress (Carvalho 2013; Meade 1997).

dynamics. Orquestra Voadora trombonist Márcio Sobrosa comments on the effects on long-term residents and musical culture, observing

the hygienization that exists in Lapa: kick out the people from the street, kick out the street dwellers, kick out the locals to create something for tourists... There is [so much] property speculation such that alternative people don't have any conditions to survive in this place. Inside this Disneyland script of Rio de Janeiro, those who will be able to stay are only those who live from this. Those who have made their lives in this place will be expelled. I am being expelled. Few people manage to live here... Either you agree with this or you leave. (1/14/15)

The center of Rio has certainly been gentrifying and under immense pressure from international speculators. This process is not unidirectional, however, and *neofanfarristas* view themselves as part of contesting this reality. SETHA LOW (2000) has investigated the Latin American plaza as a contested space of culture and politics, animated by diverse social forces and communities, often in conflict with one another. For her, the uses and histories of the plaza, as well as other public spaces, have always been practices of negotiation and contestation, rather than pure control. The relative capacity of a given community to access public space, act as they want in it, claim it, change it, and own it is what makes a plaza more or less public. For MARGARET KOHN, to be public, public spaces must entail and produce communal ownership, accessibility, and intersubjectivity (2004: 9). When public spaces are privatized, aesthetization of space entails “the desire to exclude the unsettling and the unattractive” (11). Likewise, in *The Ludic City*, QUENTIN STEVENS (2007) examines how, through play, urban dwellers use urban architecture in ways that unsettle the narratives of progress and modernity it is designed to instill.

Contestations of urban spaces that are contrary to neoliberal agendas are examples of what DORIS SOMMER calls “wobble room,” or “the gaps in destabilized systems as they scramble to make adjustments” (2006: 4). For Sommer, “wobble room” is the space for the exercise of cultural agency “to win ground in hegemonic arrangements that depend on popular consent. And the mechanism is to irritate the state in ways that stimulate concessions of more freedoms and resources... [towards the development of a] new non-capitalist sociability” (7-8). Trombonist RODRIGO DANIEL portrays the occupation of public space as a form of “wobble room” in relation to hegemonic priorities: “At the same time... that public spaces are being privatized, I think that we are able to shift this from the moment that we can show that the street can also have good things... The street is the place where the people should be. It's kind of a battle for space. We are occupying and reoccupying” (Daniel in *Aprendendo a Voar* 2015).

Free performances in the street, a space where alcohol consumption is freely permitted, are ubiquitous in Rio, and residents can nightly experience a diverse range of high quality performances without spending money on entrance fees. Such performances are permitted with a considerable degree of freedom unknown to a North American, but they are not without repression. Musicians who play in these outdoor contexts risk police repression and violent *choques de ordem*. By contrast, playing music in the street is often referred as an “*ataque*” (“attack”), an intervention in the hegemonic ordering of city space—the Carioca brass band *Ataque Brasil* references this idea in its name.

The role of social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, in facilitating street music performance cannot be overestimated. The use of social media to organize bands, *blocos*, and events in public spaces has permitted a circumventing of the club circuit and other mediated

systems of communication for dissemination of information.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, when I organized my band Mission Delirium to play on Rio's beach Praia Vermelha, the Facebook event attracted two thousand people in three days of publicization, unthinkable before the rise of social media for an outdoor event without major sponsorship and advertising. Organizing a large public event in the streets of Rio simply requires contracting an interested band and posting the event on relevant social media pages—a large audience is likely guaranteed barring any threat of rain.

Musicians who play in the streets won a considerable degree of freedom with the passage in 2012 of *Lei 5429*, known as the street artist law (*A lei do artista de rua*). The law guarantees the freedom to perform in public without permit as long as the performers adhere to a number of requirements including keeping the performance free, permitting the free circulation of traffic and pedestrians, not using a structure or stage, having no private sponsorship, and not playing after 10 PM in locations where they will bother residents.<sup>121</sup> The law's passage has significantly limited police intervention at musical events in the streets. Nevertheless, a number of street musicians keep copies of the law with them when they perform in order to protect themselves from police who may claim not to know of the law.

Street music movements in Rio exist, therefore, in an uneasy and vulnerable position in relation to the city's management. Playing in the streets, despite the language and supposed rights of the street musicians, is a vulnerable and volatile act. Holding an unofficial event beyond the confines of the street artist law will likely not cause problems with the police, but the police will be found in the right if they decide to interfere with the event. Obtaining official permission, however, can involve negotiating a Byzantine bureaucratic system. Even when musicians attain permission, police frequently act arbitrarily and cancel events for unclear reasons. Renata Dias, agent for Bagunço and Orquestra Voadora, explains her exasperation with the system and the rationale for choosing to hold events illegally:

It's not enough just to have this law because if you don't communicate with the administrative bodies, the police, the municipal guard, and you just present the law of the artist, they will cancel your event and say it can't happen. Ok then we will do it nice and legally. I will go speak with the administrative body. I say that I want to do the event. They give me a response that is always the same: your event is inconvenient. Why? They don't give authorization... You are in an impasse. Should I do the event legally and run the risk of, even inside the norms, the event being banned when I could run the same risk without asking for anything?... Ok, we ask and they say we can't play. We ask and they say we can; we get there and they say we can't. We don't ask and nothing happens. We don't ask, we get there, and they say we can't. I don't know what to do!... We have to prepare the entire year for carnival. We have to rehearse in closed places because we can't make noise in Lapa late. Lapa Presente is there watching and wanting to stop everything. It's ridiculous that the city [government] believes that the "city of carnival" doesn't need to prepare for carnival. (1/21/16)

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<sup>120</sup> *Neofanfarrista* saxophonist Sabrina Bairros (2012) has written about the vital role of social media in organizing Rio's street carnival. While social media has been noted for its role in recent social movements of organizing people relatively spontaneously in the streets without recourse to physical institutions, Bairros shows how social media has also helped organize carnival and music events in the streets.

<sup>121</sup> See the law at <https://www.leismunicipais.com.br/a/rj/r/rio-de-janeiro/lei-ordinaria/2012/542/5429/lei-ordinaria-n-5429-2012-dispoe-sobre-a-apresentacao-de-artistas-de-rua-nos-logradouros-publicos-do-municipio-do-rio-de-janeiro-2012-06-05.html>.

Dias' comments reveal the ambiguous and vulnerable position of musicians who play in the street despite a city and national official culture that celebrates and sells street music (see also Sakakeeny 2013). Musicians themselves frequently find themselves in legally questionable positions, many times despite their best efforts at conforming to them. Experiences of arbitrary power produce a sense of cynicism towards the city administration. In this context, playing music in the street takes on a stronger meaning for participants as a resistant act, an alternative to governing interests and a constant search for “wobble room.” In the following examples, I examine some of the street-based institutions and practices that have enabled the brass band movement to expand and become more accessible in its pursuit of reconstituting public space, as well as their limitations and contradictions in the construction of public participation in music.



Left: Standard asking “Whom does public art serve?”  
Right: Standard asking “public or private art?” Photos by author at Public Art Festival in Rio on June 20, 2015.

### **Boi Tolo: The Anarchist *Bloco***

I heard the police sirens before I understood what was happening. The Boi Tolo *bloco* started to entrain the rhythm of the *marchinha* beat to the whining of the police siren in sonic defiance as *foliões* entered a large building. As I approached the building trumpet in hand, I realized it was the Santos-Dumont airport, the secondary domestic airport in the center of the city. Police cars had blocked the doors to the airport, but *foliões* and musicians simply went around and over them. This was the “official opening of unofficial carnival” in January 2015. There was little interest in respecting any official boundaries; the *bloco* aimed to provide carnival cheer to airport workers and weary travelers through musically occupying it.

This wasn't a protest—there was no attempt to shut down the airport or prevent people



from working, though the massive crowd of thousands that filled the airport lobby can't have facilitated the functioning of the airport. Eventually after thirty minutes of playing *marchinhas* inside the terminal, reports started to filter through the crowd that the military police had been called, and the crowd decided to leave and take its roaming carnival parade elsewhere. Having started at 1:00 in the afternoon, the parade would not end until around 11:00 at night. But ten hours of playing pales in comparison to the endurance of Boi Tolo's carnival parade, which can last from 7:00 in the morning to the dwindling hours of the night.



Boi Tolo musically occupying the Santos-Dumont domestic airport in Rio. Photo by author on January 3, 2015.

Boi Tolo is a brass *bloco* frequently described as “anarchist.” With a spirit of radical inclusion and defiance of authority and officialdom, Boi Tolo has no official musical or tactical leadership, its parades have no defined direction, there is no cord that separates musicians from *foliões* (the *bloco*'s audience), and absolutely anyone can play. Known for its endurance, the *bloco* can last up to an entire twenty-four hours on the Sunday of carnival, as musicians cycle in and out playing through *marchinhas*, *neofanfarrista* repertoire, and theoretically anything else on repeat.<sup>122</sup>

The origin story of Boi Tolo is a comic outgrowth of the brass *bloco* revival (see chapter two). On February 26, 2006, *foliões* of Boitotá gathered for the “concentration” (meeting point) of the *bloco*, but Boitotá did not and would not appear. After ten years of existence, Boitotá's parades had become so crowded that the *bloco*'s leadership decided to inform only friends who would spread the location of the parade by word of mouth. As street carnival became

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<sup>122</sup> See television reporting on Boi Tolo and its origin story here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw0n\\_lvYb3M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw0n_lvYb3M)

increasingly popular and worries about overcrowding grew more pressing, some *blocos* chose to spread misinformation and would “spontaneously” start somewhere else in the city. While social media has made keeping these kinds of secrets more difficult, this tactic of reducing crowding is still used today.<sup>123</sup>

On this carnival day in 2006, as the *foliões* realized Boitató would not appear, some in the crowd took out their own instruments and began to play. A trumpet player appeared, friends called other friends, more musicians appeared, someone wrote “Boi Tolo” on a large piece of paper creating a standard, and a new *bloco* was born. “Boi Tolo” played on the similar sound of the name of “Boitató,” but the meaning is completely different. While Boitató is the name of a mythical Amazonian serpent, “Boi Tolo” translates to “silly bull,” underlining the ludic and far less stately nature of the new *bloco*’s parades. The name also references the many dramatic traditions of the ox from the northeast of Brazil, such as *bumba-meu-boi*. Boi Tolo and Prata Preta (see chapter two), therefore, were both founded by fans who went to find Boitató and, in failing, started their own *blocos*. Boi Tolo and Prata Preta view Boitató as a parental *bloco* and each other as “brother blocos” (*blocos irmãos*), often holding parades together.

I showed in chapter two that Boitató (and Céu na Terra) established a participatory musical structure that was free and open to brass musicians, offering an alternative to older brass *blocos* which were much more closed and presentational. Boitató and Céu na Terra, however, are organized hierarchically and use a cord to separate the musicians from spectators. There is a musical director in both groups, some musicians are paid ringers while others receive nothing, and they require the ability to read music to participate properly. They receive sponsorship and request authorization for their parades. They are now very much a part of an official city-controlled carnival despite their discourses of being an alternative to the dominant practices of carnival at the turn of the millennium (see chapters one and two).

By contrast, some *neofanfarristas* view Boi Tolo as extending the carnivalesque ethics of equality, participation, spontaneity, and rebelliousness to their furthest possible conclusions. For this reason, many refer to Boi Tolo as the most “authentic” *bloco* of carnival. The *bloco* is the figurehead *bloco* of a movement called “Desliga,” meaning “disconnect” and playing on the officialdom of the carnival *ligas* (leagues, or official groupings of *blocos*). Participants make clear, however, that Desliga is a movement, not a league. Desliga organizes the “official opening of unofficial carnival” (*abertura oficial do carnaval não-oficial*) which brings together the musicians and *foliões* of Boi Tolo and several other *blocos* that embrace the spirit of unofficialdom. This opening is generally held on the first Sunday of the year close to January 6, or Kings’ Day which in many Catholic places marks the “official” opening of carnival and the end of the Christmas season. Desliga’s invitation to the unofficial opening expounds on the principles of carnivalesque resistance to officialdom.

The Desliga dos Blocos, which fights against the excess of rules and commodification of carnival...has had a decisive role in the resistance of the authentic popular festival that is carnival. If on the one hand, *blocos* and leagues have succumbed to the call of capital and profit, on the other dozens of *blocos* have been created in Rio following the example of the free carnival that is practiced by the Cordão do Boi Tolo and others no less important...Long live the authentic and popular street carnival of Rio de Janeiro!!!

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<sup>123</sup> In 2016, the secret brass *bloco* Moita (meaning a bush behind which one can hide), for example, kept its existence and the point of concentration of its carnival parade hidden in order to prevent overcrowding and summon only the *foliões* it encountered in its improvised route.

(Desliga 2015)

The lack of official inscription into the city's carnival management enables a number of "alternative" practices. The *bloco* receives no sponsorship and there are therefore no limitations on what kinds of beer or other products can be sold. Because it has no sponsorship, it makes no money and pays no official musicians. The *bloco* roams anywhere it wants with generally no planned route. Sometimes when the crowd numbers into the thousands, it can accidentally separate into mini-Boi Tolos with separate bands that follow their own routes and may or may not meet again. The *bloco* pushes the boundaries on where music can be played, carnivalizing airports and a variety of other spaces. *Globo* comments that "As they do not follow a pre-planned route and improvise their trajectories, the unofficial *blocos* are testimonies of collective performances that would happen with difficulty otherwise" (Filgueiras 2016).

By "anarchist," participants do not mean only that Boi Tolo resists prescribed order of rules, routes, or repertoire. Trumpeter Gert Wimmer explains: "I see it as an anarchist *bloco* because, beyond the political proposal of street occupation and aesthetic, I would say that its form of organization is anarchist. It's anarchist in the sense that it is a collective construction. Everyone goes together and whoever wants calls tunes" (11/16/15). *Neofanfarristas* view Boi Tolo as a musical space absent of hierarchical power with full rights to the streets. The expandable and variable size of a musical organization that can bring thousands of people together at the "same level" in the streets makes it difficult for any one person to emerge as a director or leader. Musicians claim that "anyone" can start a song and be a leader, creating a collective and "horizontal" experience of equality. They seek to eliminate the distinction between "core and elaboration" in participatory music making (Turino 2008) or at least make it easier to circulate between the two. For many *neofanfarristas*, then, Boi Tolo exemplifies the union of musical participation and the ethic of playing in public spaces, expressed as a form of resistance and activism in relation to the official modes of organizing carnival and the sanctioned goals behind the festival's organization.

Even if Boi Tolo appears not to be openly combative towards the government or engaging in specific protests, trombonist Juba argues that the *bloco*'s positioning indeed constitutes a kind of politics:

Boi Tolo has a political proposal and it's the most political of all of them. Boi Tolo parades without authorization wherever it wants. I think it's great because the street belongs to the people. Nobody should come and bureaucratize and buy space, which is what they have started to do—lots of sponsorship, everything [owned by] Antarctica [the beer company]. The mayor and the governor of the state are creating a business to make money and privatize space that doesn't belong them. It belongs to the people [*o povo*]—public space! (Pires 10/12/14)

Many *neofanfarristas* find Boi Tolo to be a liberating space to experiment and learn an instrument where one may learn by osmosis and imitation rather than formal or hierarchical music education. Gert, who learned to play trumpet in such spaces, recounts that he

went to Boi Tolo despite not knowing how to play almost a single note correctly. It's a *bloco* that welcomes people who in the beginning were just learning to play... It was liberating... a catharsis. Boi Tolo is a great catharsis, a place of liberation. We look for

references from each other—that’s what gives organization to the *bloco* so that everything comes out together. There is no one [person] who coordinates the thing. (11/16/15)

For professional musicians who play in Boi Tolo, the spontaneous construction of a multi-level musical ensemble presents difficulties, but saxophonist Mathias Mafort claims that these encounters are necessary to open access to musical production: “When you converse with a child, it doesn’t speak as well as you. It doesn’t have as rich a vocabulary, and it has fewer resources...But still you converse with it. Just the same in music. We are not always speaking with people at the same level, but the conversation has to happen...It’s a necessary challenge for the sake of integrating people” (6/9/15). These attitudes reflect what Noriko Manabe (2015) calls “strategic amateurism,” in which activist bands use the “imperfections” of participatory music as an element of protest.

Not criticizing others for engaging in an artistic practice as beginners is strongly valued in Rio and is taken to its extreme conclusions in Boi Tolo. For many *neofanfarristas*, the positive response of peers towards engaging in music produces an atmosphere of experimentation in which typical anxieties around music making and performance are diminished. Europeans and North Americans, coming from societies in which music is viewed as a demanding and specialized activity limited to a few disciplined or “gifted” practitioners, have generally found this a refreshing approach to music making. Orquestra Voadora’s American tuba player, Tim Malik, a professional musician, reflects that in Rio,

if someone takes an instrument up everybody [thinks it’s great]. Everybody thinks any artistic endeavor is awesome. To my New York ears, I’m like, “that’s not excellent, that sucks, that’s ridiculous. Why aren’t you being more critical?” But the answer is that there’s no point or value in being that critical. It’s so much better for creation when you don’t have this sense of “let’s see what you can do—let me find how this sucks.” Cariocas think, “let me find how this is good. I’ll give a really positive response cause we’re all in this together.” That attitude makes it a really fertile environment for exploring new things. (6/12/15)

Many *neofanfarristas* comment on “horizontal” power relations as an alternative foundation to learn music in Boi Tolo. Márcio Sobrosa, former trombonist in Orquestra Voadora, theorizes such practices as instantiations of the pedagogy of the oppressed, referring to radical pedagogue Paulo Freire (1970). Freire argues that oppression in education is manifested through the differing position of the teacher, who controls knowledge, from that of the student, who is dependent on the teacher’s knowledge and fails to instill her/his own independence in the process of learning. The oppressive teacher “banks” knowledge into the student in order to prove capability according to hierarchically set standards. Freire proposes instead a dialogic approach of experimentation led collectively by the student and the teacher. Márcio favors practices like Boi Tolo as fertile spaces for dialogic education:

I created a practice based on the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, [especially] the theme of horizontality, [which is based on transforming] the relation between the oppressor and the oppressed within education, where the teacher or maestro has the role of oppressor and the students of the oppressed. How can we horizontalize this relation? In my opinion, the

pedagogy of the street is such that you introduce a person to a universe. Where that person goes to search for things is for him or her to decide. It's not you who is going to give the entire path. (1/14/15)

The experience of playing in “democratic,” “horizontal,” and “anarchist” spaces like Boi Tolo was frequently cited as a foundation for the tendency in many *neofanfarrista* bands of resisting a “leader” figure and organizing instead through consensus or voting. Orquestra Voadora saxophonist André Ramos explains how the band’s collective decision-making process grew out of the experiences of playing in *blocos* like Boi Tolo:

Where there exists a strong leadership...people have to resolve fewer problems. The problems stay with the leader. The musicians of Voadora got to know each other in many *blocos* that didn't have this. In this anarchy, you have the same problems or even more, and how are you going to resolve them? You will have to communicate, watch, and resolve the problems that arise the entire time. (1/9/15)

Boi Tolo's openness allows the incorporation of musicians who found Boitadá and Céu na Terra too demanding. It also presents a space where more experienced amateurs can try their hands at leadership and musical production rather than submitting to a maestro. As *neofanfarrismo* has expanded since the founding of Orquestra Voadora in 2008, Boi Tolo has also continued to grow, representing a moment of chaotic union between the various brass musicians of Rio. Its ethics of radical inclusion and occupation of public space have permeated the larger movement.

### **The Orquestra Voadora *Oficina*: Formalizing “Horizontal” Education**

While Boi Tolo represents an anarchic and sometimes chaotic way to openly join the *neofanfarrismo* movement, Orquestra Voadora has organized its *bloco* since 2009 with a clear distinction between musical leaders (mostly musicians in the official band) and *bloco* musicians. In the park of the Museum of Modern Art (*MAM*) every Sunday afternoon for five months before carnival, the official musicians teach the parts of their songs by instrument before running larger *bloco* rehearsals. These events are open for participation for those willing to show up, with no experience on a musical instrument required. Nevertheless, the rehearsals presume some ability on one's instrument, since the *bloco* was not intended to teach the mechanics of the instruments themselves but rather to spread the band's repertoire and prepare for the *bloco*'s carnival performance. Still, people would show up with little to no musical training and attempt to play along as the band became increasingly popular.

In 2013, the band decided to focus on musical education through offering a year-round *oficina* (or class), a more institutionalized setting for learning brass and drum instruments and spreading the band's repertoire. *Oficinas* are band-led music classes that often have the intent of preparing students to perform with the band, often at carnival. The *oficina* takes place in the large open-air venue of Circo Voador (“Flying Circus”) in Lapa, a venue with its own alternative history in relation to the relative prominence of *samba* and *choro* (Herschmann 2007) in Lapa and described by those involved with Orquestra Voadora as a kind of home.<sup>124</sup> Circo Voador

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<sup>124</sup> Circo Voador was inaugurated on the Arpoador beach in Ipanema in 1982 with an emphasis on presenting Brazilian rock. It was frequently viewed as subversive, especially during the dictatorship, and was closed in 1996. It was reopened in Lapa during the revitalization of the central entertainment district in 2004 in the space in front of

helps organize many events for Orquestra Voadora and has taken an active role in promoting the *neofanfarrismo* movement.

The *oficina* is taught by members of the band and professional musician friends, and I became an official trumpet teacher in the *oficina* during the length of my fieldwork. During the *oficina*, the band divides the students into sections by instrument (*naipes*), and instructors begin by warming up and teaching basic technique. The students are then divided by ability and sent with individual instructors who might be teaching twenty beginners at a time. Subjects vary and include music theory, technique, repertoire, and improvisation. Though much of the *oficina* is spent in individual sections, the goal is to bring all of the sections to play together and participate in the band's carnival *bloco*. Students are encouraged to collaborate and play together in different formations. Commenting on her experience of learning trombone in the *oficina*, Cristiana Campanha relates with delight, "it was a revolution in my life that an instrument of which I didn't even know the name some years past entered my life. But this same revolution is happening in the lives of many people. Orquestra Voadora is creating a revolution in Rio de Janeiro" (11/20/14). By all accounts, musical education is sorely lacking in schools, but many middle-class adults have started to learn a diversity of musical traditions through these institutions.

Anyone who wants to learn a brass instrument and has the financial wherewithal to buy one and pay its monthly price of 140 *reais* may sign up for the *oficina* (in 2016, about 40\$ USD). The band organizes much of its student community through social media, especially Facebook, and the *oficina* administers a student page (*ASSOPRA*) on which events are announced, the community discusses issues of relevance, and participants organize new musical projects. During my fieldwork, the *oficina* counted approximately three hundred students, and it has continued to expand exponentially the number of new brass bands, with "student" bands of Orquestra Voadora, such as Damas de Ferro (an all-women band with a feminist stance), Ataque Brasil, Black Club, and many others coming onto the scene.

Closing the first full year of the *oficina* before the culmination of the 2014 carnival, the students created an auto-documentary about the experience of learning a new musical instrument and engaging with the world of *neofanfarrismo*, entitled *Learning to Fly (Aprendendo a Voar)* in reference to the "Flying Orchestra" (Orquestra Voadora).<sup>125</sup> In the film, musicians speak of the knowledge gained in the *oficina* as an exchange (*troca*), a horizontal passing of knowledge between teachers to students. Some students describe the *oficina* as a form of "therapy" in which they sought a "cure" to their life problems through engaging in music. The possibility of gaining access to musical education outside of the formalism and academic setting of much musical education, such as the Escola Portátil (see chapter two), was profoundly liberating for many students.

Despite the hierarchy involved in the *oficina*, students often spoke of the "horizontal" relationships they developed with the teachers involved who would play and drink with them after the *oficina* and encourage them to lead songs and take new roles. While there exists a set of agreed upon goals to prepare students to play with the *bloco* in carnival, teachers confessed to

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the iconic Arches of Lapa. Today it is a cultural home of the Carioca left and alternative scene, associated with many social movements. It provides the most diverse musical offering in Lapa, including rock, jazz, Afrobeat, and international bands, as well as *samba* and more traditional Brazilian musical genres (Vidal 2011). The name of Orquestra Voadora has no intentional relation to Circo Voador.

<sup>125</sup> Available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBsOQkyZeA>.



me that much of the *oficina* was an experiment in attempting to provide musical education that would not feel like formal training. Voadora trombonist Márcio Sobrosa suggests in the film that

We are in a way creating something new. We don't know what it is. There is no specific model that we are presenting to the students. There is desire and pedagogic space. Everyone has to put her/himself in it because we work with horizontality. I am not the holder of knowledge. Everyone has knowledge, and we are creating a pedagogic environment to exchange it. (*Aprendendo a Voar* 2014)

The *oficina* has provided an institutional space for musical training and participation that has multiplied the ranks of *neofanfarristas* in a short time. While it is run in a space that cannot be considered public, the students of Orquestra Voadora spill into the streets after every *oficina* for hours of street music mayhem in events known as *cracudagem*.



Trombone teacher Márcio Sobrosa on left in “horizontal” pedagogical engagement with student Cristiana Campanha in Orquestra Voadora’s *oficina* in Circo Voador. Photo by author on December 9, 2014.

### ***Cracudagem*: Musical Class Confrontation in Central Rio**

Almost every Tuesday night of the year, the students of Orquestra Voadora exit the band’s weekly *oficina* and go to fill the nearby arches of Lapa with music, sometimes until 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. Hundreds of musicians, some of whom have just picked up a horn or percussion instrument for the first time, form a circle (*roda*), as more experienced musicians and Voadora band members gather around the wings. They play through the tunes they have learned from Orquestra Voadora, the broader *neofanfarrismo* movement, and, as carnival approaches, the repertoire passed on from Céu na Terra, Boitatá, and Boi Tolo. No firmly established rules on calling tunes apply, as they anarchically move from one song to another. Beer and *caipirinha*

sellers start to hang out on the periphery of the circle, fueling the musical happening as it goes on into the morning. Sometimes Lapa Presente, the police force that somewhat arbitrarily manages Lapa, attempts an arrest of a beer seller only to be met by an army of trombones that chase the police away with horn blasts.

Bystanders show up to watch and participate. Dancers emerge in the circle, fire-spinners light up the center, instruments are shared with strangers who may become future participants, and musicians sometimes pass around flammable powder and breathe fire. One night a poor man entered the circle in a wheelchair and a female trombonist set aside her instrument to dance with him, wheeling him around the circle. While the overall effect of the jam is certainly musical from a distance, standing and playing among the musicians is to hear the wide diversities of tuning, rhythmic precision, and tone quality of this open, multi-level, and student-led ensemble. Playing trumpet among them, I am reminded of ethnomusicologist Charles Keil's belief that "music, to be personally valuable and socially valuable must be 'out-of-time' and 'out-of-tune'" (1987: 275). The weekly jam in Lapa is chaotically managed in many ways like Boi Tolo, except that the former is stationary and run largely by students. Trombonist Rodrigo Daniel explains,

It's something really good for people who are learning to play because you can lose shame. You dare more. This helps in your learning. It doesn't matter if you're playing badly. It's a school: playing without knowing how to play, which always happened a lot in carnival. It is this that gave me the interest to learn more. It's possible to play despite the sense that I will make mistakes. Fuck it. The next [note] will be good. Or not. (5/2/15)

Among the participants of this weekly jam are the homeless and marginalized of central Rio. They frequently enter the circle to dance, chant, and rap. Sometimes musicians share their instruments with these folks and let them try to manage a concert Bb for the first time in their lives. Sometimes it seems that the scene could easily get out of hand. I once saw an unknown man clearly and strongly inebriated pick up a female trombonist and dance with her. I expected her to run, but instead she trusted that the larger group had her back and let herself be taken by the man in the ecstasy of the music. We are still in the center of Rio in the middle of the night, however; sometimes knives are pulled and robberies occur, and participants frequently question whether their lack of caution is actually creating an unsafe environment.

