
BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

While military leaders and politicians plotted to overthrow the João “Jango” Goulart administration, a youth collective of popular music composers coalesced on the esquinas [street corners] of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Led by Milton Nascimento, the music of the Clube da Esquina came to epitomize música mineira [music from Minas Gerais state] in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. The Clube da Esquina sound is distinctive as much for its lyrics about fraternity and loyalty as it is for its collective approach to music-making and audio production. Nascimento and his collaborators also used music as a form of protest against the dictatorship (1964-85), particularly when a majority of Nascimento’s fifth album Milagre dos Peixes (EMI-Odeon, 1973) was censored by the regime. When Nascimento resolved to release the album without lyrics, censors condemned the “aggressive” sound of the voice, and Nascimento described the impact of his voice “como uma arma [like a gun].”

Using ethnographic data and archival research, this dissertation documents the social and musical history of Milton Nascimento and his collaborators, who came to be known as the Clube da Esquina, in Minas Gerais in the 1950s through the 1970s. Early chapters argue for Milton Nascimento’s comprehension as an orchestrator of personalities, due to his collective approach to music-making and judicious selection of particular collaborators. Though often described as a regional sound by Brazilian music journalists, Nascimento’s music subverts mineiro stereotypes as often as it confirms them. In particular, Nascimento’s music brought regional pride to Minas Gerais, while recognizing subaltern voices, especially afro-mineiros and the agricultural worker. Latter chapters explore the Clube da Esquina’s contribution to Brazilian canção de protesto [protest song] during the anos de chumbo [leaden years] of the dictatorship (1968-74). The Clube
da Esquina used textual themes as well as extra-lyrical strategies to communicate political dissent in combination with regional, national, pan-Latino, and international musical styles. Sonic field analysis is introduced as a method by which to analyze how texture and scale on audio recordings can inform musical meaning. Heard in the historical moment of radical clandestine movements, disappearances and torture, and divisive debates about musical authenticity, the collective constructed a diverse set of symbolic expressions relevant to the socio-political concerns of Brazilian audiences, especially youth.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: “I AM THE WORLD, I AM MINAS GERAIS”:
POPULAR MUSIC, POLITICS, AND REGIONAL IDENTITY
IN BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL

Introduction

In 1972, performer-composer Milton Nascimento released his fifth album *Clube da Esquina* in collaboration with 19-year-old—and totally unknown—performer-composer Lô Borges. Over his career, the double album became Nascimento’s best-selling recording, but it was also responsible for coining the namesake for the collective of musicians and lyricists that created it—the Clube da Esquina [Corner Club]. Though Brazilian critics and journalists gave the album a mixed reception in the 1970s, today *Clube da Esquina* is lauded as one of the most groundbreaking post-bossa nova albums in Brazilian popular music, and with this album as a launchpad, Milton Nascimento and his collaborators have enjoyed robust careers in music ever since. *Clube da Esquina* consistently makes lists of the best Brazilian albums of all time: it was voted No. 7 by music scholars, critics, and producers¹ in *Rolling Stone Brasil’s* “Top 100 Albums,” and it is one of five Brazilian records featured in the British compilation *1,001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die* (Dimery 2011).²

Milton Nascimento’s and the Clube da Esquina’s aggregate body of work is regularly described as the quintessential sound of Minas Gerais state, fusing dense harmonies and angular melodies with samba, bossa nova, jazz, film music, progressive rock, Latin American song styles, and especially regional mineira³ vocal and guitar traditions. Though these cultural