Musicians refer to this event as "*cracudagem*," which loosely translates to the act of using crack or being "cracked out," for two widely accepted reasons. The musicians in the Voadora scene are themselves "addicted" (*viciados*) to music and to the process of learning in this chaotic environment: "this addiction to play for hours—the drug of music" (Campanha 11/20/14). The name also plays with the fact that they play in the center of the city late at night in musical contact with marginalized populations, those most likely to be actually affected by street drugs. These musicians often jokingly refer to themselves as "*cracudos*," or "crack heads," identifying with the street dwellers who wander into the circle. Rodrigo Daniel, a former student of Voadora's *oficina* who is credited for coining the term, explains,

We started using the word "crack" because everyone had left [after the *oficina*] and the only people who stayed were very crazy and drunk and wanted to keep playing with street dwellers—some people really drugged up—dancing with us. We played badly and everyone else had left. Only the *cracudos* stayed... It's something that has a lot to do with what it is to play in the street and to see oneself as a person of the street. Some of these people don't have anywhere to live, are addicted to drugs, are full of problems but they

can enjoy [music]. We used this [term] ironically but it has a certain value as well, an ironic perception that helps to resignify things a bit—what it is to be in the street. (5/2/15)

The Facebook page for the event details some of the ideas behind it, presenting it as a resignification and transformation of the material reality and challenges of the urban world: “The word *cracudagem* has been resignified in Rio de Janeiro, with music, good energy, and people disposed to occupy public space with art and cultural transformation. *Cracudagem* is a spontaneous event without control” (*Oficina de cracudagem* Facebook page 2016). Aiming to create a culture of public participation in music, these musical *cracudos* seek to resignify the prejudices towards the street and the ways it is racialized and associated with particular kinds of addictions and social stigmas. By identifying as *cracudos*, they involve the most vulnerable populations of the city center in the acts of music making in the public commons.



Left: Flame-throwing at *cracudagem* in the arches of Lapa. August 18, 2015.  
Right: Spontaneous breakdancing at *cracudagem*. May 13, 2015. Photos by author

### **Paradoxes of Instrumental Activism**

Thus far in this chapter, I have discussed the above case studies of *neofanfarrista* institutions that aspire to foster a culture of public participation in music in a largely positive light, taking seriously the possibilities, intents, and experiences of these musicians. I have called attention to the many openings they have created for Cariocas to involve themselves in music, often for the first time, leading to a fast, and indeed exponential, growth of the movement. These

institutions have created sociable spaces of encounter between different classes in which *neofanfarristas* have aimed to musicalize the “people” and, in more utopian visions, the entire city.

These practices of instrumental activism have also been, however, widely critiqued. Many musicians emphasize the gulf between discourse and practice or view the self-celebratory populism of a middle-class musical movement to be a contradiction in terms. In exploring the “paradoxes of instrumental activism,” here I aim to call attention to the limits, challenges, and contradictions involved in the construction of a movement of public participation led by the middle class.

### **Professionalism and Musical Quality**

Explaining the growth of the alternative brass movement, professional trumpeter Leandro Joaquim recounts how the movement went through three stages in its expansion throughout Rio de Janeiro. Started by professional-level *blocos* like Boitató, the movement in the early 2000s was largely limited to musicians who had already attained a high degree of musical training on their instruments, many of whom lived only from music. They gradually opened spaces for participatory music making to amateur musicians, those who could “keep up” with the professionals but were not of the same musical level. These musicians began participating in increasing numbers and began to form their own *blocos* and bands. Some of these, like Orquestra Voadora itself, were founded by non-professionals who generally had less musical training. But in their experimentations and relatively high degree of musicianship, some of these groups passed into the professional realm and became musical projects that allowed some members to live off the bands’ success.

Leandro suggests that since the opening of Orquestra Voadora’s *oficina*, the alternative brass movement had entered a third stage, one in which anyone who can buy a horn can learn and be part of the movement, regardless of whether s/he has any musical experience whatsoever. For Leandro,

The positive part is that everyone is included, everyone occupying the street, everyone having fun in a different way than they did before. This created the system that we see today. The interest in the sound of horns I think is super inclusive. I love it—it’s very praise worthy, [as is] any kind of manifestation that involves art and music. You see people with horns everywhere, playing in whatever way they know how. (6/4/15)

But for Leandro, the alternative brass movement had also become a kind of Frankensteinian monster in which a mass of new musicians with little training are being taught by the musicians of Voadora who had largely begun as amateurs. While some have sought out disciplined training, others regularly invade the streets, playing out of tune and with bad technique, passing on limited knowledge to their friends. A weakening chain of musical training has been created in which musical knowledge has dissipated so much from its origin that quality standards have become major concerns.

Many musicians complain that bringing in so many people with no clear leadership simply results in low quality music, general disorder, and bad musical training for learning an instrument and repertoire well. They argue that searching for references in the person by your side, who may have also just learned to play her/his instrument, results in a series of bad habits

and difficulties. Considering the explosion of interest in playing a brass instrument since the opening of Orquestra Voadora's *oficina*, Bruno de Nicola explains, "I'm not a great trumpet player and when someone comes playing incorrectly in my ear it pushes me [to play] incorrectly as well. I prefer to have more confident people around...How can you really integrate so many people?" (1/15/16).

While the *oficina* students tend to view themselves as involved in an important social and political project that is revolutionizing city street life in Rio de Janeiro, some more conservative or simply more serious musicians view them as privileged and unserious. While *neofanfarristas* celebrate the free musical culture they foster, some professional musicians view the logic of free music as itself deeply threatening to the livelihood of professional musicians. The derogatory term *fanfarrão* (see introduction) is sometimes used in these cases to refer to the predominantly pleasure-seeking and unserious nature of these endeavors.

As a musician in Rio, it often seemed far easier to organize people to come to a free musical event in the streets than inviting them to pay to enter a club to consume music. Some *neofanfarrista* bands view it as not even worth participating in the club system because it would limit the participants to those who could pay. Because many of the new musicians are amateur and not playing for money, lack of remuneration is not a concern. The multiplication of accessibility to learning music in the alternative brass movement, of which the *oficina* is only a recent manifestation, is, for some, cause for concern regarding the value of music, how it should be compensated, and what financial reward one should expect to receive for her/his training. Other professional musicians who view *neofanfarrismo* as an important tool to musicalize the city dismiss such concerns. Professional bassist Chico Oliveira, who also plays in BlocAto, observes that "there are professional musicians that don't love this lower quality of music of the new generation. Not me, I think that these people wouldn't be doing [anything related to] music if it weren't for Orquestra Voadora, and so I think what Voadora is doing is very important" (11/13/14).

The consolidation of the movement around the activism of public participation in music has also excluded brass bands who share the instrumental formation, leftist politics, and aesthetics of musical eclecticism but are devoted to a higher degree of professionalism. Pedro Pamplona, founder of Boitadá and Fanfarrada (see chapters two and three), distances himself from positioning his band within *neofanfarrismo* for this reason:

Fanfarrada is a friend of *neofanfarrismo*, but I don't know if we are *neofanfarrismo*. Juba [trombonist in Orquestra Voadora] believes that *neofanfarrismo* upholds a communitarian philosophy, democratic decisions, and the participation of everyone. I don't think Fanfarrada is this. We have all experienced this in other groups but in Fanfarrada I am the director. I do the production and artistic direction. The musicians accept it. (Queiroz and Pamplona 12/16/14)

Perhaps ironically, a musical movement that has come to espouse the participation of all people has thus alienated and limited the inclusion of professional musicians to some extent. Even some of those at the foundation of the brass *bloco* revival see the movement that Voadora ignited as having gotten out of hand and as threatening the livelihood of professional musicians, though many of these same musicians also profit as teachers and enjoy new audiences for their endeavors.

## The Façade of Open Horizontalism

While maestros of professional *blocos* and bands like Pedro reject the presumption that their ensembles are in any way democratic or horizontal, some musicians viewed the idea that institutions like Boi Tolo and *cracudagem* are horizontal, anarchist, and structureless as itself a façade. Trombonist Clément Mombereau dismisses the belief that there are no leaders in such spaces and argues that leaders arise by force of assertion and knowledge: “It’s those that want to play the most and know the songs the best that will succeed at being a leader. There are always people who lead” (11/11/14).

Jo Freeman (1970), in an article written for feminist organizing groups enamored of anarchist organizing that resists hierarchical structure, critiques what she calls the “tyranny of structurelessness.” She argues that that the idea of “structurelessness” had become a “goddess in its own right,” but that “there is no such thing as a ‘structureless’ group.” For her, the proposition of structurelessness in a group creates power for unaccountable leaders who become an invisible elite:

A ‘laissez-faire’ [group] is about as realistic as a ‘laissez-faire’ society; the idea becomes a smoke screen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. This hegemony can easily be established because the idea of ‘structurelessness’ does not prevent the formation of informal structures, but only formal ones...power is curtailed to those who know the rules, as long as the structure of the group is informal...If the movement continues to deliberately not select who shall exercise power, it does not thereby abolish power. All it does is abdicate the right to demand that those who do exercise power and influence be responsible for it.

In response to my claim during an interview that *cracudagem* seemed to be a free and absolutely inviting space, trumpeter Ana Martins responded, almost using Freeman’s language itself, “It may seem that it is free and that anyone can come, but it’s a group of individuals, not a collective. *Cracudagem* isn’t so open. It has a subtle elite” (12/17/15).

While Orquestra Voadora saxophonist André Ramos credits the development of a horizontally-run band structure to the experience of playing in *blocos* like Boi Tolo, he also admitted that “structurelessness” in Orquestra Voadora was a result of lack of process and order. In reality, no one person had enough power to actually lead the band in a clear way:

In a way, we come with this experience and interest [in anarchism]. But there’s another side that is just merely practical. The band has no leader because no one will manage to be a leader and no one will let this person be a leader...Our experience in these *blocos* has a big role, but these concepts [of horizontality and consensus] would not be sufficient in practice. Practice speaks louder than concepts. It is not just that we believe that we should be anarchic. In practice, it functions like this because everyone wants to lead. (1/9/15)

Female musicians were more likely to criticize the supposition that *cracudagem* and Boi Tolo were completely liberatory and horizontal spaces, as they experienced familiar patterns of



male privilege playing out in supposedly anarchist and horizontal spaces.<sup>126</sup> Arguing that diverse forms of social inequality continue to be played out in these spaces, American trombonist and political organizer Claire Haas reflects,

I feel people talk a big game about [Boi Tolo] being a really horizontal space and I feel it is the opposite of that. I see there being specific men who play leadership roles...who take up a lot of space. I see them being the ones to lead songs, I see them taking a lot of solos, I see them not leaving blank space. If everyone were complete equals—musically, racially, by class—maybe a situation could exist that way and work and be equally led by all people. But that’s not the case. Certain people lead a lot, and certain people don’t. In movement spaces when we are trying to create horizontal leadership...the goal is to make sure that everyone’s voice is heard and break down the paradigm that those who are loudest make the decisions. That is not only not being done here but people aren’t even aware it’s not being done. People who are the loudest and making the decisions in these spaces are also the people who are the most likely to talk about how horizontal the movement is...I would much rather [play with a clear director] than in a situation of horizontal leadership where there’s a secret leadership structure that no one acknowledges or where they deny its existence. (2/15/16)

For many *neofanfarristas* critical of the notion of horizontalism, the dominant middle-class profile of these musical projects troubles the discourse of full accessibility. Due to high import taxes and lack of local manufacturing, brass instruments are two to three times more expensive than in the United States. Unlike the city of New Orleans, where they are accessible to some of the poorer populations, brass instruments, especially large instruments like tubas, can be difficult and expensive to come by in Rio de Janeiro.

I frequently heard the belief that Boi Tolo, the Voadora *oficina*, and *cracudagem* are “open for whomever wants to come” (*aberto pra quem quiser chegar*). I would point out that they were open for those who *could* come. While poorer people in the central part of the city do have access to participating in such events, for marginalized populations in north zone *favelas*, events in the center of the city such as these are off limits due to geographical segregations built into the city’s fabric. Street dwellers, the poor, and marginalized people who do wander into these spaces generally have secondary roles and are transient participants. They are unlikely to purchase trumpets and chaotically learn to play amidst a middle-class carnival parade or jam session. Furthermore, one could easily argue against *neofanfarristas* that the *samba* schools they so often critique are far more participatory institutions for engaging the working classes. Though many street carnival musicians and *neofanfarristas* dismiss the *samba* schools as hierarchical, formalized, and commodified (see chapter one), it cannot be denied that they mobilize the musical participation of an incredible number of poor people in marginalized parts of the city.

Coming back to the question of “whose Rio?” in which *neofanfarrismo* seeks to position “the people” at center stage in the public commons, this construction of “the people” is inherently limited by its class origins and privileges. Participation in music making, even in *cracudagem*, is by and large limited to the middle class. Whether such participation of popular classes effectively alters or militates against structures of class and race privilege in anything close to the vision of the Anthem of Orquestra Voadora is far from clear.

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<sup>126</sup> These experiences are perhaps comparable to the experiences of women in 1960s countercultural spaces and leftist organizations who found familiar patriarchal patterns within groups that espoused equality.

The movement's particular political stances may exclude those who might not initially agree or be culturally aligned with its stances, a tension Naomi Podber (2015) refers to as that between "wide and provisional inclusion" in her article on New York's activist brass band, the Rude Mechanical Orchestra. The desire to "widely" include all people conflicts with "provisional inclusion," or the effort to maintain political purity within a movement, which can lead to demographic homogenization and lack of representation of those who have not had access to the leftist discourses explicitly requisite for inclusion. Rio's bands are statedly much more devoted to wide inclusion than Podber's North American example, and even the most political bands, such as BlocAto do Nada and Os Siderais (see chapter four), do not formally exclude based on politics. At an informal level, however, the movement's own stated ethics may exclude not only right-wing and conservative Brazilians but also those without the cultural capital to take part in an educated alternative movement.

A more pessimistic view of *neofanfarrismo*'s stated populism might even see this momentary celebration and unity of "the people" in the streets as a typical farce of Brazilian culture and carnival practices in which cultural mixing is celebrated in a way that conceals the maintenance of real inequalities. The "myth of racial democracy," or the official celebratory narrative of the mixing of Brazilian racial identity that has formed the dominant discourse since the 1930s, has been frequently criticized by those calling attention to the persistence of racism in Brazil. Roberto DaMatta (1991 [1979]) has shown how the illusory mask of carnivalesque equality is easily unveiled with the elitist phrase "do you know with whom you are speaking?" Jeff Packman asks about musical participation in Brazil, "could this perceived freedom from constraint and sense of unity...help create a false sense of belonging that does nothing more than placate the masses?" (2010: 259). Similarly, these celebratory inter-class musical encounters in the streets, where middle-class musicians go as far as identifying with the plights of "*cracudos*" and the homeless, create senses of solidarity that may do little to shift patterns of economic and social privilege beyond a few hours of entertainment. The experience of public participation in music dissolves when the musicians go home to comfortable apartments and the real "*cracudos*" stay in the streets.

While *cracudagem* is indeed a relatively open space for enjoyment and participation, the *oficina* that precedes it is far more limited to those with the resources and leisure time to learn an expensive instrument. Generally held inside the open-air venue of Circo Voador with entrances guarded by security, the students of Voadora drop the vigilance and guard they maintain in the street, leaving their instruments unattended and fraternizing freely with other students. *Cracudagem* is celebrated, therefore, for its proximity and openness to the urban other, but it follows a music class that requires a high degree of privilege to take part. The identification as a musical *cracudo* could be viewed as a convenient and even insensitive appropriation of the spaces of those who are far less privileged.

Voadora trombonist and teacher Márcio Sobrosa suggests that the *oficina*'s introduction of financial relationships with students paying for instruction compromises the very idea of *neofanfarrismo* as a social movement that destabilizes hegemonic relations.

Voadora is turning into a product captured by capitalism. The *oficina* creates a new relation that wasn't there before. [Before] we taught in the *bloco* for whomever wanted to come. There was no obligation or relation to a product to be consumed...and suddenly they pay and want a return, the relation of consumer and product. This is something that is eating our work [even though] we come from a movement. (1/14/15)

In this view, a horizontal movement is anathema to the clientelistic relationships that form through capitalism. Trombonist Clément Mombereau, noting that the movement would not have exploded without the financial opportunity offered by the *oficina* that allowed beginners to take part, jokingly questions the distinctions at play between movements and capitalism and suggests that to truly start a musical movement, “you have to make people pay” (11/11/14).

### **Itinerant Gentrification**

Orquestra Voadora is known for having “revitalized” the park spaces around the Museum of Modern Art (*MAM*) where the band holds its carnival *bloco* rehearsals for five months preceding the event. The area was and is still known as abandoned and dangerous. The entire Aterro do Flamengo of which it is a part, the grassy park that extends along much of the bay from the center to Urca, is viewed as a beautiful place to get robbed. But on Sunday afternoon a mass of middle-class musicians and *foliões* arrives to rehearse, jam, and parade back to Lapa for hours. Often the ground is left littered with beer bottles by the end of the event, though many *neofanfarristas* are conscientious about picking up litter and reminding others to do so.

Musicians arrive guardedly in fear of being assaulted in the area before entering the security of the largely middle-class crowd. They leave in a large parade partly to provide a safe way of helping participants get back to “secure” locations in the center of the city. For many people, the “secured” environment offered by this “Woodstock Carioca” and other brass band occupations of the street are an intrinsic element of what is meant by activism: the reuse, or even “rescue,” of abandoned and dangerous spaces for art, making them habitable and useable for the population. When I asked about the band’s political commitments despite its reticence to participate in protest (see chapter four), Voadora’s trumpeter Daniel Paiva responded,

What we have done in *MAM* for free for seven years, this is politics. It’s pure politics. We influenced many people to play in the street and multiplied the movement. This is politics—to occupy public space. That park of the *MAM*, seven years ago there was no one going there for leisure. It was all abandoned. You would get mugged if you went there at whatever time of day. Today it is a space occupied with culture and art. Now it is full of people learning stilts, music, whatever, even when Voadora is not there. For me, this is politics. (10/28/14)

Saxophonist Michel Moreau questions the supposed politics of the *MAM* rehearsals: “this activism here in Rio is very linked to the university, to the youth of the middle class, playboy activism. Playing in *MAM* on Sunday afternoon is activism? I don’t know, it’s a lot of leisure also” (8/18/15). The purpose of these public space occupations for Daniel is to break out of cycles of abandonment and segregation, for public spaces to be used by the public. But as Michel points out, the question is, again, which public? Whose Rio? These brass band events cannot be viewed as wholly resistant to the neoliberal dynamics in which Cariocas live. In Daniel’s comment, it is clear that Voadora participated in making the *MAM* gardens a safer place for *middle-class* bodies to frequent. The mass occupations of the streets they accomplish would likely not be acceptable to city elites if it were *favelados* occupying them.

The alternative brass band movement increases the cultural capital of spaces that for bourgeois Cariocas have been off limits and suspect. They cannot, therefore, be separated from

the neoliberal cultural economy of gentrification, which brings privileged bodies into poorer spaces. It is a truism of gentrification theory that artists are the “foot soldiers” of gentrification, as they move into poorer neighborhoods, buy property, and make the space more comfortable and exciting for bourgeois who further drive up prices and makes an area unaffordable. Since, in this case, we are not dealing with property speculation or fixed places of cultural capital, such as art galleries or music venues, these temporary musical occupations could be called forms of “itinerant gentrification.” Privileged bodies enter “abandoned” squares and poorer areas of the city to create “accessible” and participatory parties for several hours and then leave. What long-term effects might frequenting such spaces have on their cultural and economic value?<sup>127</sup>

Many *neofanfarristas* relate that they had gone with the brass bands to places in the city they would never go alone but that these experiences had increased the likelihood of frequenting those places in the future. As the center of the city has gentrified remarkably in the past fifteen years with the middle classes moving into some of these areas, it is impossible to separate the cultural events that have a growing presence in these areas from the increasing economic capital of the areas themselves. The *bloco* of Prata Preta (see chapter two) in the poorer central port area of Gamboa is a good example of this dynamic. The producers of the *bloco* I interviewed view Prata Preta as a form of cultural resistance within a neighborhood that is becoming extremely expensive due to middle-class people moving into the neighborhood. But estimating that four thousand *foliões* come to the *bloco* during carnival, one of the producers laments that, because of the middle-class aesthetics of the brass *bloco* revival, “The majority of the public of Prata Preta, unfortunately, isn’t from the neighborhood. Lots of people from the south and north zones started to frequent the *bloco*. These are people from outside that found the *bloco* and became *foliões*. The crowd from outside embraced the *bloco* in a way that we wanted people here to embrace it” (11/18/15).

For trombonist Cristiana Campanha, the movement’s left-wing and alternative credentials are based on its willingness to play in the streets and to go to the peripheral neighborhoods of *blocos* like Prata Preta. In contrast, Rio’s right wing and mainstream middle classes tend to shelter themselves in the richer south zone or further in suburbs like Barra de Tijuca:

It’s not everyone that can stand to be in a place that has poor people. Those rich people pay a lot of money to go to expensive places where poor people will not go. They are in an isolated world, not in the street. They have no desire to mix and preoccupy themselves with others. Those who are in the street have to have a minimal acceptance [for poor people]. (11/20/14)

While *neofanfarristas* may indeed have more openness to such experiences, they still bring privileged bodies to unprivileged spaces and help make them safer and more alluring for other privileged people to follow.

A seeming truism of *neofanfarrismo*’s activism is that musical occupations make an unsafe city more livable and safer; brass band events are sometimes understood as “securing”

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<sup>127</sup> Reebee Garofalo (forthcoming) has noted similar connections between the HONK! festival and the gentrification of Somerville, MA: “Reclaiming public space is seldom a simple act of recovery; it is a complex undertaking, riddled with contradictions, which demands attention to the competing forces at play...It is fair to say that HONK! has contributed measurably to the reputation for hipness that now routinely accompanies descriptions of Somerville.”

urban territory. Trumpeter Gert Wimmer argues that “A street occupied with art is a more secure street because people are there to fraternize. It’s not more secure because of force. It’s more secure because there is more feeling” (11/16/15). Likewise, DaMatta writes that in street carnival events, “it is crazy because we are in the ‘street,’ which has suddenly become a safe and humane place” (1991 [1979]: 86). Rio is one of the most militarized metropolises in the world (McCann 2008), and for the political right the answer to urban violence and insecurity is usually increasing police presence and militarization. The notion that artistic occupations of public space and access to free art make urban spaces safer is, therefore, conceived as an alternative model for creating public security than that provided by militarized police presence. One trumpeter describes this as a process of transformation of dangerous urban spaces into useable ones:

It’s good to transform a place that people believe is dangerous into a place that people use...the more people in the street, the less people are afraid. More people in the street, less violence. You feel more secure. It’s a cycle. This is something great about the *fanfarras*, even *cracudagem*—with bands playing in the street and attracting people, you feel more secure to go also. So the city feels more secure, and you lose fear. It’s important not to leave the city deserted. (Anonymous)

Coming back to the question of “Whose Rio?,” I believe it is also important for *neofanfarristas* to ask themselves: for whom are these spaces becoming more secure? Certainly, I felt more secure in a crowd of middle-class Cariocas. Having been violently mugged twice in Rio de Janeiro late at night with few people around, the idea that there is safety in numbers does seem quite intuitive. When robberies did occur at *neofanfarrista* events, heightened police presence observing middle-class crowds provided vigilant and sometimes violent response. I once witnessed a mugging at a Voadora rehearsal in *MAM* in which a young black boy ran off with a middle-class woman’s purse. He was pursued by the police, and beaten unnecessarily before being arrested. On January 30, 2016, after the pre-carnival parade in Santa Teresa of Céu na Terra, gang violence broke out as the *bloco* crowds dwindled leading to a man’s death.

The police supervision that may result from middle-class bodies putting themselves in spaces of contact with marginalized populations does not necessarily make those marginalized populations safer or less at risk of being displaced or removed from them. The influx of partiers to a public space also can create a chaotic environment in which other insecure situations can develop. Occupations of public space by the middle class, even a leftist one that seeks to erode class barriers, are enabled by class privilege. If middle-class occupations of public spaces are indeed forms of gentrification, this would certainly present a limitation, if not a contradiction, in the project to realize a movement of public participation in music.

Conflicts also frequently arise between musicians occupying “their” streets and residents who complain of loud and disorderly musical events in the middle of the night, long after the protections of the street musician law have expired. Orquestra Voadora’s saxophonist André Ramos suggests that musicians need to maintain awareness of how they interact with urban others to avoid wholesale appropriation of public space for musicians and their *foliões* alone: “This brings a responsibility. The street is not owned by anyone, not by musicians, not by old women, and not by the police. The street is everyone’s. We have to find a way to collectively use the space. The musician who believes that the street is his or hers alone is being just as anti-collective as the people who speculate on it” (1/9/15).

## Conclusions

This chapter has examined the discourses and practices of instrumental activism in relation to the movement's ethic of fostering a city culture of public participation in music, an outgrowth of the carnivalesque ethics of earlier periods of the alternative brass movement. In events such as Boi Tolo parades and *cracudagem*, many *neofanfarristas* seek to provide an open musical space in which participation and experimentation even with little musical training are possible, including to those of the lower classes. *Neofanfarristas* aim to resignify urban space and the streets as positive spaces for creation and intercultural engagement. For them, these events have immense value and offer an alternative world to that of the "divided city" (*cidade partida*), worsened by the mega-events of Olympic Rio. *Neofanfarristas* seek to make Rio's many beautiful open spaces more public and combat the logic of exclusion and privatization.

While *neofanfarrismo* has created many new possibilities for cultural action and engagement in the city, I have also pointed to the limitations and even contradictions involved. The articulations of activist alternatives are not parallel cultural formations apart from hegemonic relations but are rather embedded in the hegemonic systems that make their existence possible. My critiques are grounded in comments I heard from many *neofanfarristas* and other Cariocas in Rio. They reveal that articulations of instrumental activism in *neofanfarrismo* generate contentious debates rather than a unified vision.

This instrumental activism of the middle classes is thus not necessarily unidirectional or without unintended consequences. The construction of the "public" has its limits based on the social barriers of class, gender, and race that order the "people's" lives. Persistent inequalities in the movement reflect inequalities in society more broadly and remain unexamined by many participants. For some Cariocas, the middle-class, male-dominant, and whiter profiles of the movement generated by Orquestra Voadora have made the discourses of activism seem problematic.

The next chapter shows, however, that the work of these musicians and projects has been part of inspiring and inciting excluded populations to stake a claim on the *neofanfarrismo* movement. The limits in the dominant world of Orquestra Voadora and Boi Tolo have formed jumping off points for the creation of new projects—feminist brass bands and brass bands from the *favelas*—that seek to bring *neofanfarrismo*'s ethic of public participation closer to reality. The next chapter extends the search for social inclusion through examination of projects in which excluded groups have emerged as prominent actors within *neofanfarrismo*.