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² Also included is Jorge Ben’s *Africa/Brasil, Getz/Gilberto* by Stan Getz and João Gilberto, the self-titled *Os Mutantes*, and Bebel Gilberto’s *Tanto Tempo*.
³ Literally translated as “miner,” a *mineiro* is a resident of Minas Gerais state, whose primary industry is mining.
practices are not exclusive to the Minas Gerais and coincide across broad expanses of Brazil’s territory. However, each cultural practice often has identifiable characteristics distinct to Minas Gerais, such as the *toada*, a sentimental narrative song accompanied by *violão* [nylon-string guitar]; *seresta*, an urban form of the medieval serenade, in which lovers sing under the window of a beloved accompanied by *violão*, or often whatever is handy; *folia de reis*, solo vocal and group vocal music with handmade guitars, fiddles, and percussion instruments to accompany the Catholic processions of the Biblical wise men at Christmas (Reily 2002); and various types of syncretic Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations based on Catholicism, such as *congado*, a music and dance dramatization of the coronation of Congolese kings, as well as processions, ceremonies, and dances (Cascudo 2012, 218). Crucially, the success of Nascimento’s music, and subsequently that of the collective, brought unprecedented commercial recognition to Minas Gerais, a region at the periphery of Brazilian cultural production in which the eixo Rio-São Paulo [Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo axis] has long held center stage.

As of his 74th birthday in October 2016, Milton Nascimento had released more than 40 albums, including *Native Dancer* with Wayne Shorter (EMI-CBS 1975), *Corazón Americano* (Polygram 1986) with Argentinean protest singers Mercedes Sosa and León Gieco, and *Milton Nascimento & Belmondo* (Biscoito Fino 2009) with the French brothers trumpeter Stéphane and saxophonist Lionel Belmondo and the Orchestre Nacional d’Île-de-France. Nascimento’s career is unique from most other Brazilian artists who found fame in the United States because his domestic and international trajectories unfolded in parallel, rather than sequentially. Nascimento launched his domestic career in Brazil following his initial exposure at a song festival, which won him a contract to record his debut album with the record label Codil in 1967. Just two years later, Nascimento recorded his second album in Brazil (after being added to the roster of EMI-
Odeon) while simultaneously releasing his debut album *Courage* on A&M Records. Besides the lush orchestral arrangements of Brazilian pianist Eumir Deodato, *Courage* featured legendary jazz pianist Herbie Hancock fresh from his tenure with the Miles Davis Quintet (1963-68) and a series of influential solo albums, such as *Maiden Voyage* (1965) and *Speak Like a Child* (1968).

The collaboration between Nascimento and Hancock not only led to a lifelong friendship, but also Nascimento’s introduction to the jazz world, though often under the labels of “world music” or “Brazilian jazz.” Like many international popular musicians who find a following in North America, Nascimento’s music is admired for its hybridity of styles perceived as familiar and exotic. For jazz fans, the familiar often meant Nascimento’s mixture of modal and functional tonal harmonic language common to much modern jazz, while the exotic referred to Nascimento’s 4-octave voice singing in Portuguese and idiosyncratic fingerpicked nylon-string guitar rhythms. Nascimento first appeared at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1974 with Airto Moreira and Flora Purim, and lyricist Márcio Borges loves to tell the story of Nascimento’s name on the marquee. While other jazz musicians were advertised by the style of jazz they played—cool, bluesy, Latin, or vocal—Nascimento’s style description simply stated: Milton. Since then, Nascimento has toured consistently and maintains an active schedule of 40 or 50 shows per year. In 2013, Nascimento reunited once again with event co-host Herbie Hancock for a performance in Istanbul, Turkey on International Jazz Day. While lyricist Fernando Brant and percussionist Naná Vasconcelos passed away in 2015 and 2016, respectively, Nascimento’s other primary collaborators continue to perform and record throughout Brazil.

**Early Impressions: How I First Heard the Clube da Esquina**

The first time I heard the double album *Clube da Esquina* was in Belo Horizonte in 2005. I was a jazz singer who had discovered Brazilian music in high school, fell in love with the sound of the Portuguese language, and won a grant to study conversational Portuguese in
Salvador. I had been singing bossa nova for nearly a decade, but I wanted to understand the deeper poetry of the lyrics and the foundations of bossa nova guitar that had become so firmly fixed within the American jazz repertoire. After 10 weeks in Salvador, I spent four months in Belo Horizonte, where I lived with a host family, networked with jazz musicians, and studied guitar with Celso Moreira, a local jazz guitar legend and older brother of the classical guitarist Juarez Moreira. After purchasing *Clube da Esquina* on a whim at record shop, I turned it off in befuddlement after just a few songs. Though I ended up meeting many musicians who had performed with Milton Nascimento, the term “Clube da Esquina” meant nothing more to me than the title of that quirky album.

The second time I heard the album *Clube da Esquina* (EMI-Odeon 1972), I was walking home from yoga class a year later in the midwestern college town of Urbana, Illinois, where I was about to start an MM in jazz performance. I knew I would include Brazilian music in my master’s recital, so I decided to give the album another chance. As I walked to my small rented house on a sleepy street in eastern Urbana, I was intrigued by what I heard. Many aspects of the twenty-one tracks seemed familiar—a dreamy Beatles-ish folk-rock anthem, a melancholy ballad in 6/4, a rootsy samba in 3/4, a Spanish-language flamenco ballad—but their juxtaposition within the same album seemed utterly jarring. What kind of Brazilian music *is* this? I wondered with surprise. Each successive song felt like its own universe of musical references, and I struggled to reconcile it as a single work.

Early on, I conceptualized Milton Nascimento, quite erroneously and ethnocentrically, as some sort of Brazilian jazz phenom. Though I ultimately performed several songs by Antônio Carlos Jobim on my 2008 master’s recital, Nascimento’s music and the album *Clube da Esquina* fascinated me. In jazz arranging class, I convinced Professor Chip McNeill to require students to
write one arrangement for the university’s Latin Jazz Ensemble (LJE). This was partly a selfish request, as Tito Carrillo had shown interest in having me as a guest vocalist in the ensemble. I turned to the *New Real Book Vol. 2* for inspiration and wrote an arrangement of Edú Lobo and Capinan’s “Ponteio,” which I had the honor of performing at the final International Association of Jazz Educators conference in Toronto in 2008 with LJE. I also discovered “Vera Cruz” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges. I was honored indeed to record my dear friend Chris Reyman’s arrangement of “Vera Cruz” for the UIUC Concert Jazz Band CD *As of Yet* in 2008.

The *New Real Book*’s transcription of “Vera Cruz” was based on Nascimento’s 1993 album *Angelus*, featuring jazz musicians Pat Metheny, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Jack DeJohnette, pop musicians James Taylor and Peter Gabriel, and Brazilian compatriots Naná Vasconcelos, Wilson Lopes, and Robertinho Silva.

My fascination with Nascimento turned to obsession, and I decided to pursue a doctorate in ethnomusicology. I collected CDs and mp3s of Milton Nascimento, Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, Chico Buarque, Elis Regina, César Camargo-Mariano, Toninho Horta, Marcos Suzano, Flora Purim, Elza Soares, and Moacir Santos. I familiarized myself with Brazilian songwriters’ flirtations with reggae, with samba, with film music, with jazz, with rock. With generous funding from the Tinker Summer Field Research Grant and the U.S. Student Fulbright Research Fellowship, I spent 18 months between 2010 and 2012 living in Belo Horizonte where I conducted archival and ethnographic field research towards answering the question of just what exactly I was hearing on the album *Clube da Esquina*.

What follows are several vignettes of my own listening experiences prior to two months of pre-dissertation fieldwork in June and July 2010 (See Figure 1.1). Each is a composite of early listening sessions, without the benefit of prolonged fieldwork to provide “insider” information.
As a jazz musician who had studied bossa nova and MPB repertoire as well as the Portuguese language, I had a certain set of useful information about Brazilian music, but, as I listened, I realized how narrow that information really was. These vignettes will return once again at the conclusion of the dissertation as an opportunity to revisit how I hear them differently after the course of my field research and years of listening, and how you might hear them differently after reading my interpretation of their cultural significance. [Tracks can be streamed at Milton Nascimento’s archive at the Instituto Antônio Carlos Jobim: www.jobim.org/Nascimento. Click on Audio & Video—>View list—>Clube da Esquina 1972—> then, choose a song].