## 6. *Neofanfarrismo* and the Excluded: Gender, Race, Class, and Contesting a Socio-Musical Movement

At 6:00 PM three nights a week, residents of the *favela* Pereira da Silva in central Rio de Janeiro hear the triadic call of Tom Ashe's trumpet. The British jazz musician summons the *favela*'s children to his house, which peers over the Guanabara Bay with spectacular views of Sugarloaf Mountain. In the free music classes he organizes, Tom and his rotating team of international and local music teachers hope to build a model to fill a hole in music education in the poorer parts of Rio, especially for children of the *favelas* renowned for their poverty, violence, and drug trafficking. The project he calls Favela Brass, founded in 2014, organizes the students to play in a brass band format that integrates *samba* percussion, New Orleans jazz, and a diversity of musical traditions from around Brazil and the world. The band now plays in gigs around the city and in the *favela* itself. For Tom, giving poor children access to musical education and the circuits of musical performance provides a vehicle through which marginalized populations may seek social inclusion in a divided city. By performing daily in the central Olympic boulevard during the Olympics, the *favela* children gained access to the international spotlight that descended upon the city in August 2016.<sup>128</sup>

In early December of 2014, the all-women brass band Damas de Ferro (the Iron Ladies), formed just the year before, was set to play a packed show on the stage of Lapa's Bola Preta club. This would be the largest show the band had played yet. Damas was still relishing the newness of its success as the only all-female brass band in the city and one of the only *neofanfarrista* bands to feature more than a handful of women. Female interest in learning brass instruments had exploded in the past couple of years, and when I arrived to do fieldwork in 2014, it seemed that half of the participants in Voadora's *oficina* and *bloco* were women learning brass and percussion. With *neofanfarrismo*'s traditions of international exchange and hospitality, American trombonist Claire Haas was invited to play this show with them and later recounted, "It was one of their biggest shows at the time. We were talking backstage and there was a group hug where someone was saying something to the effect of 'they said it couldn't be done but here we are and we are doing it'" (2/15/16). By early 2017, the band had come a long way from these beginnings, setting off to tour in Brazil and Cuba and later in the year to the HONK! festival in Boston.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> See Favela Brass performing in the Olympic Boulevard during the Olympics:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OY-AsG1fGb4>

<sup>129</sup> Damas de Ferro touring in Cuba for Festival Cubadisco:  
<https://www.facebook.com/damasdeferroband/videos/vb.1413083822254986/2023832854513410/?type=2&theater>



Left: Author playing at Favela Brass carnival *bloco* parade on February 18, 2015.  
 Right: Damas de Ferro at Circo Voador on February 19, 2016. Photo sourced from Damas de Ferro Facebook.

Damas de Ferro and Favela Brass are examples of recent brass projects that seek to diversify what kinds of bodies and populations participate in *neofanfarrismo*. In the preceding chapter, I showed how much of the discourse and practices of *neofanfarrismo*'s instrumental activism is positioned around fostering public participation in music, which seeks to engender social inclusion in public space. I called attention to the limitations of such practices as long as they are primarily enacted by “alternative” middle-class south zone Cariocas, the foremost demographic of *neofanfarrismo*. I showed how some of these practices may even be seen as problematic, bordering on the patronizing towards marginalized populations and participating in the dynamics of gentrification. If the demographics of the movement were to continue to solely reflect those of Orquestra Voadora the band (not the *bloco*)—exclusively male, whiter, and the foremost band of *neofanfarrismo*—it might be difficult not to view its rhetoric of social inclusion as contradictory. These new movements argue that *neofanfarrismo* can hardly be an expression of the alternative carnivalesque if it manifests familiar forms of exclusion.

Its example and participatory practices, however, have spawned a politics of hope for advancing the project of public participation in music in new ways. Musicians in these new projects argue that the movement needs to include and be led by a broader representation of the public itself. In other words, if Voadora's initial aim at fostering public participation in music is an unfinished project, excluded populations have creatively responded with new projects that seek to further it. What kinds of limitations and difficulties have marginalized bodies and populations experienced as they take part in a movement that initially emerged as primarily middle-class, whiter, and male? What strategies have these groups engaged in to challenge their marginalized status within the movement and society? How have they been treated and represented in relation to the dominant actors of the movement? What controversies and challenges have emerged within *neofanfarrismo* with the addition of these new voices?

In this chapter, I examine the all-women's band Damas de Ferro, the feminist *bloco* Mulheres Rodadas,<sup>130</sup> *neofanfarrista* events in *favelas*, and the Favela Brass project. I aim to understand how these bands position the roles of marginalized and excluded identities within the *neofanfarrismo* movement, as well as within the larger context of their social and political lives. I also explore issues of representing excluded others through the controversy of “political correctness” that occurred in preparations for the 2017 carnival regarding themes of racism, misogyny, and homophobia in the repertoire of the alternative brass movement.

Janice Perlman (2010) argues, in relation to the lives of *favela* residents, that the experience of marginality, or exclusion from the privileges of those in dominant categories, contributes to “capability deprivation.” By this she refers to inhibition of time, space, tools, or education to develop capabilities and skills to offer to broader society. By staking a claim on the *neofanfarrismo* movement, these musicians from less privileged social categories—including women, blacker Cariocas, and *favelados*—contest their marginalization through music and challenge the deprivations of their capabilities resulting from their positions in a capitalist, patriarchal, and racist society. By drawing attention to the status and roles of women, black populations, and the poor, I examine how the participation of marginalized populations may problematize criticisms about the activist shortcomings of *neofanfarrismo* examined in the last chapter.

As in the case of Favela Brass, which is run by an English trumpeter who teaches music based in the aesthetics and traditions of Rio's alternative brass movement, the growth of these projects did not take place independently from the privileges within the movement. That is, these new projects cannot be viewed as independent movements that assert the rights and creativity of the excluded. Rather, they are inextricably connected to the structures of privilege and authority of the larger alternative brass band movement, as male musicians have provided support to all-women's bands through making arrangements for them or playing alongside them. I explore these movements of the excluded then as relational and destabilizing alternatives within the hierarchies of the broader movement.

Of course, gender, class, and racial exclusion are by no means the same kinds of exclusion—the historical lack of middle-class women playing brass instruments in Rio is a fundamentally different form of exclusion than that experienced by young girls deprived of musical education in *favelas*. The intersectionality of identities makes forms of exclusion, access, and relative privilege different in each case. The cases examined in this chapter are, however, united as case studies of contesting exclusion because of these musicians' willingness to challenge prevailing structures of privilege within the movement. Just as the brass *blocos* emerged as alternatives to the *samba* schools and *neofanfarrismo* later arose as an alternative to the cultural nationalism of the brass *blocos*, these projects have emerged as alternatives to the dominant identities of the movement led by Orquestra Voadora.

### **Women in Neofanfarrismo**

Despite the discourses of equality and freedom, street carnival and street performance events can present dangerous spaces for anyone, but especially for women. Threats of sexual assault (*assédio*) are ever pervasive. As carnival intensifies public drunkenness and licentiousness, many women avoid street carnival events specifically for their own safety. *Neofanfarrista* producer Renata Dias' experience in a south zone carnival *bloco* was not unusual:

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<sup>130</sup> See also Dias 2017 on Damas de Ferro and Mulheres Rodadas.

“A group of six men closed on me one day. They made a circle and said ‘now you will have to kiss us.’ Strong men—I couldn’t get out. I was traumatized. I didn’t kiss anyone and managed through force to get out” (1/21/16).

Many women told me that playing an instrument allowed them to play a more active role in a *bloco* that also helped protect them. In *blocos* that enclose musicians inside a *cordão* (cord placed around the musicians), playing a musical instrument allows women to enter the relatively vetted space of the musicians physically separated from the *foliões*. Increasing numbers of women have participated as percussionists since the revival of street carnival. The newspaper *O Dia* reports in “Women throw themselves into carnival” that “Today, women are in the directorship, in the instrumental sections, in the composer teams, and even in the human *cordão*,” or the circle of people holding hands to protect musicians, a job which requires strength and physical assertion (Monnerat 2017, my translation). Today it is not at all uncommon to see large groups of women playing brass instruments in the streets with their male counterparts.

This musical participation parallels larger movements towards the advancement of women’s rights in Brazil. In late 2015, a series of mobilizations known as the “Women’s Spring” (Primavera das mulheres), challenged the various forms of inequality suffered by women, including the illegality of abortions, economic inequality, domestic violence, and all forms of *machismo*. Protestors directed their anger especially at the conservative politician Eduardo Cunha who would lead the charge to impeach Dilma Rousseff. As Rousseff was ultimately replaced with a new president whose cabinet is entirely white and male, progressive women have continued to use participation in festive practices as a space for representation and agency.

These women’s musical engagements involve countering long established normalized gender roles in Brazil, especially those tied to performance and carnival. Carla Brunet (2012) argues that *samba* schools are important institutions that teach, regulate, and discipline idealized notions of femininity and masculinity in Brazil. Because these institutions have been used to project idealized subjects of Brazilian identity since the Vargas regime, both within Brazil and to the outside world, these idealizations create a powerful impact on gendered identities in Brazil. In hegemonic Brazilian culture as mediated by *samba* schools, men learn masculinities primarily through playing instruments, while women learn highly sexualized femininities through dance.

In the international world of brass bands, the engagement of female musicians in a generally male world has likewise contested gendered notions of performance and genre. In the macho black world of New Orleans brass bands, the all-female and black Original Pinettes brass band encounters multiple and intersectional forms of exclusion, including charges of lesbianism and not being received as a serious musical endeavor (DeCoste 2017). The all-female brass band Filthy FemCorps in Seattle likewise has recently had an important influence in advancing the issue of female representation in the HONK! movement. Indeed, as feminist music scholars have discussed, particular instruments, ensembles, and genres across cultures are associated with gendered bodies (Gabbard 1992; Doubleday 2008; Koskoff 2014). The image of women performing with brass and percussion thus destabilizes the normative gendering of instruments.

While today the prominence of women playing brass and percussion in the streets of Rio is striking, this is a recent phenomenon. By 2012, when Carol Schavarosk started playing trombone, she reports that there were no female trombonist models. Carol, as a belly dance instructor, had listened to Arabic music and found her way to the brass scene through interest in Balkan music. She followed the *neofanfarrismo* movement in the early 2010s, attending the shows of Orquestra Voadora, Go East, and Songoro Cosongo (see chapter three). She began to participate on percussion, though she had her eye on the trombone, but she points out she “had

never seen a woman playing trombone... Still I had the crazy desire to do this and the next year I resolved to learn. I bought one and went to *MAM* in October of 2012. I got addicted and I have only thought of trombone since then” (11/5/14).

Voadora’s open *bloco* was in some ways an ideal space to start experimenting with the instrument because ostensibly anyone could show up. Carol did not expect to immediately play in Voadora’s carnival *bloco*, but she found her peers extremely encouraging, and she quickly became a familiar character in the *bloco*. Reflecting on the explosion of female interest in trombone since, she remarks, “When I started it was just me playing trombone. Now there are many women, and I think it’s great. It transformed in less than a year. It’s crazy” (11/5/14).

The Voadora *bloco*, however, is a chaotic space in which to learn an instrument with little technical instruction available. Resolving to improve her technique and knowledge of the instrument, Carol enrolled at the Escola Portátil de Choro (see chapter two), as did many of the eager musicians who were brought in by the openness and delirium of *neofanfarrismo* but sought further training. Teaming up with two other female musicians learning saxophone and euphonium, she began to talk of an all-women’s band in 2013, but there were still very few women playing brass. Some girlfriends of Voadora *bloco* members were just getting started. With the announcement that Voadora would start an *oficina* to provide a more disciplined space to learn brass instruments and brass band music than that afforded at the *MAM*, the three enrolled and encountered many other female musicians eager to start participating.

The Voadora *oficina* played the primary role in the explosion of interest of amateurs and beginners participating in *neofanfarrismo* (see chapter five), and it was also the primary cause for the dramatic increase in women learning brass instruments, despite the all-male makeup of the Voadora band itself. Tubist Raquel Torres reported that “despite Voadora being only men, I think that they are super generous people... Their support has been great” (Torres and Coralli 1/6/15). When I asked philosopher and trumpeter Carol Marim if she experienced sexism in the Voadora *bloco*, she responded, “No, I don’t feel it, and that is why I’m there” (10/15/14). Trombonist and engineer Cristiana Campanha also decries the possible presence of sexism in the *bloco*, “I don’t feel any kind of *machismo* in the *bloco*. We are very equal” (11/20/14). The increasing presence of women has itself led to public denunciations of public assault and internet campaigns against particular men in the scene known to take advantage of women.

Many *neofanfarristas* impressed upon me that schools in Brazil did not offer the musical education available in the United States, and most of the non-professionals in *neofanfarrismo* had encountered their instruments of choice only recently as adults. American trombonist Claire Haas believes that Carioca women have certain advantages in engaging in alternative brass bands over American women because they choose to learn musical instruments as adults and are less exposed to normative gendering of instruments from a young age:

I don’t think that girls are more likely to choose flute and clarinet necessarily when they’re eleven... But later, girls who are playing trumpet, trombone, percussion, baritone, or tuba face far greater discrimination from their teachers, peers, and guest musicians. By the time you are eighteen, if you are a woman playing those instruments, you don’t have role models to look up to, you’re getting teased... By that point there are far less women who’ve stuck it through... Choosing an instrument as an adult means you can choose whatever instrument you want, and you won’t go through bullying. (2/15/16)

Nevertheless, some significant gendering of sections has occurred in Orquestra Voadora's *bloco*. The sections of *alfaia* (large barrel drum from *maracatu*) and *xekeré*, for example, are almost exclusively female while it is still rare to see women on tuba. Other sections are largely mixed.

Despite the increasing presence of female amateur musicians, Claire stresses that for women to rise further towards the professional roles within *neofanfarrismo* and the music world of Rio, more years of training and development will be required. Orquestra Voadora's *oficina* and *bloco*, however, provided the first steps to massively broaden musical participation to middle-class women in alternative brass bands in Rio de Janeiro.

### **Damas de Ferro: Rio's First All-Female Brass Band**

With hopes of creating an all women's brass band, Carol Schavarosk and her friends began floating the name "Damas de Ferro," or the Iron Ladies (though they were worried that an unintentional reference to Margaret Thatcher might turn a few off from the group). They started arranging a repertoire similar to many other *neofanfarrista* bands', mixing global pop music, Afro-Brazilian rhythms, *MPB* covers, and other genres. While many female musicians claimed not to have experienced sexism within the world of *neofanfarrismo* itself, early on the band was taught a lesson about the sexist ways such a group might be perceived by the public. While the band was preparing to play officially in the 2014 carnival, *Jornal do Dia* wrote a story on the band that focused primarily on jokes told during the interviews. The band members found the story to undermine the notion that women should be taken seriously as musicians. The author of the article reports,

They manage to squeeze free time for Damas de Ferro between time for family and boyfriends. But sometimes there's stress. "My husband complains a lot that I don't have time for anything. I try to have rehearsals on the days of his meetings," recounts the trumpeter (and biologist) Maysa Salles. But they are very enthusiastic. And, even with so many women playing together, they swear that they don't fear an outbreak of collective PMS. "Even with PMS, we are taking it easy, because we have a lot of desire to show off the band," Sabrina, saxophonist and publicist, says enthusiastically... To have just women, the members of Damas de Ferro believe, has another advantage: "when we pass the hat, just with the girls, we hope that people will give more money," Sabrina says playfully. (Maier 2014, my translation)

The band members were understandably vexed by the article. Carol explains, "we had said a lot about musical influence but there was a moment when we said a bunch of crap and he took this crap and made the article about it. He ignored that we had spoken about music. So it was totally *machista*. This was the tragic beginning of our band. It was this totally *machista* article talking about our make-up." While the band didn't necessarily start out with a clear feminist agenda, such experiences reinforced awareness of the ways women were traditionally excluded from instrumental music and not taken seriously. Carol impresses the need for the band to play well in order to prove itself as a musical ensemble that could be taken seriously on the same level as the predominantly male bands: "I want the band to play well because I don't want people to think 'oh an all-women band—of course they play badly,' like 'they drive badly'" (11/5/14).



The members of the band found that they were subject to questions of self-presentation that their male counterparts had never had to deal with. Should an all-female band attempting to prove female competence over the fetishized image of women playing brass instruments perform with a particularly feminine self-presentation? Band members found themselves in a position in which dressing in a feminine way might be perceived to further undermine the seriousness of their endeavors. Carol recounts, “We play out looking beautiful...Someone once said to us... ‘why do even you wear makeup? If I were you, I would play dressed in garbage with messy hair’” (11/5/14). Raquel describes walking a fine line in presentation in order to be taken seriously: “We don’t do shows semi-nude. We do shows with nice clothes and glitter to show that we have studied and have minds as well” (Torres and Coralli 1/6/15).

Like many *neofanfarrista* bands, Damas de Ferro stresses the importance of playing in the street. But they perceive an all-women’s band playing in the street as more daring and activist than for other bands because of the real dangers and stereotypes attached to “street women.” Many *neofanfarristas* stress that creating female-friendly and safe spaces in the streets is an activist action in a city, country, and world they view as profoundly *machista*.

As in *neofanfarrismo* more largely, the question of explicit political positioning within the band has often been posed (see chapter four). How should an all-female band position itself in relation to questions of feminism, sexual orientation, and gender identity? While an all-male band can easily elide issues of political position on gender, the demographic make-up of Damas and the questions that such an anomalous band provokes make such positioning more pressing. For Damas trumpeter Ana Martins, the lack of clarity around a clear positioning on feminism led her to leave the band: “There were gals in the band that called themselves feminists, but they didn’t want to make it clear that the band was feminist” (12/17/15). While Damas has not necessarily clearly articulated a mission statement around what constitutes feminism, most members assert, however, that the band is indeed feminist.

For many members, the qualification for feminism is already met by the primary goal of showing that women are indeed capable of creating a kind of band generally associated with men. Their gender formation, in and of itself, calls attention to the lack of women in music. They seek to highlight how lack of female role models, perception of instrumental music making as unfeminine, and predominance of men and *machismo* in the music industry undermine the growth of female musicians and deprive them of their capabilities. Trumpeter Ana argues that “machismo diminishes the self-esteem of women...The fact of being a woman playing—this is already feminism, a force” (12/17/15). Similar to the *neofanfarrista* discourse that playing in the street is “already political,” even if there is no explicit political position at stake, Ana and other female instrumentalists claim that an all-female band is “a political transformation in the sense of deconstructing the vision of *machismo*” (10/15/14).

Some band members explain that even they had not been aware of the gender disparity in instrumental music before assuming the role of performing musicians. Ana observes, “Maybe I had never noticed that there are many fewer women than men in music. Take trumpet and there are fewer still. There are things you only understand when you are in the role. So a band with only women I found incredible. You show the force of women in music” (12/17/15). Simone Regina, writing of an all-female *bloco* in media outlet *UOL*, recounts that “many people say that we shouldn’t have a *bloco* without men because that’s exclusion. Without men people think it’s radical feminism, but without women they think it’s natural. No one stops to think where this comes from” (de Almeida 2016, my translation).

Damas has often played for events specifically related to gender and sexual orientation issues, as well as other leftist causes. With original song titles like “Ovulation” (“Ovulação”), the band seeks to put what it is to be a woman at center stage through music.<sup>131</sup> Carol hopes the band might embrace female solidarity: “a support of woman by woman. All women should support each other, and it doesn’t matter what kind of life your female comrade or friend lives. She is also a woman and should be embraced” (11/5/14). Carol criticizes forms of feminism limited to supporting only particular kinds of women. She argues that Damas needs to place itself in support of the liberation of black women and gay women, as well as the sexual liberty of women by playing events like the “Slut Walk” (*Marcha das Vadias*). Damas prioritizes creating a queer-friendly space, and there are several lesbian and bisexual women in the band as well as a new tubist who is a trans woman. The band also frequently plays for pro-lesbian events, such as the Carioca version of Dykes on Bikes.

As Claire Haas recounts, the band does not primarily exist, however, to play for political events: “they don’t conceive of themselves as supporting the chanting or leading the march” (2/15/16). Damas de Ferro is a stage band that seeks to keep moving up in the scene of live music in Rio and showing through example that an all-female band is capable of occupying those spaces. With international tours and increasingly visible performances in the major venues of the city like Bola Preta and Circo Voador, it can certainly be said that the band has been successful.

Despite Damas’ engagements with political causes, especially those related to feminism, I frequently heard *neofanfarristas* outside Damas criticizing the band, presuming that it should take a stronger message on feminism or that it should abandon political causes all together. Most of the women I spoke to in the band dismiss such criticism as itself anti-feminist because of the ways outsiders sought to impose onto Damas their own visions of what roles an all-female band should play. Claire’s sentiments seem common to most of the band members with whom I spoke: “feminism is for women ultimately. It’s for the liberation of women, and women can liberate themselves in whatever way they want. If what they want is to have a band that can play on big stages for huge crowds that love them then that is feminism. It’s not something for someone else to decide for the band” (2/15/16).

### **Mulheres Rodadas: A Feminist *Bloco* for Sexual Freedom**

Annually since the carnival of 2015, *neofanfarrista* women have pushed the promotion of women’s sexual freedom to the forefront of street carnival. A Brazilian man had received attention in late 2014 for uploading a picture onto a right-wing web page of himself with a sign written “I don’t deserve a woman who’s been around” (“não mereço mulher rodada”). “Mulher rodada” literally means a “spun woman,” and the term is intended to shame sexually promiscuous women. A virtual protest emerged with an internet Tumblr account that showed gifs of women spinning with ironic humorous phrases, including “I’ve been around but I haven’t been with you.”

Carioca journalist Renata Rodrigues conceived of a *bloco* of *mulheres rodadas* who would challenge *machismo* through carnival. They would publicly promote the validity and freedom of women’s sexual choices without shame, whether women chose monogamy, polyamory, abstinence, marriage, or something else. The focus on women’s freedom of choice was already a prominent theme in street carnival that year with Comuna que Pariu, a *samba*

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<sup>131</sup> See Damas performing the song at HONK! in Somerville, MA  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYl8e4Gwb\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYl8e4Gwb_k)

*bloco* allied with the Brazilian Communist Party (*PCB*), with its composed *enredo* for that year: “the place of a woman is...where she wants” (“o lugar da mulher é...onde ela quiser”). Rodrigues is quoted in *Globo* describing the rationale for the *bloco*: “It’s surreal that in these days this still exists, the desire to divide women into who is *rodada* and who isn’t. This prejudice only exists for women, while men can do anything [they please]” (da Escóssia 2015, my translation).

Not knowing of Damas de Ferro, Rodrigues contacted another student band of Voadora’s *oficina*, Ataque Brasil, and this all-male band pointed out to the producers the existence of Damas de Ferro. The two bands joined forces to produce the music for the *bloco* and promote the cause of the *mulheres rodadas*. In the tradition of Céu na Terra and Orquestra Voadora, they taught their music to those interested in showing up to the *bloco*. They allowed men to participate, but only if they played in drag. The *bloco* has featured songs playing with the idea of the circle or spinning, such as the *axé* song “A Roda” (The Circle) by Sarajane (1987), and sexual liberty, including “Eu também quero beijar” (I also want to kiss) by Cidade Negra (1999). For women who did not want to participate as musicians, hula-hoop (*bambolê*) dance choreography provided another opportunity to play with the theme of spinning. Adopting a song from the Women’s Spring based on Caetano Veloso’s “A Luz de Tieta” (1998), they sing, “Eta eta eta, Eduardo Cunha wants to control my pussy” (“quer controlar minha buceta”).



Hula hoopers mocking the idea of being a spun woman on February 10, 2016 at the Bloco das Mulheres Rodadas on February 11, 2016. Photo by author.

In the first year, the *bloco* was recognized by UN Women for its denunciations of prejudice and promotion of womens’ rights.<sup>132</sup> In their second year, Mulheres Rodadas took on the theme of sexual assault and consent. They used the *bloco*’s public visibility to educate *foliões*

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.onumulheres.org.br/planeta5050-2030/carnaval-2015/>

and promote the sexuality of carnival only in its freely consensual forms. Rodrigues explains, “I’m very much in favor of hooking up as long as the people involved want to. If something bothers you, it is sufficient to characterize it as assault” (Mendonça 2016, my translation).<sup>133</sup>

Rodrigues defends the use of the carnival *bloco* as an instrument of political dialogue through drawing on the satirical traditions of carnival: “Carnival is a good opportunity to subvert lots of things. There is a lot of serious stuff in this theme, but the path we choose is to make fun and show that the idea of categorizing a woman is passé and the basis for a joke” (Villela 2016, my translation). With images and *fantasias* of Frida Kahlo, Rosie the Riveter, and other famous women, they use the vocabularies of carnival to make clear what is at stake. In 2016, the *neofanfarrismo* movement would continue to satirize hegemonic gendered identities through musicians’ participation in the online campaign that satirized President Michel Temer’s wife. After the coup against President Dilma Rousseff, the right-wing *Veja* magazine praised Marcela Temer as “beautiful, demure, and of the home” (“bela, recatada, e do lar”) in contrast to Rousseff whose “managerial style” they viewed as unbecoming of a woman. *Neofanfarristas* posted carnival pictures of themselves with the hashtag #belarecatadaedolar with men in drag and women drinking in the streets and playing brass instruments, criticizing the dominant conception of femininity of the new regime.

Taking place for the first time on Ash Wednesday with two thousand *foliões*, Mulheres Rodadas received international press in its first year from the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *BBC* with attention focused on redefining the roles of women in carnival. Contrasting the *samba* school *passistas* (young dancers) with Mulheres Rodadas, the *BBC* claims (somewhat falsely) that “the higher profile a woman has in one of Rio’s *samba* schools the scantier the attire. But this year, women are claiming the spotlight for very different reasons, in street carnival parades with feminist mottos” (*BBC* 2015). In the *BBC* video, a *folião* of the *bloco* can be seen reporting the familiar belief that the street carnival is a free space for criticism as opposed to the regulated spectacles of the *samba* schools: “Those who don’t feel they live up to the beauty standards imposed by the media can come to the street carnival. It’s a lot more sincere and allows you to be whoever you want” (*BBC* 2015). By seeking to provide a space in which women can be “who they want to be,” they aim to foster an oppositional and alternative space in which to negotiate other possible ways to be a woman in carnival than those offered by the *samba* schools (Brunet 2012).