**Figure 1.1**

*Track 1. “Tudo que você podia ser [Everything that you could be]”*

Initial impression: dreamy Beatles-ish folk-rock anthem

0:00. Jangly acoustic guitar somewhere on the right. A deep, round voice totally unlike the *bossanovistas* I imitated for years. Oscillates between two minor chords—i and iv.
0:25. Second acoustic guitar joins at left, sparsely. Simple 3-note melody of…is that Rhodes?…pierces through at left to mark end of first verse.
0:45. Lovely down-picked chord on second acoustic guitar at left.
0:50. Finally, hint of drums joins in halfway through second verse. Aha, now the song is going to kick into full gear as Nascimento sings title. But it doesn’t. Stays with just pulsing hi-hat, shaker, congas. Curious preference for percussion.
1:04 Interesting riff, but can’t get over how the shaker is at least as high in the mix as the hi-hat. Riff divides chorus into before-riff and after-riff. Maybe it isn’t a chorus?
1:21. Finally, electric bass bounds in as Nascimento finishes title on word “*ser* [to be]” and drums let loose as Nascimento sings “*na estrada* [on the road].”
1:25. Electric guitar adds a chordal melody on top of riff…progression seems uncomplicated, yet strange somehow.
1:35. Organ in third verse almost imperceptible, glues everything together.
1:56. Nascimento lets voice break on words “*ou nada* [or nothing]” in chorus. Even at full height of ensemble, shaker is still more prominent than [drum] kit. Cuts as well as a cymbal, but bready texture.
2:33. Ride-out is otherworldly. Nascimento’s falsetto is full and masculine, and mixes with snaking, flutey melody of organ, soaked in reverb.

*Track 2. “Cais [Dock]”*

Initial impression: melancholy ballad in 6/4 accompanied by acoustic guitar

0:00. Begins with Nascimento’s voice in bed of organ, bowed double bass, arpeggiated acoustic guitar. Quirky team of percussion—sparse shaker at left, small tom-toms left and right, and soaked-in-reverb wood block distant right.
1:03. Diction fairly smooth until second verse. Pronounces “s,” of “*Eu quero mais* [I want more]” quite emphatically, almost bitterly? Extends certain words like “*saveiro* [sailboat]”, a cognate also for “savior”? Brusque shaker accentuates curt pronunciations of “*cais* [dock]” and “*vez* [way]” with lots of “s.”
1:36. 2½ melancholy verse-choruses, chunky piano theme emerges dead center. Nascimento lingers over last words “*me lançar* [launch myself]” to connect beginning of song to next section.
1:48. Piano drifts to right in mix and wordless Nascimento joins dead center, all slowly fading away. [Note: This theme reemerges 14 tracks later in the song “*Um gosto de sol* [A taste of sun]”]

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How did these 21 songs manage to create such a distinct impact as to change my definition of Brazilian popular music in a matter of minutes? After all, I had yet to really listen to, much less understand, the lyrics. Mostly, I was stunned by the unfamiliarity of the group’s delivery. I recognized only faint relationships to bossa nova and samba, and was overwhelmed by a plethora of unfamiliar Brazilian genres that informed so many of the songs. I knew Milton Nascimento as a contemporary of the “MPB Masters”—most often grouped together with Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, and Chico Buarque, but also Gal Costa, Maria Bethânia, Edú Lobo, Djavan, João Bosco, and many others—but the angular melodies, the vocal timbres (not just of Nascimento, but of singing guitarists Lô Borges, Beto Guedes, and Toninho Horta), the fusion of pan-Latin American and Iberian guitar traditions with progressive rock and jazz, the introspection and melancholy felt quite distinct from other artists.

Following 18 months of research in Belo Horizonte and many more pondering interviews, notes, conversations, recordings, and other scholarship, this dissertation argues that the lyrical themes and musical sounds of Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina constructed a contemporary and fluid mineiridade through exploring political convictions, ethical questions, and the tensions surrounding attitudes to rurality and urbanity. The music of
the CdE, and especially that of Nascimento, has become synonymous with the term *música mineira* because fans feel that it documents tradition—regional musical practices, values, ethos—as well as being highly commercially successful. Some detractors of Nascimento and the CdE find his influences from jazz, classical, and film music to be too “elitist” (or perhaps a kinder word, “erudite”), while other detractors dislike his regional influences and their connotation of rural spaces.

**Tropicalistas versus Milton Nascimento in the Academy**

In parallel with a thriving international career, Milton Nascimento is acknowledged within Brazil as one of the great stars of MPB [*música popular brasileira*]. Literally translated as Brazilian popular music, MPB is a broad post-bossa nova style that emerged in the mid-1960s and was consolidated by the mid-1970s through the work of diverse artists including Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, Maria Bethânia, Chico Buarque, Gal Costa, Elis Regina, Edú Lobo, Jorge Ben, Tim Maia, and many others. Despite an audacious career in music, Milton Nascimento’s musical life has received relatively little attention from scholars in musicology. In 2013, Nascimento’s friend and collaborator Chico Amaral published a biography on Nascimento’s musical style, and his book’s two central questions mirror my own (Amaral 2013, 13): Where did Nascimento’s music come from? And, why is there a paucity of debate surrounding his place in Brazilian popular music? I quote Amaral at length regarding the latter:

> Why the poverty of discussion, the mention nearly always superficially, the scarcity, if not the nearly inexplicable absence of an analysis consistent with the genius of his music? What appears to me to be occurring in Brazil is an abandonment. We are giving up—along with the sellers in this industry—on our music. It is an understandable situation within the capitalist logic of the eternal substitution of any type of good, but unacceptable in terms of the cultural patrimony that Brazilian music represents (Amaral 2013, 13).\(^4\)

\(^4\)“Por que a pobreza de comentários, a menção quase sempre por alto, a escassez, se não a ausência quase inexplicável de uma interpretação condizente com a genialidade dessa música? O que me parece estar ocorrendo no Brasil é uma desistência. Estamos desistindo, junto com os vendedores do mercado, da nossa música. Situação muito explicável dentro da lógica capitalista de eterna substituição de qualquer tipo de bem, mas inaceitável face ao patrimônio cultural que a música brasileira representa.” All translations are the author’s unless otherwise noted.
Amaral’s book is irreplaceable for its exacting musical transcriptions, insightful analysis of Nascimento’s influences (ideal for popular audiences, but too brief for academic curiosity), and most of all his extensive interviews—published in full—with Nascimento and his collaborators. Amaral’s breadth in each of these areas is invaluable, however, he is more intent on answering the questions on Nascimento’s musical influences than to theorize why his work has been little examined.

One possible reason is that until the mid-1990s, documentation and analysis of the Tropicália movement has overshadowed nearly every other musician or group from the late 1960s, including Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina, among academics, historians, and authors of popular culture. Cultural studies and literary theorist Christopher Dunn, for instance, investigated how *tropicalista* [Tropicalist artist] Caetano Veloso’s interactions with other Bahian musicians, visual artists, actors, and playwrights from São Paulo cohered into one of the most outspoken vanguards of the Brazilian counterculture movement (2001). Dunn’s book painstakingly pieces together his argument that the Tropicalistas’ pastiche of diverse styles, temporal and geographic references, and use of irony resulted in a “far-reaching critique of Brazilian modernity that challenged dominant constructions of national culture” (2001, 3). The most prominent Tropicalistas—Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil—also emerged on the national stage, like Milton Nascimento, during a song festival in 1967. However, while Nascimento competed in an international festival, Veloso and Gil competed in the national Festival de Música Popular Brasileira hosted by the television station Record.