Some within the brass movement, however, critique the *bloco*’s methods of portraying its feminist causes. In particular, some are critical that Mulheres Rodadas allows participation by men, who even occupy musical leadership roles. Many feel that men have no place participating in an explicitly feminist project despite whatever feelings of solidarity they might express. While men defend their participation through dressing in drag, others are quick to point out that doing so is a common carnival practice. Indeed, though many men report that dressing in drag allows for experimentation to negotiate and subvert gendered identities, it is common to also see apparently *machista* and patriarchal men (so-called *playboyzinhos*) in drag without any particularly feminist intention. Such debates go to the heart of the perennial question of whether carnival practices of inversion effectively subvert established roles and hierarchies or provide a “safety-valve” moment of playing with them that ultimately reinstates their fixity. Because of its prevalence in carnival, festive cross-dressing cannot be assumed to be a clearly feminist act—it can also be questioned as akin to a form of minstrelsy that satirizes and mocks the other that the

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<sup>133</sup> See coverage on the *bloco*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2zmMz7yqRU>.



cross-dresser presents.<sup>134</sup>

For some, the *bloco* does not provide many visual or sonic cues that it is particularly feminist and different from other street carnival *blocos*. Claire's criticisms echo several others':

going to the *bloco* as a *foliã*, it didn't give me an impression of being a manifestation of anything feminist. It just seemed like a *bloco*. There were a lot of men in dresses but that happens in all of carnival so that's not a feminist act. There were more women than in other *blocos* but it wasn't an all-women space... What would be safe [in an all women-space] would be very different. (2/15/16)

By contrast, Claire found Damas de Ferro to be a more feminist space, despite its lesser priority to clearly engage with feminist questions and causes, simply due to its demographic make-up.

The alternative brass movement has, therefore, presented multiple strategies and models for negotiating the positions of women in *neofanfarrismo*, carnival, and Brazilian society. Positioning themselves within a movement that was until recently predominantly if not often exclusively male, middle-class women have articulated alternative gendered identities by asserting their place as practicing musicians with critical voices. While disagreements regarding the most effective methods of asserting critiques of hegemonic gendered identities have emerged and fostered new debates, Carioca women are engaging in the *neofanfarrismo* movement in ways that have asserted the musical and leadership capacities of women. They hope these engagements will provide models for further projects challenging patriarchy. Often in direct engagement with questions relating to women's rights, women have used brass to amplify their voices regarding issues that directly affect them and women everywhere.



Mulheres Rodadas. Photo by author on February 11, 2016.

<sup>134</sup> Issues of representation and performance of excluded others are further analyzed below in this chapter.

### *Neofanfarrismo in Favelas*

*Neofanfarristas* are far from unaware of the enormous class, racial, and geographical gulfs that separate them from *favelados*, Cariocas who live in one of Rio's one thousand *favelas*. Seeing Rio de Janeiro from above is to look at a patchwork of modernized apartment buildings interspersed with hills (*morros*) rising above the richer flatlands and covered by clusters of the dilapidated red brick buildings of *favelas*. While *favelas* are traditionally situated on the dramatic hills that rise around Rio, these poorer communities exist in the flat lands of the peripheries as well, scattered around the center, south, and west zones of the city.

*Favelas* originally emerged as squats for soldiers who had nowhere to live in the city and for those removed from the tenements of the center at the turn of the century. Continuous waves of migrants over the twentieth century from poorer parts of Brazil, especially the northeast, continued to populate them. Associated with the emergence of *samba*, they have provided locations for many *samba* schools in the city. They are perceived as spaces of Brazilian heritage, the fount of urban Afro-Brazilian culture that Vargas espoused as "authentic" Brazilian culture. While conservative Brazilians have often hoped to eliminate them altogether, their importance to the broader economy and the mass human suffering that would be created in doing so have made such efforts unfeasible. A 1956 law that gave *favelados* permanent squatter rights has never been formally overturned.



Rocinha, a south zone *favela* with around 180,000 people, on July 11, 2013. Photo by author.



Earlier international representations of these communities, such as the French film *Black Orpheus* (1959), idealized them as relatively innocent places that afforded the most beautiful views of Rio. But the entry of drug gangs in the 1980s has reinforced perceptions, both at home and abroad, of the *favelas* as fantastically dangerous and deadly communities. Films like *City of God* (2002) and *Elite Squad* (2007) have circulated the world as predominant images of a Rio de Janeiro on the brink of urban catastrophe. The rise of *funk carioca* music signaled for middle-class Cariocas the cultural degradation of the *favelas*. While most Cariocas, I found, romanticized the cultural richness of the *favelas* of old, even some of the most politically progressive people characterized *favelas* today as places of “cultural lack” (*falta de cultura*).

Children in Rio’s *favelas* are from a young age labeled as unworthy, dangerous, and at risk of falling into drug trafficking and violence. Herbert Gans argues that “labels” imposed upon the poor are performative and interpolate them as delinquent, criminal, violent, or immoral: they “transform and magnify [a stereotype]...they may force the labeled to behave in ways defined by and in the labels” (1995: 12). Janice Perlman suggests that the oppression of *favelados* has long been justified by what she calls the “myth of marginality”—that they are “outside the system,” violently preying on the happiness and well-being of the “moral” middle classes and “justifying” their exclusion. She argues, however, that

*Favela* residents are not marginal at all but inextricably bound into society, albeit in a manner detrimental to their own interests. They contribute their hard work, their high hopes, and their loyalties, but do not benefit from the goods and services of the system. Although they are neither economically nor politically marginal, they are exploited, manipulated, and repressed; although they are neither socially nor culturally marginal, they are stigmatized and excluded from a closed class system. (2010: 150)

Perlman suggests that the myth of marginality contributes to self-blame, senses of moral failure, the creation of scapegoats, and divisions between poor people, making solidarity and resistance impossible.

As expectant host of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, Rio inaugurated a massive campaign in 2008 to wrest control from the drug gangs with “pacification” police unit occupations (*UPP*), which have been extraordinarily violent. Suspicion of the *UPPs* inside the *favelas* and by many on the left is high, while the right has largely celebrated the forceful control imposed by the state. Some *favelas* that have become safer have been gentrified by the lower middle-classes, as well as by hippies and travelers who have found the rest of the city too expensive. Many of my collaborators spoke of the existence of a perpetual civil war in Rio, referring to the “divided city” (*cidade partida*) and likening the situation to apartheid.

The alternative brass movement, as I have shown, is largely a middle-class movement of the south zone—no *neofanfarrista* with whom I spoke had been raised in a *favela*, although some chose to live in safer central *favelas* to cut living costs. Voadora trombonist Márcio Sobrosa speaks of the difficult relationship with *favelas* that he believes *neofanfarristas* must engage:

Our city isn’t just where we live here—in Santa Teresa, Lapa, the south zone. The city is enormous. Everyday poor and black people die... We live in the same city and do nothing. We legitimize this even by saying that we don’t want these people to come rob us here. How can we manage to create a bridge with these communities? Orquestra Voadora once went to play in the Maré [*favela*]... We blocked the street and the *UPP*

wanted to pass. The kids were laughing like crazy. The whole community was happy to manifest in a ludic way that isn't the form of confrontation... They want to do these things—playful, theatrical, and beautiful parades that reclaim spaces not through direct confrontation with the police. The state gives nothing to them and still goes there to oppress and kill... How can we enter into this to empower them to express themselves, manifest, and create visibility? We don't want more killings. Orquestra Voadora, all the south zone, no one wants a city like this. How can we construct some kind of relation? We are a single city! (1/14/15)

*Neofanfarrista* bands frequently play in *favelas* employing discourses of “empowerment,” sometimes in affiliation with social projects, NGOs, and government sponsorship. Many believe these performances to be modes through which alternative ludic relationships to spaces and authorities in the *favelas* can be expressed beyond recourse to familiar scenes of violence. Indeed, a child in the Complexo do Alemão *favela* told me after a performance of the Orquestra Voadora *bloco* in the *favela* that he had heard of Orquestra Voadora but did not believe it was quite real until he saw it with his own eyes. His mother expressed that she had never seen something so beautiful in the *favela*.

While I have witnessed these events to be often joyful celebrations, I also found them to be at times rife with class antagonisms and tensions between drug gangs and *neofanfarristas*. A different model of musical engagement with *favelados* is Favela Brass, a social project founded by British trumpeter Tom Ashe who has created a brass band in a *favela* that draws on street carnival repertoires and eclectic brass repertoires. In this section, I compare these two forms of musical engagement with excluded populations in *favelas* and examine their effects in relation to the larger discourse and practices of social inclusion in the *neofanfarrismo* movement.

### **Brass Invasions of *Favelas***

On December 15, 2015, the Tropa do Afeto (the Affect Troupe) theater group invaded the *favela* of Gramacho, a community that lives in a gigantic abandoned landfill (*lixão*), with clowns and a brass band organized by *neofanfarristas*. The landfill had been a major employer even as residents lived in trash, but it had been shut down the year before, ending employment for many. The community still literally lives in garbage. The entire population seemed black, and it was described to me as having some of the worst conditions of Rio's *favelas*.

The intent of the musical action was to involve the *favela* children that the troupe would encounter in practicing the performative experience of resistance to forces that oppress them. As we left from Rio's central bus station, *neofanfarristas* were already dressed as clowns and singing *marchinhas* while brass musicians intoned the melodies. The handout passed out beforehand described the rationale and intent of the action: the “world is a machine, unequal and unjust.” The action would be a “poetic act made by a collective of people, actors and non-actors, that makes possible, through the nose of the clown, the exercise of horizontal dialogue with the population... for the poetic act must involve the population.” The goals were to “recognize the physical transformation, the absolute deconstruction, the body as an instrument, and the possibility of making ourselves ridiculous.”



Gramacho on December 14, 2014. Photo by author.

After dressing in full clown regalia, the musical clowns began parading into the streets of the *favela*, inviting children and residents as the parade went on. We played through the common repertoires—Orquestra Voadora’s music, *frevo*, *marchinhas*, and *funk carioca* music. We painted children into clowns and invaded bars, social centers, and other community spaces, carnivalizing the *favela*. We invited people into the streets beckoning through their windows. Clowns hugged residents and “ridiculed” them, painting their faces and inviting them to join the impromptu carnival. One child in a wheel chair received a particularly large display of clown attention. The clowns held hands and started dancing around him, while the band played directly to him. The clowns shouted to the gathering crowd, “everyone, this space is yours” (“galera, este espaço é de vocês”), inviting them to act upon the imagination of possessing their public spaces.

Midway through the parade, the band brought everyone down to crouch on the ground, and one of the actors in a monkey costume began to sing: “I won’t turn myself into a king, because being a king is a lie. I don’t want to be a lie. I want to be with the people.” After some repetitions, everyone began singing this refrain and we started marching again. Once we arrived in an open space at the end of the *favela*, the clowns began playing with the children and letting them try instruments, while the brass band led a conga line. One of the clowns, presenting himself as the “captain,” abruptly stood up and yelled “this game is over!” (“acabou a brincadeira!”). The people started to boo, and the monkey character who had earlier sung against being a king jumped on a car and started inciting the people to reject the captain’s authority. Careful precautions had been taken to protect the captain as the people rushed toward him, genuinely angry that he had arbitrarily declared the end of this rare carnivalesque moment in the *favela*. The children helped the monkey character approach the captain and cut off his beard. Then they ripped off the captain’s clothes to reveal a man in a diaper. The character of authority

had been reduced to an infant. The people rejoiced at their victory, the band started playing again, and we all marched back the entrance to the community.<sup>135</sup>



Left: *Fanfarra* and clowns entering Gramacho.  
Right: Musical clowns playing with a physically disabled boy. Photos by author on December 14, 2014.

Augusto Boal, the Brazilian radical theater theorist, famously critiqued “bourgeois theater” as fundamentally oppressive because of how actors dramatize questions of morality to passive spectators and provide senses of moral completion rather than foundations for action. In his *Theater of the Oppressed* (1979), Boal asserts that theater should transform spectators into “spect-actors” who are actively engaged in shaping theatrical performance and their outcomes. The spect-actor is not subject to the theater but is the active subject of the theater. Boal proposes games and practices for practitioners of the theater of the oppressed in order to facilitate this engagement and lead to what Paulo Freire (1970: 67) calls “conscientization” (*conscientização*). By this, Freire means the awareness that comes from dialogic pedagogical practices and the critical consciousness necessary to revolt against oppression. This particular action might be seen as an example of what Boal calls “invisible theater,” a theatrical enactment in a scene in which people do not expect theatrical action and unwittingly become spect-actors in the drama as they take part in its unfolding.

For Boal, “the theater itself is not revolutionary; it is a rehearsal for the revolution” (1979: 122). Most street and radical theater companies in Brazil owe some heritage to Boal’s ideas, and Tropa do Afeto is no different. In using music and clowns to involve the unwitting children in engaging in a morality play of invisible theater, the Tropa sought to engage the children as spect-actors, planting the seeds of revolt through performative experience. With the monkey’s song of love for the people and rejection of kings, the children identified with the

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<sup>135</sup> See footage of the action: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQU248n\\_Td8&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQU248n_Td8&t=1s).



populism of the monkey in contrast to the elitist authoritarianism of the captain. When the authoritarian captain proclaimed the end of carnivalesque playing, the intent was for the children to connect this experience of arbitrary authority to their own experiences in a profoundly unequal society. In being allowed to attack the captain and literally disrobe him of his authority, the children engaged in a form of revolutionary action towards an authoritarian figure. For saxophonist Michel Moreau, one of the organizers of the action,

Tropa do Afeto is an invasion... You really make a link with the people and strengthen their cultural initiatives... Children today don't see clowns. There are no more circuses. At least they will remember the thing their whole lives... We had thought about music together with the action... We thought about certain songs to accompany the dramaturgy. This community that we are visiting has never seen a *fanfarra* of this style... Music really adds to the affective potential of the action. We conceived the sonorization of the action. (8/18/15)

The members of the *tropa* perceived themselves as theatrical and musical facilitators for enabling a kind of conscientization of the *favela* children. For Michel, the music was inseparable from the dramatic action, enabling the children to take part as spect-actors in the event.



Tropa do Afeto at the end of the action with community of Gramacho on December 14, 2014. Photo by author.

This event was one of many *neofanfarrista* engagements in *favelas* I attended and played in during my fieldwork. While the dramatic action and roles in the Gramacho action were far more elaborate than is usually the case in *favela* performances, the general logic I found to be similar: *favela* residents are excluded from mainstream society and are in need of empowerment, which generally comes from outside. In this way of thinking, *neofanfarrismo* creates a peaceful and ludic happening through which *favelados* can reclaim the spaces of the *favela* beyond the

systems of control of the drug gangs or the *UPP*. In collaboration with other social projects, *neofanfarrista* bands can draw visibility to the causes of these social projects and work to further politicize *favelados*.

Despite the vocabulary of horizontalism, these forms of instrumental activism are, however, relatively top-down hierarchical engagements in which a cultural vanguard acts to “facilitate” the liberation of the oppressed. Freire’s and Boal’s models both rely on facilitators who provide dialogic games and models for engagement that allow the oppressed to creatively criticize and resist their oppression. But these models presume enlightened and benevolent facilitators who act as a dialogical vanguard. *Neofanfarristas* could be seen as coming into *favelas* and proposing their own view of cultural action upon the *favelados*. Such a model of cultural activism does not originate from the practices and cultures of the oppressed. It brings outside models from the middle-classes with implicit assumptions about the validity of certain cultural forms of action over others.<sup>136</sup>

I have also seen class tensions explode at *neofanfarrista* performances in *favelas*. At a performance in the Complexo do Alemão *favela* in early 2016, two young women from the *favela* interrupted the brass performance, yelling on the microphone to decry the invasion of white people from the south zone. As more young *favelados* moved in to seize control of the microphone, it seemed for a while that the entire event would be shut down. Clearly the aim of inspiring cross-class and cross-racial solidarities was far from realized at this particular action.

At an earlier action in late 2014, the Orquestra Voadora *bloco* led a massive parade through the Complexo do Alemão *favela* that dangerously entered into drug lord territory. The parade mistakenly entered into the “mouth” of the drug trade (*no meio da boca*) with tables set up openly selling hard drugs in labeled bags. One hundred musicians had entered into the cross-fire of drug gangs and *UPP* police, and some Voadora musicians even began buying drugs from the *favela* vendors. What happened next was mass confusion. It was clear to some that we had to leave, and the musicians departed hastily while playing Fela Kuti’s “Expensive Shit.” Reports varied regarding what happened. Shots may have been heard in the distance from another gang that disapproved of the festiveness occurring in this gang’s territory. Another report claimed that the *UPP* police had been called to put a stop to the trade and that the loudness of the *bloco* had helped police localize where the drugs were being sold. The *bloco* arrived back to the center of the *favela* in safety, but it remains unclear what exactly unfolded. Some *neofanfarristas* defended our presence as having “pacified” an insecure and violent situation. But the arrival of privileged bodies loudly celebrating in a *favela* cannot be assumed to guarantee safety. Lack of knowledge of internal dynamics, power structures, and local tensions can exacerbate the cross-class and cross-racial contact that *neofanfarristas* celebrate.<sup>137</sup>

The desire to spread art beyond the reach of the middle classes to those who live in *favelas* and peripheries is no doubt laudable. These actions represent a rejection of the forces that segregate Rio into a city that is simultaneously one of the most privileged and excluded cities in the world. Many of these actions have produced felicitous encounters, and some have sought to induce critical consciousness among *favelados* in relation to forces that oppress them. However, *neofanfarristas* playing in *favelas* cross barriers of exclusion and privilege that lay bare the tensions at play in Carioca society that are not simply silenced through raucous celebration. At

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<sup>136</sup> These critiques reflect longer debates in critical pedagogy and *tropicalia*. See Roberto Schwartz’s essay “Culture and Politics” (1970) or José Celso’s critique of Boal.

<sup>137</sup> Orquestra Voadora band playing in Complexo do Alemão on a different occasion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caM5Etfhdxk>.



times, such celebrations can even exacerbate these tensions. Moreover, these engagements are generally one-off top-down encounters, special events in which *neofanfarristas* enter a *favela*, celebrate, and retreat back into their privileged homes. What substantive effects do such temporary engagements really have? By contrast, what kind of empowerment is possible in the forging of a local and permanent culture of *neofanfarrismo* in the *favela* itself?

### **Favela Brass: Building Long-Term Musical Agency in a *Favela***

During the 2016 Olympics, the city administration garnered criticism for the walls constructed on the sides of the freeway that connected the airport to the center of the city. These walls obscured the view of *favelas* like Maré from visitors' first impressions of the city. But with Tom Ashe's project Favela Brass playing sixteen performances in sixteen days during the Olympics with coverage by *Globo*, the *BBC*, *NBC*, the *Guardian*, and *Al-Jazeera*, he hoped that the Olympics would give visibility to a project that promotes a different vision of the *favela* from those the city sought to suppress. Tom aspires for Favela Brass to provide a positive model of how participation in collective music making might lead towards social integration and participation of the excluded.

When Favela Brass performed at the 2016 Honk Rio!, the band would be a unique feature of the festival as the only ensemble to hail from a poor community with predominantly black membership. Tom frequently points out that import taxes and lack of local production make brass instruments in Brazil two to three times the cost that they would be in his native England. Subtract the earning power of *favela* residents and these prices leave the hope of participating in the brass movement all but impossible. In some *favelas* and poorer neighborhoods, musical education may come through the *samba* schools which do not teach brass. Otherwise, the dominant element of the musical soundscape consists of the electronic sounds of *funk carioca*.

Tom hopes that the opportunities the social project may provide for playing live music will help erase negative stereotypes and offer the children access to the benefits of Rio's middle-class society, potentially even a way out of the *favela*. In his efforts to offer the children tools for engaging with the world outside the *favela*, he even includes English instruction in his classes. In positioning his project as a vehicle of social inclusion, Tom aims to offer solutions, albeit through a limited model project in one *favela*, about how the labels attached to the poor might be deconstructed and how the cultural capital gained through the project might lead to economic capital and resources otherwise limited to the middle class.

One might see a parallel to using music in the *favela* to foster agency and self-esteem in the Grupo Cultural Afro-Reggae. The NGO was founded in 1993 in the Vigário Geral *favela* by *favelados* themselves with the goal of providing education and access to an artistic project that seeks to build self-esteem through valorization of local culture and connecting the *favela* to other Afro-diasporic expressions through music. By contrast, while Favela Brass may have some similar goals, it is primarily controlled, organized, and promoted by an "outsider" who governs the repertoires and practices of participants.

Gayatri Spivak's oft-cited essay (1988) asks whether western engagements with colonized populations can at all help produce subaltern subjects who can "speak for themselves" without cooperation in the colonial project. Here I ask if the fact that Favela Brass is directed by a middle-class gringo necessarily means that it inscribes the poor into the value regime of the population that oppresses them. What social and political work might a brass band of *favelado* children be able to do to help close the gaps of extreme inequality that have long plagued Rio de

Janeiro? During my fieldwork, I lived at the project in the Pereira da Silva *favela* as a full-time volunteer teacher for three months.

Pereira da Silva, the home of Favela Brass, is a small *favela* located between the Santa Teresa and Laranjeiras neighborhoods. Like other hilly *favelas* in the south zone, the view of the “marvelous city” from Pereira da Silva is spectacular. This *favela* had been known in the 1990s as a dangerous and violent place controlled by drug trafficking. As one of the first posts of the *UPP*, the *favela* became, however, a kind of “success model” for pacification. Residents frequently impressed upon me that there was little violence or strife within the *favela*. They told me that I was much more likely to get robbed in the streets of the surrounding richer neighborhood of Santa Teresa (which proved, unfortunately, to be true).



Author performing in back at left with Favela Brass and its organizer Tom Ashe at back center in local television screening in Pereira da Silva *favela* on January 25, 2015.

Pereira da Silva is perhaps the most gentrified *favela* of the Santa Teresa neighborhood. Like other “safer” *favelas* in the south zone, it had become a place where middle-class bohemians sought low rents near the center of the city—even international students and artists, such as Tom Ashe himself—as the cost of living sky rocketed in middle-class neighborhoods. Tom is a well-known musician in the city’s alternative brass movement and the jazz and *roda de samba* scenes. He houses travelers as well as volunteers in his house through Airbnb. Projects such as this in *favelas* farther from the center and with higher rates of violence are likely less viable, as there are various levels of stratification within the patchwork of Rio’s *favelas*. The drug gangs retain a presence in this *favela*, however, and they seemed menacingly unwelcome

towards outsiders. I learned, however, to simply say I was a resident (*morador*), and their resistance would soften as they told me “well welcome then!” (“seja bem-vindo então”).

Pereira da Silva gained international visibility in the past twenty years through the Morrinho project (“little hill” or “little *favela*”). Morrinho is a miniature *favela* art project made out of the bricks used to build *favela* homes, representing the conditions of daily life in the *favela* as well as the aspirations and dreams of residents (Angelini 2015). Begun as a childhood game in 1998, Morrinho grew into a large-scale structure that attracts tourists to the *favela*. It has been replicated at the Museum of Art of Rio (*MAR*) and presented at forums and exhibits in Europe as a demonstration of ingenuity and creative response to oppressive circumstances. A brick made for Favela Brass shows that the band has been imaginatively built into this artistic imagining of the community.



Left: The Morrinho project in Pereira da Silva. Photo by author on November 22, 2014.  
Right: A brick for Favela Brass at Morrinho in Pereira da Silva. Photo by author on December 16, 2015.

Tom Ashe was drawn to Rio for its “healthy” live music culture, which he saw as moribund in England. He first came to the city to teach in a social project in the Complexo do Alemão *favela* in 2008. Because of the widespread pervasiveness of live music in Rio, he was shocked to witness how little access to musical education there was in the city itself, especially for the poorer populations despite the romanticization of their musicality. He explains,

Music is so central in the culture and the social life and so it’s very surprising that there are real serious holes in the music education system in Rio. And there’s a divide—people who have got money to buy instruments and pay for individual lessons learn to play wind instruments. Because of the high cost of instruments and because of the lack of any kind of decent provision of instrumental music lessons in school, it makes it almost impossible for [poor] children to learn wind instruments. (*BBC* interview on Soundcloud 2016)

Tom came to view much of the middle-class brass movement as elitist and disconnected. He had taught a workshop in the center of the city that provided free music lessons, but, given the location alone, it was only richer people who took advantage. He believed that the only efficient way to spread musical education to the *favelas* was to go directly to them.

For Tom, success in music is not based in inherent genius but in opportunities. He sees his own musical success as owing to the Doncaster, England music and jazz programs that helped him excel. He views the lack of musical output from contemporary *favelas* as a direct result of lack of opportunity. Marguerinha (Carlos São Vicente), the percussion instructor of Favela Brass (as well as of the Vila Isabel *samba* school and Boitató), had first learned music through a social project in a poorer community. He expresses similar sentiments: “It’s interesting to work with *favela* children that have few opportunities in real life. Opportunity doesn’t arrive very easily. If you look for it, you won’t find it” (10/10/14).

Tom expresses hope that “Favela Brass will be a lesson to show that we need a musical education system in Rio that is gonna cultivate its latent talent. I don’t know if people in Rio think kids in *favelas* are a lost cause. But if you give them lessons they’ll kick the door down” (*BBC* on Soundcloud 2016). He seeks to use the band’s presence in the public sphere of Rio de Janeiro to make a statement about the “latent talent,” or “capability deprivation” of *favela* youth. The name Favela Brass itself resignifies the term *favela*, often negatively stigmatized and used with derision towards particular places in the city and their residents. If such a band could be organized in such oppressive social circumstances, Tom argues, *favelas* must have something to offer society—they cannot be wholly “marginal” (Perlman 2010).

Favela Brass has grown tremendously since its founding in 2013. When I began volunteering at the school in late 2014, the band’s repertoire was limited and the skill of the few students who were learning to play horns was basic. Tom was introducing music theory, teaching students to read pitch through solfège shape systems, and using Portuguese mnemonics to teach them to read rhythms. He used glockenspiels to teach younger children easy songs, intervals, and basic musicality. He brought the students to perform at Boitató rehearsals and experience the professional music world. He invited guitarists and *cavaquinho* players to lead *rodas de samba* so that the children would learn Brazilian *sambas* in the traditional *roda* context. A rotating cast of international volunteers from the United States, Europe, and other parts of South America offered private lessons on a variety of instruments. The band started out playing for events in the *favela*, such as game days during the 2014 World Cup and their own *favela* carnival parade in 2015. As the band’s profile increased, it started playing gigs throughout the city, at private schools, the British consulate, music festivals, and many other opportunities. By the time of the Olympics, I was amazed to see that the project had grown to have thirty or so regular students with an eclectic and well executed repertoire.

The musical aesthetics of Favela Brass resonate with and are largely based on those of the alternative brass movement, a mix of the brass movement’s phases of cultural nationalism and internationalist musical eclecticism. While Tom romanticizes the *favelas* of old as live music bastions, he expresses distaste for much of the music popular in contemporary *favelas*, including *funk*, *pagode*, and contemporary *samba-enredo*, though he has arranged with *funk* beats and taught *funk* songs, such as “Rap da Felicidade” (see chapter four).

Tom maintains that the movements to revive *samba* and other traditional genres since the 1990s are mostly limited to the center of the city and the middle classes that freely circulate in these spaces. He sees his goal as bringing the students of Favela Brass “along with” the traditional music and street carnival revival movements of the rest of the city: “we want to reconnect them just like the rest of the city with traditional *samba* music, ditto carnival music. They’re learning the *marchinhas*, rather than *enredo*. Come carnival, they will be a part of traditional street carnival” (10/23/14). Two years later, *Rio Times Online* would report that the

“children’s participation in the city’s carnival celebrations gives them a chance to show off their dedication and talent, as well as allowing them to participate in the festivities” (Long 2016).

Despite his interest in integrating the children into the middle-class street carnival, however, he conceives of Favela Brass also as a community-building institution in a poor area. In this respect, he stresses the importance of *samba* schools as mass community organizing institutions. For Tom, Favela Brass “is a kind of *samba* school. I want it to be similar and different. *Samba* schools are kind of like British brass bands a hundred years ago. They have a big social function of bringing people together in low-income communities. I’d be extremely happy if this school can do that” (10/23/14).