Nicknamed the *festivaia*—a clever combination of the Portuguese words for “festival” and the verb “to boo”—, the leftist middle-class youth audience was so intent on supporting politically-conscious songs that Sérgio Ricardo famously smashed his guitar in frustration with
the crowd’s boos (Stroud 2000, 89-90). Veloso’s and Gil’s explosive performances of “Alegria, Alegria [Joy, Joy]” accompanied by the electrified (and distorted) Beat Boys and of “Domingo no Parque [Sunday at the Park]” with the equally boisterous Os Mutantes, respectively, egged on the rowdy audience.

The following year, in 1968, Veloso and Gil united with Gal Costa, Maria Bethânia, Os Mutantes, and Tom Zé to record the landmark album Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis, which reflected their collaborative influences from and inspiration by artists in other media, including visual artist Hélio Oititica—whose exhibition entitled Tropicália came to stand for the entire movement—, concrete poets Décio Pignatari and brothers Augusto and Haroldo Campos, and filmmaker Glauber Rocha (Severiano 2008, 383). Tropicalist music often used irony and linguistic play to frustrate listeners’ expectations of what song should be, while gender-bending (Veloso) and Black Power (Gil) dress and incendiary stage antics broke with the conservative social mores of the era. Though the pair—and their collaborators—garnered unprecedented attention from Brazilian youth audiences as well as the press. Caetano Veloso took great pains to defend Tropicalismo’s musical innovations in the press through an article that described his work with Gil as continuing the linha evolutiva [evolutionary line] from bossa nova to MPB [música popular brasileira] (Barbosa 1966). Veloso’s claim was controversial at the time, because so many interpreted Tropicália as anathema to bossa nova. By 1969, their ostentatious stage behavior led to Veloso’s and Gil’s forced exile by the military regime, and the subsequent dissolution of the Tropicália movement.

As a literary theorist, Dunn’s analysis of Veloso and Gil focuses primarily on their larger cultural significance and did not extend to the music or its sonic properties. Though Dunn makes his argument for recognition of the Tropicalista’s impact as a social movement, he leaves plenty
of room to debate their impact in terms of a truly singular musical movement. Rather, the Tropicalistas’ musical output should be seen as one significant component of a dense cluster of post-bossa nova experimentalism that helped to launch the new style of MPB, such as the loose collectives Clube da Esquina and the Pessoal do Ceará (which included Fagner, Ednardo, Belchior, and Amelinha), established bands, such as Os Mutantes, and individuals such as Chico Buarque, Edu Lobo, Elis Regina, Jorge Ben, Tim Maia, and Raul Seixas.

Sociologist Sheyla Diniz dedicated an entire chapter to defining the Clube da Esquina while attempting to explain why the Tropicalista movement has received far more critical attention (Diniz 2012, 172). While journalists and fans regularly describe the Clube da Esquina as a musical movement, scholars, historians, and the artists themselves have rejected the label of movimento [movement]. The artists argue that the Clube da Esquina was far more “spontaneous” than a formalized movement, and they place great importance on the serendipitous and informal nature of their collaboration. Likewise, Brazilian academics seem peculiarly concerned about intentionality when it comes to bestowing the label “movement” upon a group of artists. For instance, Milton Nascimento’s current guitarist Wilson Lopes described the Clube da Esquina as a musical movement during the defense of his dissertation, provoking nearly fifteen minutes of contentious discussion about whether the term was appropriate. In the end, the committee required that Lopes include a quote from lyricist Márcio Borges that qualified his position: “We neither formatted nor formulated a manifesto for a movement like, ‘Let’s start a movement’” (Lopes 2010, 14).5 Aesthetic movements are necessarily retroactive designations, since it is impossible to foresee whether artistic traits, innovations, and trends will make a lasting impression. Even if no individual song or individual artist within a movement adheres exactly to the summarized characteristics of that movement (mutually defined by fans, critics, historians,

5 “Nós nunca formatamos nem formulamos um manifesto de um movimento tipo ‘Vamos fazer um movimento.’”
and journalists), the designation is still useful for comparing works, identifying precursors, and discussing influences on successive artists.