Tom was happy, however, that the school did not reflect the gender divisions reinforced by *samba* schools (see Brunet 2012 and above). At the time I volunteered there, the school was about even between girl and boy musicians, and there was no particular gender division in choosing an instrument. In the *favela*, “brass is completely alien, which is good for us. We haven’t inherited the idea that boys play trumpet and girls play flute. There’s no baggage that way. They’re all just picking up trumpets and playing them, and it works absolutely fine” (10/23/14). In this respect too, Favela Brass has much in common with the street carnival and *neofanfarrismo* movement in which female participation on a diversity of musical instruments is far more common than in the *samba* schools.

While Tom and the teachers generally did not openly malign the dominant funk styles of the *favelas*, they believed it was important to broaden the children’s horizons to other repertoires “beyond the *favela*.” Marguerinha explains:

In the *favela*, *samba*, *funk*, *charme*, and soul were born—all the genres of black music that black Brazilians introduced to Brazil. But it’s good also for the *favela* to have knowledge of *MPB*, of rock, and of classical music because all good music is good to hear... It is good for the *favela* to open its horizons. Everything gets closer... They need to know first what is in their own country... The intention here beyond giving music lessons is for us to search for citizenship, living with and respecting others. [Because of this], it wouldn’t be interesting to focus on just one rhythm. It’s more interesting for us to teach various rhythms for them to have their whole lives... This is a question of citizenship: it’s important that they know that in the northeast there is *forró* and *xaxado*. There are various rhythms just as important as the rhythms they have in their state. If they respect other rhythms of the other states certainly they are being citizens. (10/10/14)<sup>138</sup>

It is perhaps unsurprising given Marguerinha’s status as the percussion leader of Cordão do Boitató, the brass *bloco* that initiated the alternative brass movement and its initial aesthetics of cultural nationalism and rescue, that he would espouse the importance of representing musical traditions from throughout Brazil. Here he frames this engagement as an ethical way to be a citizen in a pluralistic nation.

Beyond these engagements with the diversity of Brazilian music, Tom intends to use the school to introduce international musical styles so that students may be international, as well as national, citizens, engaging with musical eclecticism in ways similar to *neofanfarrismo*. Tom, having been trained primarily as a jazz trumpeter, seeks in particular to introduce and integrate jazz in the project, especially traditional New Orleans jazz and the second line tradition. Tom frequently draws the musical parallels between the two cities as a justification (see chapter

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<sup>138</sup> For more on discussions of citizenship and popular music in Brazil, see Dunn and Avelar 2011.



three). The logo of Favela Brass even uses the traditional purple, green, and gold colors of New Orleans. Favela Brass builds affinities with New Orleans' rich musical culture also born out of poverty and legacies of slavery, representing a transnational dialogue with the larger Afro-diasporic experience of creative responses in oppressive environments.



Design by Pedro Pamplona (co-founder of Cordão do Boitató) and sourced from Favela Brass Facebook.

Since my initial period of ethnographic fieldwork with Favela Brass, Tom has sought to strengthen this New Orleans connection. With pilot trips to New Orleans, he has been attempting to forge institutional links with Matt Sakakeeny, ethnomusicology professor at Tulane University, and the social project Roots of Music, co-founded by Rebirth's snare player Derrick Tabb, in order to possibly bring the *favela* children to New Orleans. Tom has transcribed and taught the children modern second line music, and Rebirth standards now resound around Pereira da Silva. Tom explains that "One of the revelations was just how much the kids like the second line stuff. They just call it jazz. They prefer to play it. They like *samba* percussion but there aren't too many people in Rio doing second line. It's theirs—it's something completely new... We wanna move towards where people in Rio can see New Orleans music going on in the streets of Rio" (1/6/17). In the 2017 carnival, Favela Brass accomplished its first carnival performance outside the *favela* with a second line-themed parade. *Rio Times Online* prepared Cariocas, informing them that the "Children will showcase a rare performance of the 'second line' style of New Orleans jazz, giving the audience the chance to participate by walking and dancing alongside the musicians as they parade. Second line participants often wave umbrellas or handkerchiefs as props while they walk or dance" (Long 2016).

This diversity of styles mixes together in the Favela Brass repertoire. In their version of "Chariot of Fire," a song associated with the Olympics, the band goes between a *funk carioca* beat and a *samba* rhythm. The band might then move to a contemporary second line song, an old Dixieland tune, a *maracatú* song, and then fall back into a familiar set of *marchinhas*. Tom explains that the mixing of traditions is the long-range goal of Favela Brass with language that resonates with the aesthetics of musical eclecticism of the *neofanfarrismo* movement:



It's a big aim of the project to create the conditions where they might be able to come up with new stuff through the combination of the traditions they're learning. That's definitely a main aim of the project, to stimulate new stuff. New Orleans and Rio both face a similar danger of becoming caricatures of themselves. In Rio, you have this *samba* school cliché and the *roda de sambas* that play the same stuff in the same way. In New Orleans, you have traditional jazz which hasn't shifted forward a lot... It's almost ironic that the protagonists on both sides try to keep the thing static. [Favela Brass] is basically mixing swinging acoustic live music traditions. I want them to get the traditions but also innovate and create variety... They just mix it all up. Yesterday we were playing "Rocky" and Marcus was playing a New Orleans snare beat naturally without thinking about it... Whatever they have at their fingertips, they just mix it up. (1/6/17)

As the Olympics approached, Tom considered the possibility that Favela Brass could participate, but, he stressed, they had no contacts or clear idea of how to benefit from the systems. One of the teachers suggested to Tom, "maybe the fact that you guys don't have anything IS your Olympic story, maybe it's all about the struggle of the kids and the teachers to get included in the Olympics over the next year" (2016a). Tom used this narrative as the major selling point for the project. The project came from "nothing," the children came from "nothing," and including them in them in the Olympics would represent a success story for Pereira da Silva and an example to *favelas* elsewhere. They set the goal of performing in the opening ceremonies. The children would be "ambassadors" to the world from the *favelas* of Santa Teresa. Tom writes on his blog that the opportunity represented a kind of entrepreneurial lesson: "if we did make it, it would teach the children that if you really go for stuff, there's a good chance you will make it" (2016a).

In his writing about why Favela Brass deserved a shot, he stressed the intercultural connections that helped the children learn about worlds beyond the *favelas*. Favela Brass could represent an opening of horizons to other models of *favelas* to the outside world when it descended upon Rio de Janeiro. In the end, Favela Brass did not make it quite to the Opening Ceremonies—rather it played daily performances, mainly in the Olympic Boulevard. The band was, however, featured on *BBC* prime-time television right before the opening ceremonies.<sup>139</sup> It is no doubt that reaching this level after less than three years represents a significant achievement for the children, Tom, the social project, and Pereira da Silva.

While many cultural projects involving those in poverty have as their intent a strong denunciation of poverty and the system that creates and maintains it, Favela Brass does not embrace a discourse of protest or any kind of stringent political critique or means of resistance. Instead, Tom employs an entrepreneurial discourse that prizes taking advantage of opportunities within an unequal system, activism within a neoliberal reality. Tom sees musical activism, at best, as an "implicit statement:"

I wouldn't want to use the school to make a political point ever. It's about giving kids opportunities to play music. The only political statement that I would want to make is just to show that if you give kids an opportunity in a place like this, it's worth doing because it gives good results. I don't know if that's activism or not. I suppose it's activism in the sense that it's a direct action in trying to help within a context of a broad failure to

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<sup>139</sup> See the *BBC*'s video of Favela Brass broadcast during the Olympics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZouwCC7WLg>.

provide educational opportunities for the kids, so I think we are intervening in that sense. If someone sees a video of our kids playing traditional Brazilian carnival music well in the center of Rio, that's gonna make a few people think "why isn't there more of this?" It's more of an implicit statement. (10/23/14)

Tom's approach is an essentially pragmatic means of broadening opportunities within the value regime that exists, not upending that regime or inspiring the children to build autonomy from it.

Like *neofanfarrismo*'s occupations of public space, Favela Brass could also be viewed as part of the gentrification of the Pereira da Silva *favela*. Tom is part of a class of local and international bohemian outsiders who have taken up cheap residence in the *favela* and facilitates other outsiders, like myself, to live there. In the ways that he seeks to extend a middle-class movement into the *favela* and bring the children "along with it," Favela Brass could be seen as an invasion of the value regime and practices of the middle class into a poor space. The hierarchy of the organization's structure, run by a middle-class "gringo" from Britain, means that the representation and narration of poverty and opportunity are primarily controlled by an outsider. While Favela Brass may help deconstruct the ideology of marginality by showing that *favelado* children can be actively engaged with and contribute to society, the project has its limitations in helping its "subaltern" students "speak" in their "own language" in Spivak's sense.

It is worth asking what other models of social engagement might be possible. What would such a project look like if it were primarily directed by musicians from the *favela*? How might the reception of the project and its possibilities for middle-class visibility change if the means of representation were more similar to that of the Morrinho project or Afro-Reggae? Even if controlled by an outsider, what might an educational model based on a Freirian perspective be like, in which Tom acted more as a facilitator for dialoguing with the children about aesthetics and values and formed a more horizontally-led organization, such as Samuel Araújo's project in the Maré *favela* (Cambria 2012), even with the practicalities of doing so with children taken into account? How would middle-class society respond to a brass band project that was more intent on engaging with the dominant sounds, repertoires, and realities of the *favela* itself rather than facilitating connection to outside cultural values?

My speculations about other possible projects in no way discount the laudable work that Favela Brass does. Providing free musical education and aspiring to use musical opportunities to gain access to social betterment are fundamentally good actions and honorable goals. It seems likely that this musical education could lead to the production of professional musicians, a group of children with stronger access to social benefits, and a proliferation of similar projects in other *favelas* and poorer spaces. In contrast especially to the one-off musical engagements of *neofanfarrismo* in *favelas* examined above, Favela Brass represents a long-term musical engagement with developing the musical skills of *favela* children that help them become active creators and performers of music.



Favela Brass children at Olympic sign. Photo sourced from Favela Brass Facebook.

### **Homages to or Stereotypes of the Excluded?**

In the opening of unofficial carnival in 2017 during the Boi Tolo *bloco* (see chapter five), musicians launched into “Mulata Bossa Nova,” perhaps the most over-played *marchinha* in all of Rio. A sub-group of *neofanfarrista* women had begun refusing to play certain songs, including this one, that they deemed offensive, and on this day the majority of the musicians refused to play. The male musicians who had called “Mulata Bossa Nova” grew angry at a group of female musicians who led the charge against the song. The song recounts the story of Vera Lúcia Couto, who won the title of Miss State of Guanabara in 1964 (at that time the state containing the city of Rio de Janeiro), making her the first black woman to be a contestant for Miss Brazil. Despite the progressive content of the story, female *neofanfarristas* criticized the *marchinha* on the grounds that the term “mulata” was racist and associated with the over-sexualization of black and mixed-race women. They cited the possible etymological derivation of the word from “mula/o,” or mule, in their argument, emphasizing that the term no longer had a place in contemporary vocabulary on race relations. In many brass *blocos* in the 2017 carnival, “Mulata Bossa Nova” would be nowhere to be heard.

This final section explores ethical questions of representation of excluded Others through discussion of the recent controversy of certain *marchinhas* that came under public scrutiny in 2017 for their politically incorrect lyrics and stereotypical treatments of Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and LGBTQ peoples. Carnival in Rio de Janeiro since the 1930s has been understood as an articulation of a cultural politics that asserts national identities and hegemonic race relations (McCann 2004a et al.). This articulation has been largely based on the supposedly positive valuation of Afro-descendent culture despite the maintenance of extreme race-based inequality, commonly known as the “myth of racial democracy.” The notion that cultural appropriation could even be a sensible critique in a “racial democracy” where marginalized

cultures are viewed as part of the collective national culture was for many *neofanfarristas* and Cariocas a novel one.

But in 2017, brass musicians began asking themselves, what are appropriate musical repertoires to play that engage with the excluded of Brazilian society? They interrupted each other in the streets when launching into particular songs and criticized each other's costumes over charges of cultural appropriation. At stake in the controversy has been the question, what is the difference between a respectful homage (*homenagem*) and a negative, essentialized stereotype (*esterótipo*) in songs about and carnival costumes of excluded Others? The debates between these defensive and critical positions towards traditional practices have sparked deep divides. In 2017, the long-standing defenses of racial democracy among the activist wing of Rio's musicians was no longer credible, a manifestation of the long unraveling of the myth of racial democracy in post-dictatorship Brazil (Paschel 2016). They critiqued the view of carnival as a liberal space in which "you can do anything" (*tudo pode*) and proposed an alternative carnivalesque ethic in which the resistance of oppressed peoples that carnival celebrates needed to be taken seriously and not transformed into a joke.

The debate that exploded in 2017 continued for weeks on social media regarding the wisdom of playing songs that may no longer represent the cultural politics that the "activist" wing of the movement wanted to manifest. What emerged as a debate on social media made its way into local media, forcing other *blocos* to question or defend their practices, and even into the international media. The *Washington Post* would report: "Many of the most beloved Carnival songs were written in the 1930s and '40s and use language that might now be considered controversial at best—and racist at worst...This year, a cluster of Carnival parade groups chose to exclude the mulata song and other anthems from their repertoires" (Sims 2017). The author attributed the critique to the assertiveness of Brazilian social movements since 2013 and positioned it in the context of reacting against Temer, who closed federal ministries devoted to justice for peoples of color and women.

Importantly, it was women who pressured the musicians to stop playing certain songs and forced the debate. Raquel, in the activist media collective *Ninja*, reported, "We women are learning that we have force! Mess with one woman and you've messed with all women. It doesn't matter if three guys are playing a *machista* song. We will come and change the music. We were silenced for years" (*Ninja* 2017, my translation). This chapter has analyzed the ways that excluded populations have taken part in the alternative brass movement, and this section shows the effects such engagement have had on some of the movement's expressive practices. Aligning their own experiences of exclusion in solidarity with those of other marginalized groups, female *neofanfarristas* have sought to reframe the acceptable repertoires of street carnival.

These debates resonate with academic and activist questions regarding the ethics of transcultural performance, music, and cultural appropriation. While many authors are openly dismissive of any kind of cultural appropriation as akin to a kind of minstrelsy (Hutnyk 2000), others have recognized the vast diversity of possible cross-cultural interactions and their potential for progressive effects (Roberts 2016). Eric Lott, in his exploration of American minstrelsy, has argued that presenting the homage vs. stereotyping question as an either/or misses that cultural appropriation is often understood by musicians themselves as both. Lott argues that "Minstrel performers often attempted to repress through ridicule their real interest in black cultural practices they nonetheless betrayed—minstrelsy's mixed erotic economy of celebration and exploitation...what [I call] 'love and theft'" (Lott 1995: 6). Patrick Johnson has

argued more sympathetically that “the performer may come to know himself or herself by performing the Other” (1995: 208).

The performance of the Other may thus yield sympathy for the Other, as well as a basis for cultural critique and a realignment of political identity. In the case of Rio’s alternative brass movement too, while I found many practices and songs offensive, I recognize that some defenders genuinely feel that they are respecting and honoring excluded cultures and giving them voice in carnival. Such engagements with the excluded may even be perceived as the basis for some *neofanfarristas*’ “radical” politics.

By 2017, *neofanfarrismo* had become an internationalist movement with frequent visitors from throughout the West. But the first time that leftist American and European visitors to Rio’s brass *blocos* witness the traditional performative practices of the *marchinha* “Índio quer apito” (“Indian wants whistle”), their reactions generally range from offended to horrified. During every other B section, musicians and *foliões* crouch down on the ground. As the drums begin marking every eighth note to heighten the drama of the moment, musicians and *foliões* begin screaming with their hands waving in front of their mouths in imitation of the stereotypical “Indian call” so present in Wild West movies from the United States. At the end of the section, the musicians and *foliões* jump up on cue to play and sing the song through again. This “Indian call” happens multiple times every time the song is played, which in Boi Tolo might be at least once per hour, as the song is one of the most popular *marchinhas* in Rio.<sup>140</sup> My reaction, and those of my foreign friends, was shock because it seemed that our Brazilian leftist and activist friends were engaging in a mass action of stereotyped and essentializing behavior, a performance of collective racism. What was it that we were not understanding such that these “engaged” Brazilians perceived this practice as completely acceptable?

According to the co-founder of Cordão do Boitatá, the song’s lyrics memorialize the visit of the first lady of Brazil, wife of Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-61), to an indigenous community. She had brought various gifts to the native leaders. When she attempted to put a necklace around the chief, he stood up and rose above her. In her effort to put the necklace around his neck, she let out a fart. In the song, the chief in satirical defiance, tells her “I don’t want necklace, Indian wants whistle,” a line immortalized in the *marchinha*:

Ê, ê, ê, ê, ê, Indian wants whistle  
If that’s not possible, he will eat sticks.

Over there in the banana trees a white woman  
Brought to Indian a strange necklace  
Indian saw most beautiful present.  
I don’t want necklace! Indian wants whistle!

The melody of the song of the song is a minor pentatonic scale and uses a melodic profile uncannily similar to the Atlanta Braves’ “Tomahawk Chop.” Beyond the melodic stereotypes, the lyrics themselves primitivize the “native” speaker as kind of “noble savage.” The lack of articles in my translation is from the original Portuguese lyrics and likely imitates a “pidgin” Portuguese used to represent “natives” who have not fully mastered the colonial language.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> “Índio quer apito” (composed by Harold Lobo and Milton de Oliveira in 1960), performed in Prata Preta parade: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkEqus0ECCA>

<sup>141</sup> A black-and-white music video of this song can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJLrCCQyvx8>.

*Marchinhas* are famously politically incorrect as journalist Ruy Castro observes:

Nothing could be less politically correct than the *marchinhas*. Their lyrics were ‘offensive’ to any group you could imagine: black, Indians, homosexuals, fat people, bald people, stammerers, adulterers, ugly women, husbands in general, bosses, civil servants—for every one of these types, several crushing *marchinhas* were composed. But they were so funny or absurd that, incredibly, no one seemed to take offence. (2004: 88)

*Neofanfarristas* too seemed not to be much worried about these questions. Many interpret the lyrics as a song of defiance to the neo-colonial system in which a native leader mocked a symbol of white power and rejected her propitiating gifts. They viewed the performance of the songs as a gesture of solidarity with indigenous people. Others viewed the performance and interpretation of various Others as an inherent aspect of carnival. What American leftists perceived as an act of collective racist cultural caricature, Brazilian leftists generally perceived as a liberatory gesture of solidarity with native peoples.

Carnival characters in Rio include a cast of exotic Others with both white and black Brazilians dressing up as “Indians,” Arabs, “Orientals,” and various other Others. Most musicians perceived my pushing on the question of the ethics of representing exotic Others as generally annoying (*chato*) and an imposition of my American binary racial thinking on Brazil’s complex map of racial identification. A trombonist summarized the ambivalent feelings many *neofanfarristas* expressed regarding the political incorrectness of *marchinhas* and the fact that people played them anyway:

Here in Brazil, everything becomes a party... Here you can make this [Indian call] gesture. There are so few Indians—there is no one to complain about this... If it were a gesture denigrating black people then there would be problems. But carnival *marchinhas* have a ton of prejudices. There’s homophobia—“A Cabeleira do Zezé” implies that you can’t be gay. But it’s to play with the homosexuality of carnival... We sing [these songs] and it’s cool. But it’s [also] kind of strange—it’s become traditional... There are heavy [*pesadas*] things in the lyrics. We *are* preoccupied with these questions. We are not alienated people. We have political consciousness of right and minorities, with affinities for differences. Even still, we play these songs. You can only understand it like this: if you stop playing all the songs, there won’t be any songs. In carnival, you can do anything. (Anonymous)

Claire Haas’ comment expressed my and other foreigners’ confusion at the refusal of a supposedly “activist” movement to engage with identity politics:

While it doesn’t surprise me to see *playboyzinhos* with Indian feathers, it does surprise me to see in the ranks of *neofanfarrismo*, people with some real politics, taking on the identities of people who are more oppressed than them and not questioning it... If you want to honor and respect indigenous people, there are ways of doing it that don’t perpetuate stereotypes about them... Portraying [native peoples] as people from another time and place and unchanged is not respectful or accurate. (2/15/16)



Many musicians expressed opinions similar to Claire's in the debate that raged over social media, claiming that the stereotyped gesture was offensive. One woman on social media claimed, "'Índio' ... contributes to the alienation of the white *folião* who dances without trying to engage more profound questions...It's making fun and nothing more. OK, carnival is for making fun but given that many feel offended, why the necessity to reproduce [all this]?"<sup>142</sup> Others found the debate annoying and unnecessary. They argued that the song and its gestures represented solidarity and that it even celebrated native defiance to colonialism. Without this song, there would be no consciousness of native peoples in Rio's carnival repertoires and native peoples would lose their "representivity." For others, the essence of carnival is liberty of expression and this debate infringed on freedom of expression. Citing Caetano Veloso's "É Proibido Proibir" ("It's Prohibited to Prohibit" from 1968), they claimed that such political correctness was anathema to the spirit of carnival. Some used the hashtag #RIPcarnaval.

"Cabeleira do Zezé" (1964) by João Roberto Kelly, was also widely criticized as inciting violence against homosexuals. The song's narrator wonders if the long hair of a man named Zezé implies that he is gay, climaxing in the repeated line "cut his hair off" ("corta o cabelo dele"). When Céu na Terra had performed the song with Kelly in a commemoration of the composer's *marchinhas*, one of the *bloco*'s musicians had worried that its politically incorrect lyrics would cause some kind of scandal. Before this debate erupted in 2017, another of the *bloco*'s musicians had defended to me the song's "liberatory" function, allowing people to publicly sing about homosexuals in an era before the wider acceptance of homosexuality. Dismissing the political critiques as absurd, he relates

This song fifty years ago was received as something completely liberatory; these days, the politically correct come knocking on the door saying 'no'... You must play [*brincar*] with religiosity... We live in crazy times. Before you had more liberty... These aren't homophobic criticisms—they are ways of playing with homosexuality, with the possibility of saying 'fag' [*viado*], 'slut' [*vadia*], or 'lesbian' [*sapatão*]. These days you can't say these things. You [must] say 'homosexual.' (Anonymous)

But in the debate on social media, many pointed out that hetero-cis people "playing" with the idea of violence towards homosexuals was far from innocent play, claiming that the song actually incited violence itself. One woman on social media responded to such viewpoints: "We can no longer find it normal to sing 'cut off his hair.' Traditions that kill must end!"

While less openly homophobic, the song "Maria Sapatão" ("Maria the Lesbian"), which sings of a woman who is "Maria by day and João by night," was also widely criticized when sung by heterosexuals. Some claimed that for heterosexuals to openly use words associated with homosexuality involves privileged dynamics that would be very different if a primarily gay group were "reclaiming" such words. Another woman on social media argued, "it's one thing for a gay man to cry 'fag' [*viado*], but it's another for the macho oppressor who, when he wants to offend his friend, calls him a 'little fag.'" In all these cases, the songs were defended on the one hand as liberatory because they were "respectful" and "playful" renderings of excluded Others. On the other hand, the predominantly privileged, whiter, and straight musicians were criticized for singing songs that essentialize these Others and may even incite violence against them.

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<sup>142</sup> Quotes taken from this Facebook conversation are quoted anonymously.

While there was a range of debate on these two songs considered above, most asserted that the *marchinha* “Ó Teu Cabelo” (1932) was irredeemably racist. In this song, the presumably male and white singer of the lyrics exoticizes and fetishes a sexualized mixed-race woman:

Your hair doesn't lie mulata  
Because your color is mulata,  
But because your color doesn't run mulata  
Mulata I want your love

You really have a flavor of Brazil.  
Your soul is the color of indigo.  
Mulata, little mulata, my love  
I was named your intervening tenant.

Whoever invented you  
Made a consecration.  
The moon desiring you went square  
Because mulata you're not from this planet.

When my dear you came to this planet  
Portugal declared war.  
The competition was colossal then  
Vasco da Gama against the naval battalion. (my translation)

Suggesting that the *mulata* is not from this planet, the narrator makes her into a completely Othered sexual object of his possession. He can desire her love and possess her even without “dirtying himself” since her color doesn't “run.” A woman on social media described her visceral reaction against the song and how it provoked her to suddenly stop taking part in carnival festivities: “Always when they play ‘Ó teu cabelo’...I get extremely uncomfortable and normally my reaction is to stop dancing right away.” A black woman in the social media discussion claimed that because of such songs, “Carnival is a racist environment.”

All three of these songs that were the most controversial in the discussion were standard *marchinhas* in the alternative brass movement during my fieldwork, canonized in the repertoire of both Boitatá and Céu na Terra. Many musicians began to suggest that even if only some were offended by these songs, it should not be worth playing potentially offensive songs when there were so many forgotten *sambas* and inoffensive *marchinhas* that are not part of standard repertoire. Others suggested that they begin composing new *marchinhas* with playful but inoffensive lyrics. Voadora's saxophonist, André Ramos, recorded himself playing a newly composed *marchinha* and posted it on the Voadora student Facebook page, inviting students to make up their own lyrics.

Local media coverage showed that while Boitatá, Mulheres Rodadas, and others had pulled “Índio,” “Ó Teu Cabelo,” “Maria Sapatão,” and “Cabeleira do Zezé” from their repertoire, other *blocos* reacted defensively and charged them with “censoring” carnival, even raising the specter of the military dictatorship. The president of the oldest brass *bloco* Bola Preta (1918) responded: “We don't consider these *marchinhas* offensive. Those who composed them didn't have that intention. Carnival is a big play. This polemic isn't going to take any one anywhere and

will even devalue carnival” (Ramalho 2016, my translation). Countering this traditionalist view with implicit reference to Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), Djamila Ribeiro argues in “Your discourse doesn’t lie, racist” (in reference to the line, “Your hair doesn’t lie, mulata” in “Ó Teu Cabelo”),

It’s no argument to say that these songs are part of a tradition when all traditions are invented. People don’t want to do work to become better people. If the target groups of these *marchinhas* feel offended, it’s time to rethink. To have fun with the derision of Others shouldn’t be understood as fun. Times change and people evolve, which is good. Voices of the past must be exactly in the historical time in which they were present. (Ribeiro 2016, my translation)

*Washington Post* reported that João Roberto Kelly himself, the author of many *marchinhas*, including some of the controversial ones, claimed that “the criticism of the songs was ‘a little exaggerated’ and too ‘politically correct’” (Sims 2016), comparing the campaign to stop playing them to censorship under the dictatorship (Balloussier and Gragnani 2017). The *marchinha* composer even composed a new *marchinha* lambasting the Mulheres Rodadas and defending his songs:

I want a *mulher rodada*.  
A virgin woman has nothing.

I want a wise woman  
Vibrant, awesome  
To teach me many lines  
To create *marchinhas* for carnival.

I want to see feminism,  
Not as a fad and without passion,  
That understands the play  
Of my “gay boy” and my “lesbian.” (Xexéo 2017, my translation)

The last line refers to his *marchinhas* “Cabeleira do Zezé” and “Maria Sapatão” that were criticized in the controversy. In this song, Kelly seems to reappropriate the *mulher rodada*, likely referring to the *bloco* that had grabbed media attention by asserting female sexual liberty, making her an object of his desire and possession. He seems to ridicule women who are concerned with these issues as “virgins,” those who haven’t “been around enough” and cannot appreciate his jokes.

While some defendants of these *marchinhas* claimed they were being censored, reporters acknowledged that it was nearly impossible to truly ban music in carnival because of the spontaneous and chaotic nature of the *blocos*: “even a previous discussion—and apparent consensus—doesn’t mean that a song will be taken out of the repertoire, because of the very structure of the *blocos*, where each person arrives with her/his instrument and ends up altering the program on the spot” (de Almeida 2016, my translation). Voadora saxophonist André Ramos viewed the debate as inherently “polemical, because many people believe that nothing can be questioned in carnival, while we as musicians have to do what’s possible to work with these

questions. Carnival is political, and positioning and lack of positioning are political acts” (*Ninja* 2016, my translation). Some *neofanfarristas* espouse the movement’s alternative credentials by positioning themselves as eager for change relative to the conservatism of the larger *blocos*.

The debate went beyond lyrics and to the question of *fantasias* themselves. Some *neofanfarristas* began to take issue with costumes that stereotyped traditionally excluded Others, especially dressing as native peoples, wearing Afros, dressing as the “nega maluca” (crazy black woman), sporting blackface, dressing as medieval Arabic characters, and cross-gender dressing. For many, the questionability of these practices was shocking. One woman on social media, evoking “racial democracy” justifications of Brazil as a country in which no one had “pure blood,” asked, “But isn’t carnival the time for people to play? For people to be what they always wanted to be? Can a person not dream about being Indian? Being black? Being white? Being Arab? Because here in Brazil no one is pure blooded.” Orquestra Voadora’s *bloco* has a variety of theme days for rehearsals, and one of them is devoted to the celebration of native peoples in which the entire *bloco* dresses in “native” *fantasias* in solidarity with native peoples. While some may use these *fantasias* primarily for their ludic potential, others use them to launch critiques. One whiter woman I observed appropriated the image of the *Índia* in order to criticize Brazilian colonialism, wearing the Brazilian flag as a cape with “return to the Indians and ask for forgiveness” written in place of “Order and Progress.” Despite these expressions of solidarity, some native Brazilians have repeatedly argued that masking as Indian is a racist caricature, as can be seen in the photo on the right below.



Left: Orquestra Voadora “Indian” themed rehearsal on December 13, 2015. Photo by author.

Right: Indigenous Guarani man in protest with “#Indian is not a *fantasia*” written on his hand. Photo available at <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=339188299933575&set=a.135548263630914.1073741826.100015272238814&type=3&theater>

The *neofanfarrista* band Black Clube has also been a subject of controversy regarding racial appropriation, as a predominantly white band playing *black music* (see chapter three). Until 2016, the band’s mascot was a *black pau* (“black power”) image of a stoned-looking black man with an Afro, and band members frequently wear Afros in performance. Due to a series of public critiques, the

band did eventually change the mascot, but some of the band members I interviewed were indignant about the controversy. One of the band members reflects, referencing the homage,

I do this with reverence and reference... When something is done with respect and the intention of lending homage, this kind of thinking doesn't make sense. We want to create a world in which things increasingly mix. The more we can pass certain barriers I think the more people will do things together... We don't do this to be cool or usurp anything from anyone. We do it because we like this music, because we have idols in this music. If you are going to say that it's not legitimate for me to be a *capoeirista*, of course it is. I chose this for myself. I chose that culture as my culture... Here in Brazil we have this relation with black music. Are we going to end up just playing white music? (Anonymous 11/16/15)

In general, discussants were much more likely to question the acceptability of cultural *fantasias* than another common carnival practice—male-to-female crossdressing, which was defended as more progressive, an opportunity for a man to deconstruct gendered identities and experiment with the fluidity of gender. Recall that men are permitted to participate and even assume leadership roles in the feminist *bloco* Mulheres Rodadas if they are willing to cross-dress. One woman on social media defended the practice based on the intent of the crossdresser but disparaged cultural *fantasias*. For her, this was murky territory in which conscious awareness of others and their responses were required in engaging with performing Others:

I think it's great that in carnival people dare in the ways of presenting themselves in the world and that men try clothes that they wouldn't have courage to from day to day... The problem is when the dress is to perform a stereotype... The *fantasias* of the indigenous, gypsy, and other vulnerable groups I think enter the risky limit between homage and stereotype... It's important that we make exercises of alterity, to try to perceive the discomfort of others, and with this to have new ideas about the ways we present our images—have fun without anyone feeling offended.

Like indigenous appropriations considered above, some crossdressers specifically use the occasion to promote solidarity with women, using the appropriation of an image as a method of critique of *machismo*, such as a man I observed crossdressing with “my body, my rules—men in solidarity” written on his back.

While musicians and *foliões* in the brass movement were debating the acceptability of these practices perhaps for the first time, such criticisms of cultural *fantasias* in activist and academic Brazilian writing by black and indigenous authors are far from new. Djamila Ribeiro's post “Black Woman is not a Carnival Fantasia” details the history of blackface (which is generally used in its English term in Portuguese) in United States minstrelsy the popularization of the practice in early American films. She argues against the homage hypothesis, claiming “Painting oneself black has no grace; it's offensive... we don't need and don't want this kind of ‘homage’... Respect our humanity” (Ribeiro 2015, my translation).<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Despite the association of blackface with the United States, it has also been practiced in Brazil. Marc Hertzman writes: “‘musical blackface’ was complemented in *salon lundu* with lyrical caricatures of slave life. Black protagonists depicted in song spoke with a lisp, mispronounced words, and were otherwise depicted as hapless, go-lucky stooges. Male characters danced, made jokes, and entertained their white masters. As they did elsewhere in the Atlantic world, performers in Brazil donned black paint to sing about slave life” (2013: 23). For more on blackface





Left: The mascot of Black Clube was changed in the middle of 2016 after several complaints about the black power image on the standard. Photo by author on February 9, 2016.

Right: Flutists playing in Céu na Terra carnival parade dressed in blackface on February 6, 2016. Photo by author.

Gabriela Monteiro’s “Little Black and Feminist Guide to not being Ugly in the *Fantasias* of Carnival” (2016) admonishes readers that “if your *fantasia* need justifications, it probably has problems.” She advises them to ask themselves if their *fantasia* “in some way reinforces stereotypes of groups oppressed by patriarchy/racism/capitalism?” She critiques the belief that cross-dressing is much more likely a progressive action in a *machista* society.<sup>144</sup> She describes her own sense of lack of clarity regarding the moral complexities of the question and recounts how she had gone to dialogue with transgender people on the subject: “they told me a lot of things—[from the belief] that this behavior reinforces a transphobic fetish to [on the other hand] an emotional testimony that I heard from a girl that the first time that she had an excuse to dress as she wanted was in carnival. The fact that there are diverse opinions doesn’t weaken the necessity for discussion—on the contrary” (Monteiro 2014, my translation).

## Conclusions

As Monteiro acknowledges, clear and unambiguous “best practices” for engaging the subjects of historically excluded categories, their musical genres, and their costumes are elusive and up for debate. The line between homage and stereotype is hazy and ambiguous. Brazil is an extremely mixed country, and the cross-cultural encounters that may emerge from engagements with alterity may result in some forms of progressive race relations and solidarities. But, as Monteiro argues, if these repertoires and practices are approached without questioning and

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in Latin America, see Bishop-Sanchez (2016) on Carmen Miranda’s use of blackface and Chasteen (2004). Black masking as indigenous likewise has a long history throughout the Americas, in Brazil (*blocos de Índio* in Bahia), New Orleans’s Mardi Gras Indians, and in Trinidad’s carnival.

<sup>144</sup> Interestingly, female-to-male cross-dressing I have never heard criticized, presumably because in that case the less powerful gendered identity is appropriating the identity of the more powerful.



dialoguing, they easily risk stereotyping, racism, or essentialism. It was, in particular, the lack of debate and reflexivity around these issues that I had previously found surprising in a self-defined activist movement. Claire Haas had put the issue succinctly a year before this debate erupted: “At the heart of it is if *neofanfarrismo* is activist, [musicians] should take a hard look at race politics and how they are occupying black and indigenous spaces” (2/15/16). It is clear that such work has begun. Now such debates are occurring within the public fora of the movement and even reaching major media outlets.

Why did this happen now, after these *marchinhas* have long had a place in the alternative brass movement and Brazilian popular culture more broadly? It is clear that women’s strong participation in *neofanfarrismo* pushed the perspectives of this excluded group that has on occasion aimed to strengthen solidarities with other excluded groups, including Afro-Brazilians, indigenous people, and LGBTQ. The gradual increase of political positioning within the movement since the 2013 protests (see chapter six) has made explicit contestations more possible. The internationalism of the movement has also put *neofanfarristas* in conversation with other perspectives on race and gender and has perhaps made traditional practices more open to questioning. The shift, likewise, towards a more cannibalistic approach to repertoires has also perhaps undermined the importance of “authenticity” and respect for tradition of the earlier moment of cultural rescue in the brass movement.

This chapter has reviewed several sub-movements within the alternative brass movement that have sought to expand the movement’s demographics and cultural politics beyond its whiter, middle-class, and male origins and increase the participation of women, poorer, and blacker populations. Despite this diversification, I have noted several ways that the movement continues to display elements of classism, sexism, racism, homophobia, and the privileging of the value regimes that preexisted this diversification. New projects have depended also on the support and models of bands that preexisted them despite the more limited demographic diversity of those earlier bands.

While the diversification of the movement could be seen as simply a logical extension of the discourse of social inclusion in *neofanfarrismo*, the addition of these voices has also begun to transform the movement, setting off fault lines between participants. The debate over *marchinhas* and *fantasias* shows that the work of social inclusion has gone beyond the development of projects that assert the agency and place of historically excluded bodies within the alternative brass movement. *Neofanfarrismo* has begun the work of self-criticism regarding the status and rights of excluded Others within the movement’s own expressive practices and put this debate at the forefront of a larger conversation about what constitutes an alternative and/or activist movement.

## 7. The Honk Rio! Festival of Activist *Fanfarras*: Consolidating a Socio-Musical Movement

In August of 2015, my band from San Francisco, Mission Delirium, was set to play at midnight for an estimated two thousand people on Praia Vermelha, one of the most stunning beaches of Rio's south zone. I had managed to organize a tour for the band to participate in the first Honk Rio! Festival of Activist *Fanfarras*,<sup>145</sup> and this would be our first show. Upon noticing the worried expressions on the faces of the organizers, I learned that the *choque de ordem* police had been called by organizers of a nearby event to prohibit the arrival of unlicensed beer sellers. The police told us we could not play without authorization, which would likely not have been granted had it been requested. After hours of negotiation with police to no avail and threats of arrest, an impatient audience of thousands of people that had neither beer nor music began pleading with us to play in opposition to police orders.

Many members of our American band had played in intense protest situations with the police before, and we decided to play with awareness that it could mean a police assault. One of the event organizers caught the audience's attention through the use of "the people's mic" (*microfone humano*), the use of which had been popularized through the Occupy movement. He alerted the crowd that we would defy the order but that we should be ready for any police reaction. The first drum hit of our version of the Bollywood classic "Kise Dhoondta Hai" (1989) hit the crowd like a bottle of champagne coming uncorked as the tense police situation was diffused through exuberant partying. Cariocas began couple dancing in recognition and appreciation of our arrangement of the Brazilian *forró* "Feira de Mangaio" mixed with hip-hop beats. After Mission Delirium played, many audience members told us that though the first edition of what would become an annual festival would officially start a week later, this was the best opening an activist brass band festival could hope for.<sup>146</sup> The police would, in the end, violently shut down the event later at 6 AM by pointing a gun at the head of the bassist of Bagunço in the middle of the band's set.

Many of the political tensions present in this story were exactly the kinds of issues around which the Honk Rio! Festival defined its discourse. What can the public do in public space, and who has the power and right to order public events? How is such police repression of street culture related to larger arts of governing in an Olympic city? How activist and socially inclusive is it anyway to throw free parties in rich neighborhoods like Urca, relatively inaccessible to the popular classes?

For four days later the next week, Rio de Janeiro's streets, plazas, *favelas*, suburbs, beaches, and nightclubs were filled with brass band music to celebrate the first annual Honk Rio! Festival of Activist *Fanfarras*. Twenty-one brass bands made up of three hundred musicians hailing from Rio, São Paulo, Chile, the United States, and France entertained thousands of music fans. Environmental Encroachment came from Chicago, priding itself for having traveled to every HONK! festival. Rim Bam Bum from Chile came back to Rio to represent another South American country at the festival. Almost all of the brass bands and *blocos* discussed in this dissertation as well as many others have played in the now annual Honk Rio! festival. Under the banner of activism, they have every year since filled the streets with the diverse repertoires of

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<sup>145</sup> In Portuguese, "Honk Rio! Festival de Fanfarras Ativistas."

<sup>146</sup> Mission Delirium at Praia playing *forró* on Praia Vermelha (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-GFet6mTYM&index=53&list=PL6SaRKto7UfYWW0POSPGGYfaPc7Dvt7zx>) and my original song "Tandy" in the streets of Rio: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT721DC1FU8>).

*neofanfarrismo* and the brass *blocos*, as well as new sounds brought by the international bands. After the first edition of this festival of *neofanfarrismo*, *Globo*, in reference to Honk Rio! and several other musical events in the streets that recalled the spirit of Rio's resurgent street carnival, asserted that 2015 would be remembered as the year that "carnival never ended" (Ribeiro 2015, my translation).



Mission Delirium from San Francisco, CA at Honk Rio! August 6, 2015. Photo by Carolina Galeazzi.

The founding of the Honk Rio! festival in 2015 represents a culmination point in the unfinished and ever-changing transformation of *neofanfarrismo*. A community that emerged at the turn of the millennium with the revival of brass *blocos*, oriented towards cultural nationalism and retaking the streets during carnival, had transformed into an internationally oriented and year-long movement self-defined as activist. In this concluding chapter, I explore the founding of the Honk Rio! festival as a consolidation of this socio-musical movement.

In Jonathan Christiansen's model of the stages of social movements (2009),<sup>147</sup> Honk Rio! represents the movement's entrance into a process of bureaucratization: the building of official institutions and official ideologies. I do not believe, however, that these forms of institutionalization necessarily lead to ossification and to his next stage of decline. These institutions can also be new vehicles through which debate, change, and further transformations can be fostered. The Honk Rio! festival has formed a contentious debate on what constitutes musical activism, putting *neofanfarrismo* in conversation with a broader international community of musicians preoccupied with the cultural politics of public festivity. While Honk Rio! published no mission statement about what constitutes activism, it has used the festival webpages and social media to promote certain ethical visions and to construct a genealogy of the movement.<sup>148</sup> Self-selecting individuals from a variety of bands in the city volunteered to be part of the production team and craft the language and the events of the festival. But for the vast

<sup>147</sup> Jonathan Christiansen (2009) has analyzed social movements as passing through distinct phases of emergence, coalescence, bureaucratization, and decline.

<sup>148</sup> In Appendix 1, I have included the history of *neofanfarrismo* as published on the Honk Rio! website.

majority of *neofanfarristas*, participating in the festival meant signing on to the established discourses generated by the production team even as they were ostensibly up for debate.<sup>149</sup>

Noriko Manabe (2015) suggests that politicized festivals communicate their politics on a spectrum between “informational” and “experiential” models, not unlike Turino’s distinction between presentational and participatory categories. In the informational approach, politics are didactic, explicit, and hierarchically communicated, while the experiential festival asserts its politics through its organization, “provides an immersive experience that enables a participant to envision an idealized future” (264), and has “greater attraction for the unconverted” (290). Compared with informational festivals such as Live Aid, Honk Rio!, as well as the larger HONK! festival circuit, is further to the experiential end of her spectrum. It frames itself as a horizontally produced event and therefore inherently open to diverse perspectives and the possibility of being shaped by them. Various “informational” and didactic points of view do, however, enter into the space, as well as in the official messaging of the festival.

Conflicts between these two models go to the heart of the question of how this socio-musical movement aims to articulate its politics, one that forms a contentious debate at the center of the movement and festival. In the broader HONK! network and in *neofanfarrismo*, the relative lack of explicit positioning, or of the informational model, has produced deep controversies on just how “activist” the festival and movement are. In Honk Rio! and the broader HONK! circuit, all the topics considered in this dissertation—public participation in music, repertoire selection, instrumental protest, alternative pedagogies—remain topics for dynamic debate at the festivals.

It was my great fortune during my fieldwork to be part of the production team of the first Honk Rio! Festival, during which I participated in the discussions where we crafted the discourses and event plans of the festival. Acting at once as a festival organizer, ethnographic researcher, and touring musician, I brought my professional brass band Mission Delirium from San Francisco that I helped found in 2013. Attempting to foster the internationalism that the festival sought to promote, we recorded there our first album, *Mission Delirium: Live in Rio* (2015).<sup>150</sup> The day after the festival, I hosted a bilingual colloquium (*roda de diálogo*) on the discourses and practices of activism in *neofanfarrismo* and the HONK! festivals, where academics, musicians, and fans debated the very topics of this dissertation. Bands hailing from around Brazil, France, the United States, Germany, Argentina, and Costa Rica have since visited Rio to play in the festival, as the international reach of Honk Rio! has broadened. In 2017, São Paulo’s growing brass scene even held its first edition of Honk SP, as the *neofanfarrismo* movement has spread to other parts of Brazil or created links with preexisting bands. Though the festival has now become an annual event, this chapter is focused primarily on my ethnographic engagement with the production of the first edition and the initial conversations regarding what it would mean to hold an international activist street festival in Rio de Janeiro and unite *neofanfarrismo* around activism, as well as my visit to the third edition of the festival in 2017.

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<sup>149</sup> Honk Rio! official website with footage: <https://neofanfarrismo.wordpress.com/videos-e-noticias-honk-rio/>

<sup>150</sup> Available at <https://missiondelirium.bandcamp.com/releases>.



Album cover of Mission Delirium in the streets of Rio. Original photo by Carolina Galleazi on August 1, 2015.

### **A Brazilian Brass Band in Boston and the Internationalization of HONK!**

In calling the festival Honk Rio!, *neofanfarristas* positioned themselves within an international movement begun in the United States. The Somerville Second Line Social Aid and Pleasure Club Society, a community band specializing in second line music from New Orleans, founded the first HONK! Festival of Activist Street Bands in 2006 in the Boston area of Somerville and Cambridge, MA. HONK! Festivals have since been founded in Seattle (HONK! Fest West), Austin (HONK!TX), Providence (PRONK), New York City (HONK NYC!), and even Wollongong, Australia (HONK! Oz)—with smaller related festivals sprouting up in new cities including Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Eugene, Oregon. Alternative brass band festivals had already been commonplace in Europe, especially in France and Italy, such as Montpellier’s annual festival or Rome’s Sbandata. No alternative brass band festival name and idea, however, has spread around the world like that of HONK!

The “About HONK!” page of the website of Boston’s festival, however, does not claim itself as an origin point but rather as the North American convergence point of an international and activist alternative street music movement:

Throughout the country and across the globe, a new type of street band movement is emerging...reclaiming public space with a sound that is in your face and out of this world... these bands draw inspiration from sources as diverse as Klezmer, Balkan and Romani music, Brazilian Samba, Afrobeat and Highlife, Punk, Funk, and Hip Hop, as well as the New Orleans second line tradition, and deliver it with all the passion and spirit of Mardi Gras and Carnival. Acoustic and mobile, these bands play at street level, usually for free, with no stages to elevate them above the crowd and no sound systems or speaker



columns to separate performers from participants. These bands don't just play *for* the people; they play *among* the people and invite them to join the fun. They are active, activist, and deeply engaged in their communities, at times alongside unions and grassroots groups in outright political protest, or in some form of community-building activity... At full power, these bands create an irresistible spectacle of creative movement and sonic self-expression directed at making the world a better place. (HONK! Fest 2016)

When I arrived in Rio and heard brass bands playing many of the repertoires I had heard in the alternative brass movement in the United States, HONK!'s vision of a worldwide street band movement indeed seemed prophetic. As in *neofanfarrismo*, the original HONK! festival in Boston promotes an aesthetic of musical eclecticism. The specific musical sources mentioned in the above quotation, including diverse manifestations of carnival, were prominent sources in Rio years before the founding of Honk Rio! The Boston HONK! festival has acted as a space to consolidate and disseminate diverse repertoires now played through the USA and the world, including many of the songs discussed in this dissertation. Like *neofanfarrismo*, the original HONK! festival celebrates reclaiming public space, diminishing divisions between producer and spectator, and potentially engaging in acts of protest.

Reebee Garofalo, snare player in Somerville Second Line and one of the original organizers of the Somerville festival, commented to me during the 2017 Honk Rio! that it felt uncanny to him that "it couldn't help but feel like I had something to do with this festival in a completely foreign country." While this is no doubt true, unlike the emergence of some other HONK! festivals after Somerville that were directly inspired by the original festival, *neofanfarristas* emphasize that their movement and festival are not cultural imports. Inserting itself into the increasingly transnational HONK! network, Rio's festival is a node in a "rhizomatic" movement, a multitude that forms a broader international socio-musical movement. In Rio, the American HONK! movement is not a point of origin but a foundation for horizontal dialogue with diverse street brass movements from throughout the world. Highlighting the independent evolution of *neofanfarrismo* before taking up the HONK! label, American trumpeter and former Rio resident Bill Brennan refers to the intersection of the American HONK! movement and *neofanfarrismo* as a "convergent evolution" (10/17/14).<sup>151</sup>

The original HONK! festival has sought to include international bands since the beginning, reaching out especially to European bands. But with the inclusion of Os Siderais in 2013, one of the primary Carioca brass bands involved in the momentous June 2013 protests (see chapter four), the original HONK! forged a link with a musical community in Brazil that practiced street culture manifestations the magnitude of which the original founders of HONK! likely had not imagined. The festival organizers in Boston found Os Siderais' political activities the right kind of fit for the intents of the Boston festival and funded much of the band's tour costs through crowdfunding (Cook 2014).

When I arrived in Rio in 2014, I very quickly moved in with Juba, tubist and trombonist in Os Siderais and Orquestra Voadora and founder of Honk Rio! He was already living with Bill Brennan, an American trumpet player he had met at HONK! in Boston from the Rude Mechanical Orchestra (RMO), New York's protest brass band founded in 2004. From my housing situation alone, the level of international networking of alternative brass band musicians that had already been achieved in Rio was palpable. I played often with Os Siderais, and the

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<sup>151</sup> Honk Rio! 2015 promotional video, "Neofanfarrismo encounters HONK!," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpJSf5WTQ8o>.



band members related to me the inspiring experience of their tour to HONK! in Boston.

While *neofanfarrismo* had already been in a process for several years of searching for new sounds and musical sources (see chapter three), Os Siderais trumpeter Gert Wimmer relates that the trip to Boston opened them up to a variety of new styles: “What I can say about HONK! is that it’s an opportunity for you to evolve very quickly because you listen to the most diverse kinds of music...The musical diversity of that space is an absurd learning experience...It opened up a bridge of exchange with North American *fanfarras*” (11/16/15).

This musical exchange wasn’t only from the Americans to the Brazilians. Through jam sessions and other exchanges, RMO’s trumpet player Bill Brennan recounts the band’s hosting of Os Siderais in New York City:

We invited them and Environmental Encroachment to one of the houses and we swapped some songs. We learned [the Os Siderais original song] “Blues cigano”, which the RMO called “Os Siderais blues” because they didn’t want to use the word “cigano,” [meaning “gypsy,” which they viewed as derogatory]. Juba organized a [political] action in New York, [even though] he was there for less than a week, pulling together Os Siderais and Environmental Encroachment for a solidarity action with the Brazilian June 2013 protests. We marched around with a bunch of signs saying that New York stands with Brazil. Juba filmed the whole thing and made a video out of it. (10/17/14)<sup>152</sup>

Indeed, in American HONK! festivals, it is now not uncommon to hear *neofanfarrista* arrangements played by American bands.

Beyond the festival’s exceptional musical diversity and hospitable welcoming, Os Siderais was struck by the notion of an activist street music festival. As discussed in chapter four, the band was formed as a more politicized alternative to Orquestra Voadora and participated in some of the most momentous protests in recent Brazilian history. Touring to HONK! in 2013 only months after the June 2013 protests that sparked marked politicization in the *neofanfarrismo* movement, the band appreciated the open celebration of activism in the context of a festival. Unlike carnival, it seemed that one did not have to argue about whether HONK! was “alienated” or “engaged,” since it presumed engagement in the very title of the festival. Juba explains,

In HONK!, it’s beautiful that they assume a political discourse, because in this world people often believe they don’t need to position themselves. People in HONK! assume such a beautiful idea: we can change the world. They took this idea and put it in the name of the festival itself...You can’t do HONK! without this even if activism is not a word that will explain everything. (Pires 10/12/14)

Though the idea of an activist festival was certainly inspiring for a band that wanted its own musical community to take a more activist stance, saxophonist Gabriel Fromm observes that what they saw was almost “cute” compared to the violent protests and police responses to playing music in the street in Rio:

The activism [in Boston] is very “light” because of the relative social conditions and power relations. Our tradition in Rio is much more explosive because of carnival...The

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<sup>152</sup> This video of this action can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNcpGEmhODU>

activism that we saw is an activism that is almost cute—to support the community gardens, a much lighter street occupation... The question of activism in Boston is difficult because it is a super privileged city in every way. We went to play in the poorest area and it seemed almost upper-middle class compared to Rio. (1/8/15)

Os Siderais, inspired by their experiences at the original HONK!, returned to Rio de Janeiro committed to organizing a version of the festival in Brazil. Armed with the idea that musicians could collectively produce a festival devoted to activism, they would produce the first Honk Rio! festival less than two years later.<sup>153</sup>



Left: Boston HONK! Festival Poster by Seth Tobocman.  
[http://www.cervenabarvapress.com/october2006\\_newsletter.htm](http://www.cervenabarvapress.com/october2006_newsletter.htm)  
 Right: Promotion image by Rafo Castro of Honk Rio! 2015.

### Controversies of Activism in the Boston HONK! Festival

The spread of HONK! festivals constitutes a concrete example of the emergence of international activist musical networks that articulate a social-musical alternative vision of urban life to that of global neoliberal urban governance. However, the positioning of activism, as in *neofanfarrismo*, has also long been an issue of controversy within the American HONK! movement. Many have worried about how to maintain the ethical principles of the festival as it spreads. Festival organizer Reebee Garofalo writes,

<sup>153</sup> Footage of HONK! festival in Boston by San Francisco’s Brass Liberation Orchestra:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gkNa0XY6UA>

Although the term “activist” can be controversial in describing HONK! bands, most are civically engaged in some way, if not in outright political protest then at least in some form of community-building activity. Because of their commitment to playing in the street, HONK! bands exemplify a forceful political statement about reclaiming public space in a time of profound privatization. (2012: 281)

Activism within the original HONK! festival has been a controversy because part of the original intention of the festival was to forge a space of connection and networking for bands that defined themselves as in some way political. HONK! in the United States represents a consolidation of a network of brass bands with histories of participation in protest as far back as the 1960s, such as the Vietnam War, the alter-globalization protests, the anti-Iraq war protests, and the Occupy/anti-austerity movements. As opposed to lyrically based protest music, Garofalo suggests that “we might think of HONK! bands as the ground game of progressive music” (forthcoming). Amelia Mason likewise asserts, “the giant musical block party that is HONK! is a celebration of what is probably the most vibrant incarnation of the protest music tradition in America today” (2017).

Despite these explicitly activist connections, the HONK! network also emerged within less politicized, countercultural spaces, such as the Burning Man circuit, the large week-long countercultural festival in Nevada. Bands formed by brass musicians on the “playa” (the festival grounds), such as the Burning Band and the Orphan Band, had already been connecting musicians from throughout the United States in one of the world’s most famous countercultural spaces. Tracy Johnson, French horn player in Environmental Encroachment (the Chicago band that attended the first Honk Rio!), explains the relationship of HONK! to Burning Man: “There are certainly a lot of Burners in the community. You see the leave-no-trace, radical inclusion, radical self-reliance, de commodification, the barter system. It’s one thing to expect gifts, but at HONK! you don’t have to ask for anything. Everything is offered. It’s like a gift community” (Johnson and Smith 8/12/15). I have heard some participants describe HONK! as a mix of band camp, Occupy Wall Street, and Burning Man.

While bands such as the Somerville Second Line band, Vermont’s Bread and Puppet Band, San Francisco’s Brass Liberation Orchestra, and New York’s Rude Mechanical Orchestra all orient themselves to engaging in left-wing protest, such bands have never been the majority. As in *neofanfarrismo*, many bands do not identify with the term activist, and a familiar “engaged/alienated” split animates the community. Some of the bands that more narrowly define instrumental activism around engagement in protest and view their bands as political projects view the term “activist” in the festival title as a misnomer at best and an appropriation at worst. They believe that the festival is far from politically destabilizing and has quickly grown to be “merely countercultural,” a festive space divorced from political engagement. Festival organizers in Boston have sought to reframe the activism of the festival more towards protest since 2014 by organizing political actions in which the bands touring to the festival participate musically in political campaigns. In the past three years, they have organized hundreds of musicians to play outside of an ICE immigration detention center for those destined for deportation.<sup>154</sup>

Beyond instrumental protest, HONK! in Boston stresses social inclusion and occupation of public space, or public participation in music, as intrinsic to its activism. For Garofalo, a HONK! band is one that is fundamentally an open and democratic project that strategizes in

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<sup>154</sup> See the action here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6SaRKto7UfYWW0POSPGGYfaPc7Dvt7zx>

order to create musical spaces of interaction that are accessible and fulfilling for both the amateur and the professional, a goal common to many of Rio's brass *blocos* and bands (see chapter five): "At the heart of HONK! practice is the notion that culture—and, in particular, music-making—should be part of everyday life (not a series of specialized, regulated events and not simply a commercial enterprise), and an equally powerful sense that anyone can participate" (Garofalo 2011: 18). While many bands, like Rio's carnival *blocos*, do strategize to be multi-level projects, the presence of professional bands in the HONK! and *neofanfarrismo* circuits, however, shows that the high aesthetic standards of some bands conflict with the participatory ethic of others. American HONK! organizers have created the "School of HONK!" in Cambridge, MA to bring some of these pedagogical ideas to further fruition beyond the festival itself with a year-round weekly class for learning instruments and eclectic brass repertoires. Not unlike Voadora's *oficina*, this free, multilevel, and multigenerational class with up to three hundred members is a weekly event in which participants do workshops, learn songs, and parade through the city.

HONK! in Boston is a non-profit event supported by the local community through lodging, food, volunteer labor, and donations. The festival portrays itself as "grassroots" and outside of the logic of consumerist, sponsored festivals. None of the bands are paid, though they receive financial aid from crowdfunding to make the trip, especially for those from afar like Os Siderais. The festival is produced by a volunteer team of musicians, rather than paid agents, who take on the work of organizing the festival. During HONK!, major open public spaces within Davis and Harvard squares are saturated with unavoidable sounds and images of the festival's free events. HONK!'s annual "Reclaim the Streets for Bikes, Horns, and Feet Parade" from Somerville to Cambridge intervenes on the public with openly left-wing messages and countercultural art. All the bands parade with activist groups intermixed, including Occupy Boston, Veterans for Peace, and Food Not Bombs.

Many of the critiques of *neofanfarrismo* are also applicable to HONK! in the United States. Like *neofanfarrismo*, HONK! is a relatively privileged and whiter movement that has had limited success in diversifying despite stated goals and good faith attempts—with notable exceptions—such as the consistent presence of black New Orleans second line bands and Haitian Rara bands from New York at the Boston HONK! While activism has been a controversy within the original HONK! in Massachusetts, subsequent HONK! festivals until Rio de Janeiro chose to skirt the issue all together. As new HONK! Festivals emerged in several other cities—all ongoing festivals that receive many of the same traveling bands—they maintained many of the organizing and aesthetic principles of the Boston festival. All until Rio, however, dropped the "activist" label from the festival, finding that the political intent of the Boston festival was somewhat of a lightning rod and might alienate its public and musicians. Losing this focus on activism, Austin's HONK!TX has gone so far as to consistently invite a New Orleans-themed band from the US military. The choice of *neofanfarristas* to reinsert the word activist (as *ativista*) into the Honk Rio! festival title represents, therefore, an affinity with a controversial idea within both the Brazilian and American alternative brass communities about instrumental music as an agent of social and political change.





New York's Rude Mechanical Orchestra, one of the most politicized brass bands at HONK! in Massachusetts, in 2013. Photo by Greg Cook.

### **Debating Instrumental Activism at the Honk Rio! Festival in 2015**

As the brass band community recovered from the carnival “hangover” (*ressaca*) in February 2015, we began to hold preliminary conversations to organize the first HONK! in Rio de Janeiro. Central questions in this effort included how to frame the festival, build an organizing model, raise funds, and publicize. Head organizer Juliano Pires (Juba) had doubts about using the term “activism” but felt that it was an important way to position the festival, especially in light of the legacy of the Boston HONK! and the practices of many *neofanfarrismo* bands. Honk Rio! was to be a consolidation of the *neofanfarrismo* movement with all its diverse strains of influence, including carnival *blocos*, professional stage bands, and protest movements. But the question was, as in HONK! in Boston, how to unite *neofanfarrismo* around activism when not all the bands viewed themselves as activist?

We established somewhat regular meetings with representatives of the participating local bands to plan the schedule and frame the vision through consensus. We determined that we would try to obtain city permission to play in all the outdoor locations where bands would play stationary in the streets, but that we would attract more than enough people to hold events without permission. We managed to obtain permission for almost all the public spaces except for the parades, which we reasoned would be mobile and therefore would run less risk of being shut down. Producer Renata Dias obtained authorization from the city by framing Honk Rio! as a profitless event with the “intention to unite the *fanfarras* and bring important subjects about social problems to the public” (1/21/16).

As we planned the events and language of the festival, our concern was to model it on the format of the Boston HONK! and its discourses of activism, while retaining elements that were unique to the Brazilian history. In the Boston HONK!, the unfolding of events over the festival days had been ritualized over the years, and Rio followed in its footsteps. We planned an opening Thursday night in Praça XV near the imperial palace with all twenty-one bands, inaugurated by Mission Delirium. Friday night featured protest bands in the Gamboa neighborhood, hosted by Prata Preta, with performances by the protest bands BlocAto do Nada



and São Paulo's Fanfarra do MAL (*Música, arte e liberação*). An impromptu performance of some Mission Delirium members as San Francisco's Brass Liberation Orchestra (which had several overlapping members) provided an international protest band to the mix.

A day of performances on Saturday in different spaces of the hilly bohemian neighborhood of Santa Teresa was modeled on the simultaneous performances in the Boston HONK! "Honkinho" (Honk in the Portuguese diminutive), based on the Boston HONK!'s "instrument petting zoo," playfully introduced children in Santa Teresa to instruments. A parade of the *bloco* Céu na Terra was planned for late Saturday in Santa Teresa to descend to the entertainment center of Lapa. The inclusion of this *bloco* paid homage to the street carnival movement as the origin point of *neofanfarrismo* (see chapter two). A massive Sunday parade on Ipanema beach modeled on Boston's parade, featuring all the bands marching along the beach with different community and activist organizations, was to close the festival.

A central concern was to spread these free performances beyond the confines of the more privileged center and south zone neighborhoods, to "occupy" the entire city. Free events were also planned in periphery neighborhoods and cities, as well as *favelas*. In the outdoor shows, three to fifteen brass bands were scheduled to play stationary one after another in free street performances for fans and people from the neighborhood. When these events occurred, they were unavoidable spectacles to passers-by with crowds of thousands of people filling the streets.

In the run-up to the festival, we invited the bands to describe their involvements in activism, which we would publish on Facebook. Most had played in protests, were involved in education or performance projects in lower-income areas and *favelas*, or promoted historically marginalized musicians. For many of the bands, the very fact of playing in the streets was viewed as activist because it created a non-commodified and accessible form of public participation in music in a city they viewed as tending the other way. But for some bands, this was a challenge. Bruno de Nicola recounts,

For the production of HONK!, an encounter of engaged *fanfarras*, I was responsible for Cinebloco. Juba came to ask me to send material about something social that we had done [before], like play in a *favela*, for children, in a hospital. Nothing. Cinebloco hasn't done anything of the sort. Playing in the street—maybe three or four times in the beginning to gain a bit of visibility. It's the most mercenary *fanfarra*. We are not preoccupied with society or the street. (1/15/16)

Though involvement in protest actions was an important legacy for many of the bands that participated in the festival, it has not been an active component of the festival itself, nor was there any explicit comment on the World Cup and the Olympics. On several occasions when head organizer Juba defended the "activism" of the festival, he said that while some of the bands may not identify with the term "activism," it was the production and organization of the festival itself that was activist. Grounding the framing of activism in the "experiential model," Juba reflects,

I saw in Boston also that there were many bands that weren't activist. For me, the question of activism is much more in the process of production and the concept of collective organization, the process of constructing the festival... We are producing collective work with many volunteers from the city. (Pires in the Honk Rio! Debate 2015)

That the festival is “horizontally” and collectively produced by mostly musicians rather than producers and agents means to him that it is more solidly an expression of the musical culture itself and is part of decommoifying the artistic production process. For Juba, the fact that brass *blocos* like Boitató and Céu na Terra had been organized by musicians themselves was an important common element with *neofanfarrismo* and the HONK! festivals that he views as outside of the capitalist production process. While the official discourse of the festival embraced horizontality and democratic production, however, many *neofanfarristas* with whom I spoke view this posturing as problematic. As discussed in chapter five, some view the discourse of horizontalism as hiding real power differentials and hierarchies and critiqued the production process of Honk Rio!

For the producers, the festival’s activist credentials rely on organizing outside of the system of capitalist sponsorship on which most festivals depend. Orquestra Voadora’s American tuba player points out that the name in Brazilian Portuguese “Honk Rio!” sounds remarkably close to Rio’s mega-festival “Rock in Rio:” “The play on words of Honk Rio! is perfect. Rock in Rio is totally corporate. So there’s definitely a mocking of that” (6/12/15). At the final festival show on the Arpoador beach, Bagunço’s drummer told the audience that Honk Rio!’s successful realization showed that “we can do anything.” Raising funds on the independent online platform of Kickstarter, we managed to pay for the costs of the festival without contracting sponsorship, which is often perceived as a necessary evil to be able to organize an official *bloco* in carnival. No musicians received payment except to remunerate costs. Defending these organizational methods as forms of activism, the Honk Rio! website claims,

Although the lineup of brass bands doesn’t consist exclusively of activist or politically-engaged marching bands, the coming together of artists and city residents in order to bring about a better world is something inherent to the process of organizing HONK! It is organized and carried out by the brass band musicians themselves. And through this process, the principles of human rights, social justice, ecology, and a more active, participatory society come to permeate the entire festival....For this collective undertaking, they involve the local communities and work alongside them to develop the capacity and consciousness for improving the city in a multitude of ways. They demonstrate that every individual is capable of coming together with others to accomplish great, transformative things in the service of a better world. It is a crash course in constructing a society in a way that flies in the face of the paternalistic, “top-down” approaches of governments or businesses and runs counter to the homogenizing logic of a passive, consumption-oriented society. (Honk Rio! 2015)

Despite these general principles, Honk Rio!, like the original Boston festival, created no absolute mission statement or litmus test of brass band activism. Because of this vagueness, Damas de Ferro percussionist Thaís Bezerra, as well as many others, told me, “for me, Honk Rio! was simply a festival of *neofanfarrismo*” (Oakland, 5/10/16). Voadora trombonist Marco Serragrande failed to see anything particularly activist about Honk Rio!: “I don’t see them raising a flag for any cause. What kind of activism is this?...It took me a while to understand the festival as activist. I thought it was a festival of *fanfarras* and just that” (12/11/15).

In the colloquium following the festival, I invited participants to think through the festival’s use of the term “activism,” what it meant in Rio, and the significance of connecting to

the legacy of the Boston HONK! festival. I recounted the contested history of the term “activism” in the HONK! festivals. I asked participants, would it be helpful for Honk Rio! to develop an official definition of activism given this important history and the tendency for it to be vague and contested? Or, is it important to leave activism as an open concept that could be determined by participants themselves? No official answer came out of the discussion, but participants did feel that simply using the word “activist” had a performative function in that it inspired people to think about brass bands in relation to their political and social power and act upon such imaginations. Producer Renata Dias suggests that Honk Rio! “opened the minds of musicians a bit in relation to the question, what is activism? A member of a *fanfarra* can now ask him or herself, in what way is my *fanfarra* activist? What kind of activism?... You make people think... *Neofanfarristas* are starting to think more about what can my band do beyond its sound, beyond its musical quality” (1/21/16).

These conversations have since evolved. The 2017 festival continued the *roda de diálogo* tradition and had up to one hundred participants debating a diversity of topics, from the international politics of street occupation to how to care for fellow musicians struggling with drug addiction. With deepening political crises, musicians used the festival for more explicit, “informational” political positioning including denunciations of President Temer and Mayor Crivella. Likewise, American bands have paraded in Rio in homage to Black Lives Matters. Women associated with Damas de Ferro, which had recently visited HONK! in Boston that year, organized participating women to form a “*bloca*,” a feminization of the word *bloco* and an exclusively female jam session before the annual parade. Activism has continued to form a dynamic debate led by festival participants rather than defined by an absolute mission statement. For many in the international HONK! movement, the movement’s democratic and non-dogmatic approach to activism is itself a theoretical contribution to what can be considered musical activism. Pushing back against the critiques that these festivals are not explicitly political enough and essentially arguing for Manabe’s experiential model, Boston HONK! organizer Trudi Cohen argues that “to define an activist band in broad terms rather than limited terms benefits us” (Andrews 2017).



The “*bloca*” playing at the third Honk Rio! Photo by author on November 6, 2017.

## Debating Musical Eclecticism and Cannibalism at HONK! Festivals

Activism was not the first name proposed for the Honk Rio! festival. Juba had suggested calling it the Honk Rio! Festival of Cannibalist *Fanfarras* (*Fanfarras Antropofágicas*) in reference to the prominent idea that *neofanfarrismo* represents an aesthetic and ethical cannibalization of the brass band (see introduction). If this name had prevailed, it would have presented an obscure reference to international bands, but Brazilians would have understood it especially as celebrating the musical eclecticism that *neofanfarrismo* had come to embrace. The choice to ally the *neofanfarrismo* movement with the growing network of HONK! festivals could itself be understood as a cannibalization of a festival from another country.

Honk Rio! has provided many opportunities for international encounters and exchanges of music between diverse groups of people. For example, Favela Brass' director Tom Ashe recounts that during the second edition of the festival,

Favela Brass ended up playing [New Orleans music] in the street and then going down Santa Teresa. I realized the people who were following were singing our songs, and it seemed like a second line. It became apparent that they were American. It was the Minor Mishap Brass Band [from Austin, Texas] that just through sheer good fortune happened to be there when we were playing. They absolutely loved it. It was great for us as well because the kids could see they hit a chord with the Americans. Minor Mishap came to the project and did a workshop and taught the kids some tunes. We kept contact with them and they're talking about bringing the kids to HONK! in Texas. (10/23/17)

With the first edition of Honk Rio held in August 2015, the polar opposite season of carnival, the festival offered a major public manifestation of a consolidated brass band mobilization outside of carnival. For many participants, distinguishing *neofanfarrismo* from carnival was important to define the movement. Before the festival occurred, Carol Schavarosk had hoped that Honk Rio! would “separate the *fanfarras* from carnival. It's still very linked. People playing brass in the street, for those who see it from the outside, it seems like carnival. There must be more distinction between what is a *bloco* and what is a ‘brass band’ [using the English term]” (11/5/14). For producer Renata Dias, this goal was certainly met by the festival: “Honk Rio! brought the idea to the *foliões* that love carnival that *fanfarras* play more than just *marchinhas*...They already think differently” (1/21/16). When Prata Preta, a brass *bloco* that primarily plays *marchinhas* and *sambas* (see chapter two), was invited to play in the first festival, the *bloco* rejected the invitation, perceiving the distinction as important: “They invited us to play in Honk Rio!...We thought that it wasn't appropriate to play because it had nothing to do with us. We are not a *fanfarra*. A carnival *bloco* is different” (Muller, Sarol, and Loyola 11/18/15).

Honk Rio! has, however, positioned itself within the history of Rio's brass *bloco* revival by inviting “homaged” *blocos* to play carnival repertoire during the festival. Céu na Terra was invited the first year, Boi Tolo and Prata Preta in the second, and Songoro Cosongo in the third. Since these are open *blocos* in which anyone can play, these experiences were especially inspiring to international participants who had never experienced the explosive participatory mobilization of thousands in the streets that typically occurs in Rio's brass *blocos*. In the second edition of the festival, Honk Rio! organizers explain the importance of carnival to the

movement's origins:

Honk Rio! is inspired by the movements of *fanfarras* and street bands from outside Brazil in recent decades, but we also give total reverence and honor to our traditional street carnival, [which is] free, democratic, and spontaneous. Here the HONK! festival happens with our imprint [*cara*], and it is no accident that many people confuse *fanfarras* with carnival. A *fanfarra* is a *fanfarra*...but carnival is ours! Because of this the 2016 Honk Rio! Festival pays homage to two great Carioca carnivalesque *cordões*: the Cordão do Boi Tolo and the Cordão do Prata Preta, *blocos* that mark the history of the city with irreverence, tradition, and with clear political positioning: the street is ours. Let's occupy it! (Honk Rio! Facebook 2016)

This reclaiming of carnival by Honk Rio! indicates a relationship similar to that of the broader *neofanfarrismo* movement to Brazilian music traditions described in chapter three in which the musically eclectic urge does not reject cultural rescue and tradition but rather cannibalizes them. While Honk Rio! represents a culmination in the transformation of the brass *bloco* revival into an internationally oriented movement, it also turns back to its origins and constructs a genealogy that positions carnival as the origin of it all.

In the few years that Honk Rio! has been an annual festival, it has forged new international partnerships that have influenced Rio but have also, in turn, influenced the larger international HONK! movement. The tour of Austin's Minor Mishap to Honk Rio! for the second edition of the festival in 2016 led to the invitation of Os Siderais to Austin's HONK TX the following year. Os Siderais toured through New Orleans, diving into second line and traditional jazz scenes, before opening HONK!TX with a workshop on the *bloco* concept. In the description of the event, Minor Mishap describes the rationale:

One of my favorite things from our trip to Rio de Janeiro was seeing various bands merge into blocos and then parade through the city - all joining in on each other's songs. We're hoping to foster more of this sense of community here in Austin and what better time than during HONK!TX? You are all invited to participate! The Super Band Merge, or bloco, will start...with a workshop led by a brass band from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Rio de Janeiro is the world's capital of huge, amazing street processions, and we think they might have some very interesting methods and ideas to share with us (as well as a song or two)...It will be chaotic, but we hope it will be glorious chaos rather than frustrating chaos...This is an experiment, and we're just going to jump in and try it. (Super Band Merge 2017)

The text goes on to prescribe a method for this cultural and musical exchange. Any song can be called, but bands were encouraged to choose "easy and accessible" songs that could be learned on the fly, take leadership roles in cuing sections, and making sure there are musicians in every instrumental section that could cover the parts. In 2017, Honk Rio! organizers would launch the free Oficina do Honk in preparation for the "Bloco do Honk" in the third edition of the annual festival. The *oficina* teaches songs from a variety of the local and international bands who have participated in the festival in order to provide an open *bloco* for anyone present at the festival to participate, whether or not they play in a performing band.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> The Bloco do Honk in homage to Songoro Consongo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yG01DsUCC4>



As more bands visit Brazil from around the world, such international influences, exchange of repertoire, intercultural experiments, and theorizations and practices of activism will only continue to cross-fertilize in the years ahead. As Environmental Encroachment's trombonist Mike Smith observes, "Brazil already had a HONK! culture that we could bring a few things to. Now they're bringing things to our HONK! culture" (Johnson and Smith 8/12/15).



Bagunço at Honk Rio! August 6, 2015. Photo by Carolina Galeazzi.

### **Translating Honk Rio! into Unified Political Action**

While instrumental protest may not have been a primary focus of the first Honk Rio! festival, the networking and consolidating of the movement around activism had immediate effects on the movement's ability to organize a protest outside of the festival setting. Many *neofanfarrista* bands and musicians have acted as tactical musical support groups for various social movements and protests, but, as I have shown, few issues broadly unite the movement. The possibility of a clampdown on the raucous street culture of Rio de Janeiro, however, is a mobilizing issue by which all *neofanfarrista* bands feel affected and around which *neofanfarristas* can be quickly politicized. As Voadora's saxophonist André Ramos observes, "in the beginning [of *neofanfarrismo*] it was just 'woo-hoo, let's party.' But when you encounter a violent police unit, it will bring [political] questioning whether you want to [participate] or not. It all stops being mere play very quickly" (1/9/15).

In preparation for the Olympics, the city mounted a crackdown on unofficial street music and carnival events in 2016. As repression against unpermitted street activity increased in the year of the Olympics, *neofanfarristas* would unite to protest for the right to play in the street, mobilizing the activist discourses promoted in Honk Rio! This final episode shows the fluidity between various musical, carnivalesque, and activist repertoires of *neofanfarrismo* enacted in

new scenarios, as the socio-musical movement positioned itself in a precarious relationship to the neoliberal rationale of the Olympic city of Rio de Janeiro.

The unofficial opening of the 2016 carnival began on January 3rd in Praça XV with the “anarchist” brass *bloco* Boi Tolo (see chapter five) leading a massive unruly parade through the center of Rio de Janeiro to celebrate its tenth anniversary. The parade was open and cordless without clear direction, and I joined the mass of people with my trumpet. As more people arrived, the *bloco* grew increasingly crowded and began dividing into different sections, with some mini-bands stopped in the street while others marched off spontaneously in other directions. As our mini-*bloco* found its way back to the main crowd, we noticed that a line of riot cops had formed behind the main section of the *bloco*. The riot cops arrested an unlicensed beer seller, and a trombonist began playing the Darth Vader Imperial March.

While the police presence seemed worrying, I didn’t make too much of it since I had seen riot police many times before and had never seen them attack. As we arrived in the Cinelândia square, I saw a sea of people crowned by the carnival banner of Boi Tolo on the steps of the Câmara Municipal. I watched as more disputes arose between beer sellers and the Municipal Guard police. Then gas bombs, flash bombs, and rubber bullets started to go off, contributing to a near stampede as musicians and *foliões* ran. The music finally stopped and the massive crowd was withered within minutes. A small group began to regather defiantly playing Sérgio Sampaio’s famous countercultural song, “Eu Quero é Botar meu Bloco na Rua” (1972) with *foliões* singing the titular refrain, “what I want is to put my *bloco* in the street.” The *bloco* emerged from the smoke of gas bombs meandering towards the Museum of Modern Art, the traditional grounds of Voadora rehearsals.<sup>156</sup>



Boi Tolo tubist defiantly plays in front of the municipal guard before police attack on January 3, 2016. Photo by Gabriela Barreira published by *Globo* (Barreira 2016).

<sup>156</sup> Footage of police attack: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cu6G55IFpnU>.

Boi Tolo is a famously illegal *bloco* due to its resistance to the regulations of official *blocos* (see chapter five), but police attacks on unofficial carnival *blocos* were, musicians told me, without precedent. In the preceding year, I had seen, however, an uptick in repressive practices, from the prohibition on beer sellers at *cracudagem* to the police-enforced cancellation of outdoor rehearsals for no apparent legal reason and the episode at the opening of the first Honk Rio! discussed at the beginning of this chapter. A consensus in the *neofanfarrismo* movement emerged that the city administration had chosen this particular occasion to send a message: in this year of the Olympics, unofficial street culture would not be tolerated in the Olympic city. Attacking the beer sellers who sold beers other than Antarctica, the official beer and sponsor of street carnival, was interpreted as a message from the company<sup>157</sup> that threats to its monopoly would not be tolerated. For the alternative brass community, the notion that a private company would use the state to manage a carnival event for its own profit was akin to the privatization of street carnival. Heineken, with its red star, would jokingly emerge as the “beer of the resistance” in the alternative brass movement. Images such as those below were shared on social media that pointed the finger at Antarctica and its attempts to control carnival and repress unofficial events.



Left: *Blocos* with and without Antarctica, published by Jornal O Badernista. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Jornal%20O%20Badernista%20-%20A%20miss%C3%A3o%20antartica>  
 Right: Police beating *folião* who plays outside of the enclosed official carnival. Political artwork by Matheus Ribs. <https://www.facebook.com/matheusribsocial/>

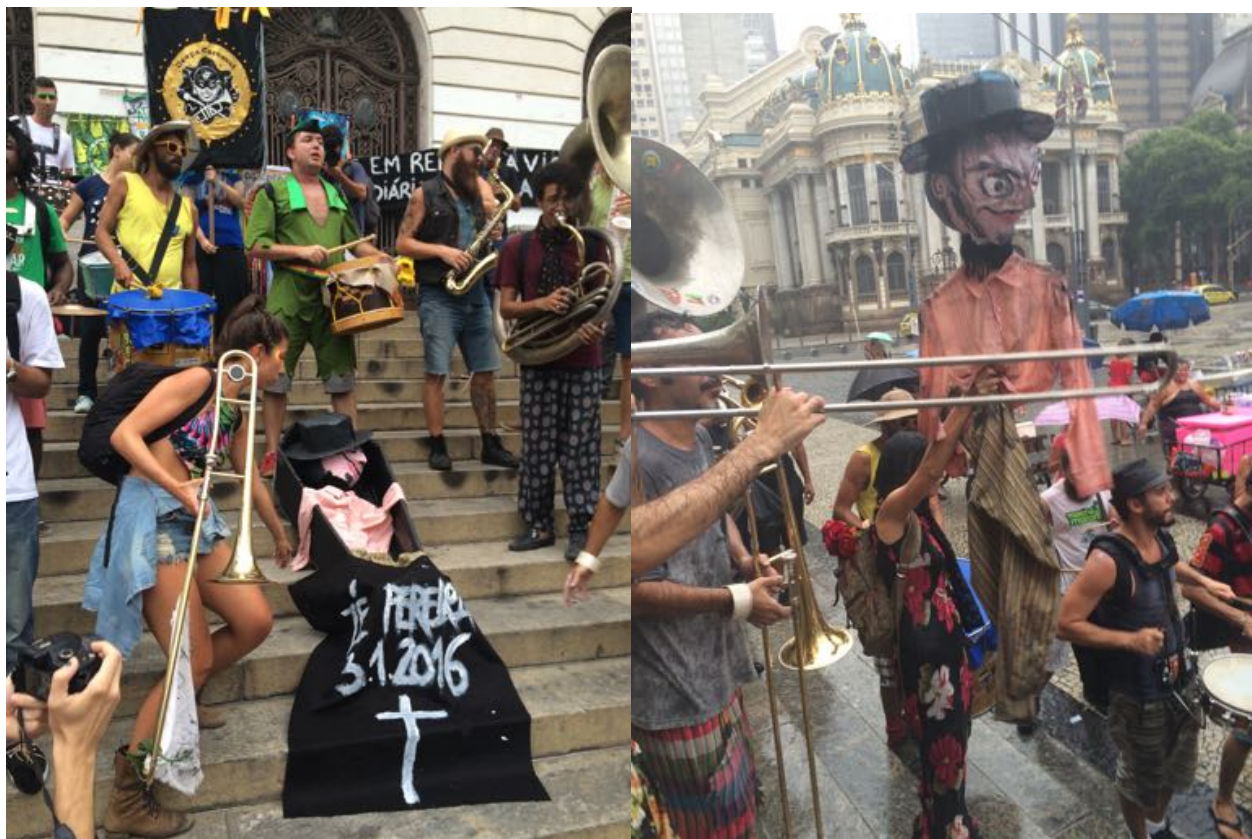
While Boi Tolo embraces practices of resistance and defies official regulations of carnival, the *bloco* does not generally endorse political causes or campaigns. It does not, however, generally meet the repressive arm of the state either. One brass *bloco* and *neofanfarrista* band after another published repudiations of the repression on social media. The brass community organized a nonviolent action that would bring together many musicians on

<sup>157</sup> Antarctica is a Brazilian beer brand owned by AmBev, which controls a quarter of the world’s beer market.



January 14. When I arrived in Cinelândia for the action, musicians-turned-protestors were creating banners saying “Carnival is not a marketplace” and “In repudiation of the daily violence of the Municipal Guard.”

The brass band community had organized a New Orleans-based jazz funeral for Zé Pereira, a traditional personification of carnival (see chapter two). “Mourners” brought a coffin with a dead Zé Pereira on a stick and placed it at the base of the stairs of the Câmara. The band began to play the New Orleans jazz funeral standard, “Just a Closer Walk with Thee,” while carrying Zé Pereira’s coffin around the square. Arriving back at the steps, we then launched into the traditional carnival march of “Zé Pereira,” as protestors took him from his grave and made him dance excitedly above the crowd in a ceremony of death and resurrection. We then started a march through the center of the city with the bands’ standards, including that of Honk Rio!, and a huge banner against police violence. One march sign read “carnival, revelry, and struggle,” bringing together the ludic and the political as one and the same manifestation.



Images of the jazz funeral for Zé Pereira. January 14, 2016. Photos by author.

This story illustrates many of the workings of the *neofanfarrismo* movement, its modes of social cohesion, its use of musical resources in protest, and the ways it has interacted with hegemonic power since the consolidation of the movement around activism through Honk Rio! First, though the police attacked Boi Tolo, the action triggered a cohesive and collective response from representatives of almost the entire brass movement, first through social media and then a collective performance protest and march. Musicians viewed what happened in Boi Tolo, an open *bloco* in which most had played, to be personally relevant and important to all alternative

brass musicians.

Second, a potential response of political protest was already present within the musical “repertoire of contention” of the brass musicians when they were attacked. Though this protest was novel in that it articulated a response to the very viability and rights of existence of the brass movement itself, the experiences of playing in protests provided musicians with ready-made musical tools of response, from playing the “Imperial March” to melodic soccer chants that called the mayor a dictator.

Thirdly, the Carioca brass world has such a large collective pool of music on which to draw that an inter-band musical protest required little training or preparation. The musical repertoires of contention are broad, open to interpretation, and musically eclectic. The choice to hold a jazz funeral with classic jazz funeral songs for Zé Pereira brings together a little-known black practice from New Orleans with music for the iconic figure of Rio’s carnival. In the protest action itself, particular songs, from *MPB* protest classics to satirical *marchinhas*, were chosen in order to underline the contentious nature of the action. *Neofanfarristas* draw on both national and international repertoires for strategic ends and combine them creatively.

Lastly, Boi Tolo’s discourse of occupation of public space and opposition to regulations and city control turned in this moment from a relatively tolerated subcultural movement parallel to the official *blocos* into an oppositional movement against the city administration. *Neofanfarristas* believed they were being repressed by the state in favor of private interests. They generated a frame for action that laid the blame on Antarctica and a larger ploy to privatize carnival. *Blocos* like Boi Tolo that sought mostly to exist outside of the official carnival became more politicized when their actions no longer came to be tolerated in the Olympic city.



March uniting various brass bands and *blocos* with their standards against police repression of playing in the streets. January 14, 2016. Photo by author.



While many have questioned the activism of the Honk Rio! festival as well as the broader HONK! network, on this occasion of instrumental protest the festival's consolidation of *neofanfarrismo* as a socio-musical movement framed around activism had aided in producing a collective response of much of the brass community to militate for the right to play in the streets. The mobilization constituted an unintended consequence of the festival's consolidation of the community around the ambiguous discourse of activism.

While the festival promulgated its politics more through an experiential model of activism rather than the informational model (Manabe 2015), therefore, we might see the festival's experiential activism, both in Rio and abroad, as captured best in the Portuguese verb *experimentar*, which means both to experiment and to experience. That is, rather than a didactic or monologic form of activism, instrumental activism's very horizontality and lack of semantic discourses promote a dialogic form of activism that is dynamically constructed by its participants.

Certainly, the HONK! festivals are not purely horizontal spaces in which participants have equal control over the repertoires and discourses. Particular individuals retain the power to set the terms of the debate, whether meritocratically through the work they put in or other forms of privilege that have allowed them to occupy powerful positions. But the HONK! festivals are experimental spaces in which musicians can try new models of musical activism and push the festivals themselves towards new forms of engagement—be they musical protests of ICE centers in Boston, feminist challenges like the *bloca* in Rio, or the episode examined above in which musicians raised, quite literally, the HONK! banner to defend Rio de Janeiro's street carnival.

### **“Carnival Strike:” Final Thoughts**

In this dissertation, I have sought to illustrate the creative and critical engagements of Rio's brass band community as it militates for a more democratic, more public, more egalitarian, and safer city. But what have been these brass musicians' tangible impacts, and what can we learn from them? *Neofanfarrismo* has been part of the transformation of the aesthetics of Rio's carnival, one of the biggest festivals in the world, beyond cultural nationalism towards an embrace, theoretically, of any genre. It has provided a space for the re-entrance of the middle classes into carnival and various new spaces of the city, and it has perhaps helped enable the process of gentrification of the center of the city. It has sought to transform carnival itself into a political practice while at the same time promoting carnival as a year-long movement in which volatile, experimental street parties are available for participation beyond the carnival season. It has put questions of management of public space at the forefront of public debates as Rio transformed into a city ruled by the local and international profit-driven rationales of an Olympic city. It has forged real if limited alternatives to Rio de Janeiro's hegemonic culture, priorities, and politics.

The transformation of an explicitly carnivalesque movement into an explicitly activist “socio-musical movement” forces us to rethink relationships between the festive and the political. While many social movement scholars generally assume a functionalist model in which social movements “act” upon music, examining how they “mobilize” musical traditions or resources (Eyerman and Jamison 1998) or how they “do music” (Roy 2010), I have argued that the relationship between musicians and social movements is far more interactive and dynamic. In the case of *neofanfarrismo*, musical festivity has been a generative force for the production and mobilization of social movements and for the politicization of the musical community. Holston

(2014), Castells (2012), and others have noted the lack of durability of contemporary internationally-based social movements. But the *neofanfarrismo* movement shows that more explicitly cultural expressions of activism are perhaps more durable in binding and sustaining resistant communities, as they help set the affective conditions of festive political engagement when new opportunities arise.

It is not only the cultural politics of the carnival season, therefore, that are at stake in understanding the politics of carnival. It is how carnival is used and theorized beyond the season itself that also reveals its political importance. Employing musical, festive, and political repertoires in a variety of scenarios, *neofanfarristas* challenge any simplistic division between the cultural and political, the alienated and the engaged, activism and counterculture, discipline and diversion. In contrast to those who might view these as ephemeral or “safety-valve” experiences, they understand these practices as forging an alternative, maybe even revolutionary, new reality. I hope the relational roles of sound and participatory musical practices in expressing opposition and constructing senses of the public and private will garner more analysis beyond lyrical analysis in the study of musical activism. As trumpeter Gert Wimmer observes, “HONK! brings the question of activism to practice. It’s not a question of saying ‘I am in favor of this or that,’ but rather ‘I will organize in this way’” (11/16/15).

The discourse of the alternative is the engine of change within Rio’s brass movement and perhaps more generally of dynamic movements that have not ossified. As emergent alternatives eventually come to be cast as dominant or hegemonic, the alternative negates itself as it establishes the foundations for new alternatives to emerge. Through this dialectical model of cultural change, *neofanfarrismo* and Honk Rio! emerged from the revival of the street carnival. But today one cannot experience street carnival as an ossified origin of Honk Rio! They are in dialogue with one another, and they cannot be viewed as independent events. Both street carnival and Honk Rio! constitute major moments of cultural manifestation in a continuum of brass music in the streets throughout the year, providing opportunities for the proposal of new alternatives and for the further mixing of repertoires. In founding the Honk Rio! festival, *neofanfarrismo* is perhaps no more unified than it ever was before, as consolidation does not necessarily lead to unification. With Honk Rio!, the festival has forged new institutions and moments of mobilization through which the movement may continue to grow, evolve, diversify, and debate.

I celebrate their accomplishments, but I have sought to point to the challenges as well, and I urge scholars to take more nuanced accounts of activist movements. Despite their populist discourses, both *neofanfarrismo* and the American HONK! movement are imbricated within the systems they critique. This is perhaps an obvious point, but I have taken it as a foundation of analysis, and I argue that understanding the subject positions at play in activist movements can give us an at once sympathetic and realistic appreciation of their potential. I have argued that alternative culture is neither an expression of pure resistance nor simply a commodified expression of hipness that expresses no real possibilities of resistance, whereas many scholars take an approach that places them on one side or the other. Rather, the alternative is a dialectical part of hegemony, a mode of positioning that encourages new critiques and projects to emerge within the boundaries set by hegemony itself. Alternative movements navigate the realities of the world in which they find themselves, while pushing for realities not yet born.

In this way, we can view *neofanfarristas* as creative agents of change, and we can look in new places for the possibility of resistance. The hegemonic cultural economy of the city relies on and commodifies the production of *neofanfarrismo* while affording musicians the bare minimum to survive and function. But like the proletariat, *neofanfarrismo* is not completely confined to the

boundaries set by the owners of the streets; rather, it is in a tense and productive relationship with them. In response to the attack against Boi Tolo and the protest it inspired, producer Renata Dias positions *neofanfarrismo* as a part of the cultural economy of the city with a real capacity to challenge it:

I have even thought about a carnival strike...“See here, mayor: there will be no street *blocos* this year. Your tourists will come to Rio. The sponsors will come. There will be no musicians. This carnival, we will just meditate”...The city needs us. It depends on us. It sells itself through street carnival with plaques all over the city promoting it. It swells its chest to speak about us and doesn’t support us with anything. I don’t know how long this will take. I don’t know how many years. But I believe there will be a change. Either it will be the privatization of carnival, or it will be us saying, “listen, the street is ours. We have rights. We will do our thing. You will have to swallow it. Or we call a carnival strike.” (1/21/16)

The notion of a “carnival strike” puts at stake the interdependence of the cultural and the political in the formation of this socio-musical movement. *Neofanfarrismo* is in a kind of revolutionary dialectic with the city itself, and the dialectic, in this neo-Marxist paradigm, is the engine of change. What Boston HONK! festival organizer and scholar John Bell writes of organizing a different radical arts group holds true of the activist festival in Rio de Janeiro: “The challenge has been to create alternatives to dominant culture, and yet to maintain specific points of contact with certain aspects of that culture, all the while maintaining a critical analytical viewpoint—a difficult balancing act” (2006: 380). The revolutionary potential of alternative and activist movements, therefore, is surely limited by the conditions that make their existence possible. However, though their terms may be limited, debated, controversial, and even compromised, these boundaries do not negate their potency in allowing the imagination and manifestation of a new world.

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## Appendix 1. A History of *Neofanfarrismo* in the Words of a Carioca Musician<sup>158</sup>

“*Fanfarra*” or “brass band” is a type of band comprised predominantly of wind instruments and percussive accompaniment. It is a format that existed long before electricity (and thus TVs, radios, tape players, amplifiers, electric guitars, microphones, etc.) but could nonetheless reach multitudes with its live performances. In a time when everything was done live, *fanfarras* were the most powerful means on the planet for reaching great multitudes. Since a *fanfarra* was typically home to the loudest of all instruments (trumpets, trombones, tubas, saxophones, etc.) and took the form of a large group, they could play for hundreds, even thousands – sometimes even the entire city. In this way, they could popularize songs, provide musical education, and add ritual to culture. The *fanfarra* is even posited by some as the original precursor of mass communication on the planet.

From the times of their origins, *fanfarras* have played in every country and region of the world, primarily in the streets, as that is the meeting place of the people worldwide. They played in the style of the local genres while also expanding their repertoires internationally, for instance, into the realm of polka, waltz, or foxtrot.

In Brazil, the genre most favored by the *fanfarras* was *dobrados*, which was influenced in turn by *lundu*, *maxixe*, and, of course, *marcha*. They also played a variety of international genres. The history of gazebos is connected to *fanfarras* insofar as they were constructed to house the performances of the *fanfarras* (known more simply at the time as “music bands”).

All of this occurred many decades before the existence of rock, bossa nova, funk, jazz, and samba. And now, 150 years later, the NEOFANFARRISMO movement has arisen in Rio de Janeiro, rescuing the wind and percussion instrument format and performing selections from the most diverse genres out there, be they current or otherwise. However, this movement doesn’t trace its roots to traditional *fanfarras*. Instead, it descends from the *marchinha blocos* of Carnival in Rio.

### THE RISE OF BRAZILIAN CARNIVAL: *Marchinhas* and *Frevos*

The origins of Brazilian Carnival, as best as can be determined, are intertwined with the rise of *marchinhas* and *frevos*. The birthplaces and cultural centers of these two types of songs are Rio de Janeiro (*marchinhas*, mostly) and Recife (for *frevos*). Using the same curved wind instruments (as well as percussion), the Carnival *bloco* format brought the *marchinhas* and *frevos* to streets across the country in parades with colors and costumes, enshrining Carnival as the biggest party in the country!

### RESISTANCE TO UNIFORMS IN THE STREETS

The *marchinha blocos* that sustained the Brazilian Carnivals for almost a century went extinct in the 1980s in most of the country. Only in Rio, the birthplace of this genre, were they able to avoid this fate. They remain strong today. It was no coincidence that a movement of resistance and revalorization of the *marchinhas* began here in Rio de Janeiro in the last decade,

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<sup>158</sup> In the preparations for the Honk Rio! festival in 2015, the head organizer, Juliano Pires, published a history of Rio’s alternative brass movement on the festival website in Portuguese and English, positioning it in relation to longer histories of brass in Brazil, in carnival, and worldwide. This text is quoted in full.

with *blocos* such as Céu na Terra, Boitatá, Boi Tolo, Se melhorar afunda, the traditional Bafo da Onça, Cacique de Ramos, Banda de Ipanema, and many others, including the most classic *marchinha* bloco, the centenarian Cordão do Bola Preta, which brought thousands of costumed people to the streets. The true street Carnival, the notion of “Carnavalization” (following Bakhtin), and its participating public have only begun to really take off in the last few Carnivals.

### **IN THE STREETS ALL YEAR ROUND**

Musicians that played together for years in Céu na Terra, Boitatá, Boi Tolo, Se melhorar afunda, and Songoro Cosongo decided in 2008 to utilize these same wind and percussion instruments to play the whole year round. They would play a diversity of contemporary and historical genres from Brazil and beyond. From this musical melting pot arose the first *fanfarras* of the movement: Orquestra Voadora, Fanfarrada, Go East Orkestar, and Os Siderais. Each one had its own unique characteristics, and wherever they popped up, they caused great surprise and hubbub with their catchy and energetic performances, be they on stage or in the streets (i.e., their original context).

After what was called by some the “Summer of the ‘Bones” in the year 2012, these *fanfarras* (who had already obtained public funding and were performing consistently) traveled to other countries. Orquestra Voadora to France, Portugal, England, Spain, and Belgium. Os Siderais to France and Scotland. And Go East to Serbia. While this was happening around the globe, a second wave of fanfarras began to take shape in Rio, winning over more and more diverse audiences with every show: Sinfônica Ambulante (from Niterói), Cine Bloco, Fanfarra Cantagalo, and the Monte Alegre Hot Jazz band (in the style of Dixieland). In the following years came even more: Damas de Ferro, Fanfarra Black Clube, Ataque Brasil, and Zambalo. It was a movement whose bonds were perpetually strengthened by the streets, by friendships, by “*fanfarra* battles,” and by everything that they all shared with each other. It got bigger and more solid with every year that passed.

The concern about and participation in social and ecological actions was present from the beginning for a large part of the movement. The notion of the *fanfarra* was reconfigured, until the old concept of “*fanfarrão*” (a derivative, pejorative term that refers to someone who doesn’t care about anything and takes no responsibility for anything) was laid to waste by the cannibalistic activity of the *neofanfarrismo* movement.

### **NEOFANFARRISMO WORLDWIDE**

The international exchange with other modern *fanfarras* is also booming, be they French “fanfares,” North American “brass bands,” Chilean *fanfarrias*, Portuguese *fanfarras*, or others. A variety of bands have played and swapped notes with bands from the Rio movement, such as Globe Notes, Octopus Brass band, Vilains Chicots (among other excellent French bands), the Chilean Rim Bam Bum. Some of this exchange has also taken place when Rio *fanfarras* go abroad to meet other bands in their homes, such as the incredible *fanfarras* of HONK! (U.S.): Environmental Encroachment, Second Line S.A.P.S., Emperor Norton’s Stationary Marching Band, Hungry March Band, Rude Mechanical Orchestra, What Cheer! Brigade, and many others. Many partnerships, international connections, and flowerings of generosity and friendship have developed over time. Now, in 2015, we are preparing to host the international festival in which *Neofanfarrismo* will finally meet HONK!: HONK! RIO Sound the cosmic trumpets! The fanfarras are invading the planet!



## Appendix 2: Glossary

- Afoxé*: *Blocos* that brought *candomblé* rhythms, especially *ijexá*, to carnival in Salvador beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Ala*: Sections within a *samba* school or *rancho* often dressed to interpret a dramatic theme.
- Antropofagia*: Literally meaning cannibalism, this term refers to a heritage of Brazil's modernist movement that believed that Brazil's greatest artistic strength is based in active devouring and transformation of all possible influences.
- Ataque*: "Attack," used by *neofanfarristas* to describe playing in the street.
- Axé*: Originally an Afro-Brazilian term meaning lifeblood, spirit, or vitality associated with *candomblé*, it is also used as the name of a popular carnival music genre from Salvador that emerged in the 1980s and 90s.
- B-Rock*: Brazilian rock genre from the 1980s that was heavily influenced by punk and heavy metal in the United States and England.
- Bateria*: Generic term for Brazilian percussion ensembles.
- Bandeira*: "Flags," used by *samba* schools as well as by protestors in social movements.
- Berimbau*: Afro-Brazilian string instrument used in *capoeira*.
- Black music*: Brazilian popular music genre encompassing musicians that have engaged with black music styles from North America since the 1960s.
- Bloco*: Initially used for all-male carnival groups that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, *bloco* is now the predominant term for any mobile musical ensemble in street carnival.
- Blocos-afro*: Musical ensembles created by the Afro-Brazilian cultural movement that emerged in Salvador in the 1970s, critiqued hegemonic racial democracy, and mixed many forms of Afro-diasporic music.
- Bossa nova*: 1950s musical movement associated with the whiter middle class of Rio's south zone that drew from *samba*, jazz, and classical music.
- Candomblé*: Afro-Brazilian syncretic religion.
- Capoeira*: Afro-Brazilian dance form, accompanied by music, that may have been used to mask training in martial arts from colonial masters.
- Carioca*: Refers to that which is and those who are from Rio de Janeiro.
- Carros de som*: Sound cars used by *samba* schools, *blocos*, and protests to amplify sound. These are not in favor with the brass *blocos* and *neofanfarristas* who prefer acoustic performances on the same level as the audience in the streets.
- Choro*: Umbrella term for a diversity of mostly instrumental genres played in Rio at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that had influences from European dance music and African syncopations.
- Ciranda*: A circle dance and characteristic rhythm from Pernambuco, Brazil.
- Cordão*: Refers to the cord held around musicians in *blocos* to keep them safe and together in crowded carnival environments. Also refers to popular class carnival parade groups that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but its original terminology is no longer as important when used as part of the name of a *bloco* today.

*Cracudagem*: Meaning the “state of being addicted to crack,” refers to jam sessions in Rio de Janeiro since 2013 in which amateur brass musicians play in a circle without excluding other musicians or people from the street.

*Cumbia*: Originally a folkloric coastal Colombian genre that has indigenous, white, and black influences, now popular throughout Latin America and the world.

*Dobrado*: Brazilian military march genre popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Enredo*: Dramatized theme songs written each year by *samba* schools and some *blocos* for carnival.

*Entrudo*: Portuguese street manifestation that included spraying others with offensive liquids and playing on pots and pans (*charivari*) that was the most popular practice of carnival in Brazil until it was banned in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Estandarte*: Standard used by *blocos* to provide visual identity and to help lead a parade.

*Fanfarrã*: Term in Portuguese for a mobile ensemble composed of wind and percussion instruments originally popularized by the military.

*Fanfarrão*: Derogatory term for someone who has no sense of responsibility or social commitment and just wants to party.

*Fantasia*: Carnival costumes that in *samba* schools are coordinated with the larger *enredo*. In *neofanfarrismo*, *fantasias* tend to be designed individually.

*Favela*: Poor neighborhoods, often in the hills of Rio de Janeiro, that lack the infrastructure of city neighborhoods.

*Foliã/Folião*: Based on the word for revelry (*folia*), these are female and male terms for carnival revelers who do not play music; a participatory audience.

*Forró*: Umbrella term for folkloric music genres from the Northeastern interior popularized in Rio de Janeiro beginning in the 1940s.

*Frevo*: Brass genre from Recife, Pernambuco that emerged from the mixing of military bands, Afro-Brazilian syncopation, and *capoeira*.

*Funk carioca*: Also known as *baile funk*, this has been the predominant musical style of Rio’s *favelas* since the 1990s. Musicians rap over an electronic beat similar to a 3-2 *clave*.

*Iê-iê-iê*: Term for Brazilian rock based on American and English rock in the 1960s.

*Jongo*: Afro-Brazilian dance and rhythm from the southeast of Brazil.

*Marcha-Rancho*: Slow variation of the carnival march popular in Rio from the 1920s to the 1960s.

*Marchinha*: Comic and satirical carnival march genre popular in Rio from the 1920s to the 1960s.

*Mangue beat*: Musical and cultural movement that began in the 1990s in Recife, Pernambuco focused on revitalizing regional genres and mixing them with global popular styles.

*Maracatú de baque virado*: Also known simply as *maracatú*, an Afro-Brazilian percussion tradition and dramatic procession associated with carnival in Recife, Pernambuco.

*Maxixe*: Genre popularized in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Rio de Janeiro based on the melding of polka and the Afro-Brazilian *lundu*, now played by *choro* ensembles.

*Música popular brasileira (MPB)*: Term originating in the 1960s to describe post-*bossa nova* populist musicians who sought to translate a diversity of Brazilian folkloric genres to a

popular song genre. Espoused leftist cultural nationalism and protested the military dictatorship. Now a term that designates Brazilian popular music of the middle class of a particular lineage.

*Neofanfarrismo*: Term originating in the middle of the 2000s in Rio de Janeiro to describe movement of alternative brass bands playing eclectic repertoires and espousing notions of activism.

*Oficina*: Originally meaning workshop or atelier, these are classes in a music or dance form offered throughout the year.

*Pagode*: Generic term for party or *samba* event. Also an Afro-Brazilian movement in the 1970s in Rio de Janeiro that sought to reclaim *samba*'s "roots" and subsequently became heavily commercialized.

*Rancho*: Carnival group that emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Rio de Janeiro and included brass and percussion.

*Roda*: Afro-Brazilian cultural practice of collective manifestation in a circle often open to outsiders. Especially used for musical expressions, such as "*roda de samba*."

*Salsa*: Generic term for a collection of Afro-Hispanic Caribbean genres, especially Cuban *son*, consolidated into a marketing category in the 1970s in New York.

*Samba*: Originating in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Rio de Janeiro as a carnival music genre, *samba* was promoted by the populist Vargas regime in the 1930s as the "national music" of Brazil.

*Samba school*: Popular institutions devoted to parading in Rio's yearly carnival that have spread throughout Brazil.

*Samba-enredo*: *Samba* genre written by *samba* schools based on yearly *enredo*.

*Samba-canção*: *Samba* songs broadcast through radio from the 1930s to the 1950s, not necessarily associated with carnival.

*Samba-reggae*: Music genre based on the mixing of *samba* with *reggae* and other Afro-diasporic rhythms played by *blocos-afro* since the 1970s in Salvador.

*Samba-exaltação*: *Sambas* with patriotic lyrics.

*Sambódromo*: Closed spectator avenue for *samba* parades constructed in 1984 in Rio de Janeiro and copied in many other cities in Brazil.

*Second line*: Popular class brass band parade tradition from New Orleans in which paraders form the "second line" behind a band.

*Street carnival*: Refers to outdoor carnival events in public spaces, not including the *samba* schools.

*Tropicália*: Countercultural movement from the late 1960s that drew on cannibalism to critique the left-wing nationalism of *MPB* and proposed a "universal sound" that would draw on international styles of music.

### **Appendix 3: Chronology of Important Brass *Blocos*, Musical Institutions, and Bands in Rio de Janeiro Considered in this Dissertation**

Bola Preta (1918)  
Banda de Ipanema (1965)  
Cordão do Boitató (1996)  
Bloco da Ansiedade (1997)  
Escola Portátil (2000)  
Bloco do Céu na Terra (2001)  
Cordão do Prata Preta (2004)  
Songoro Cosongo (2005)  
Cordão do Boi Tolo (2006)  
Orquestra Voadora (2008)  
Luzeiro (2008)  
Fanfarrada (2009)  
Monte Alegre Hot Jazz Band (2009)  
Go East Orkestra (2010)  
Sinfônica Ambulante (2011)  
Os Siderais (2011)  
Ôncalo (2011)  
Super Mário Bloco (2012)  
Cinebloco (2012)  
BlocAto de Nada (2012)  
Black Clube (2013)  
Damas de Ferro (2013)  
Bagunço (2013)  
Favela Brass (2014)  
Ocupa Carnaval (2014)  
Marofas Brass Band (2014)  
Amigos da Onça (2014)  
Mulheres Rodadas (2015)  
Technobloco (2016)