When the members of the Clube da Esquina shrink from the thought of having created a deliberate and conscious movement, what is it they’re shrinking from? Diniz points to musicologist Ivan Vilela’s claim that the canonized trajectory of popular music—bossa nova, Tropicália, Jovem Guarda, MPB, rock brasileiro—was selected by academics and taste-makers—such as “journalists, historians, social scientists, and literary critics”—and not, as Diniz points out, musicologists or professional musicians (Diniz 2012, 196). When asked by scholars about the legacy of the Tropicalistas in one infamous interview, composer Edú Lobo pointedly refused to take part in the group’s canonization by popular music scholars:

> Actually, when the Tropicalismo story exploded, I was much more interested in what was happening with the Clube da Esquina. And I think it’s a mistake the fact that, when we talk about music in Brazil, generally, about movements, it’s always bossa nova, Tropicalismo… It’s not like that; there are many nuances. And one of them, an organized movement that had a defined form and new musical ideas, was certainly the Clube da Esquina. This very important movement from the mineiros was a great development of bossa nova, similar to bossa nova in a certain way, because it was greatly concerned with harmony (Naves et al 2006, 266).  

As Diniz points out, the Clube da Esquina as a named entity did not yet exist in 1968-69 when the Tropicalists “exploded,” but Nascimento and friends had already been writing songs and exhibiting them at festivals by that time. Edú Lobo provided a heartfelt quote for Nascimento’s debut album *Travessia* in 1967, where he traces Nascimento’s musical influences as deriving from the harmonies of Jobim, the trio arrangements of Luiz Eça and his Tamba Trio, and the “Holy Trinity” of jazz musicians—Mingus, Miles, and Coltrane. Rather than delving into why Edú Lobo was more interested in the Clube da Esquina than the Tropicalistas, Naves and her

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6 “Na verdade, quando explodiu a história do Tropicalismo, eu estava bem mais interessado no que estava acontecendo no Clube da Esquina. E acho que é um equívoco o fato de que, quando se fala de música aqui, de uma maneira geral, dos movimentos, fica sempre bossa nova, Tropicalismo... Não é bem assim, tem várias nuances. E uma delas, como movimento organizado e que tinha uma forma definida e novas ideias musicais, foi com certeza o Clube da Esquina. Esse movimento importantíssimo dos mineiros foi mais um grande desenvolvimento da bossa nova, bem parecido com a bossa nova, de certa maneira, porque tinha uma preocupação harmônica muito grande.”
fellow editors continued to quiz him about Tropicalismo, until he declined to answer in exasperation. I interviewed a musician in Belo Horizonte who mused whether racism could have been behind the dearth of historical writing on Nascimento:

I think that people really privileged Tropicália more because of the involvement of Caetano [Veloso] and [Gilberto] Gil. I think the following: I’ve read a few books—not all of them—but you don’t see, for example, the guys that talk about history… Take Nelson Motta, *Notas Tropicais* [Tropical Nights, 2000]. He started from the beginning of bossa nova, from everything that was involved in the *zona sul* [south Rio de Janeiro], at Nara Leão’s house, you know, the people that came together and made this bossa nova movement and what was surrounding that […] They don’t mention him [Nascimento], so I really wondered about that. Is this racial prejudice? Did it really reach that level? (Alves 2010).7

Though some would rush to argue the impossibility of racial prejudice when afro-Brazilian Gilberto Gil was just as outspoken and admired by critics as Caetano Veloso. But race in Brazil is intimately tied to class, and Gil was born into a well-educated, upper middle-class household, immersed himself in the art world, and indexed intellectual discourses in his music.

Nascimento, too, was raised in a middle-class family (adoptive and white) and was well-educated. Yet, his music *sounded* the rural landscapes of Minas Gerais as much as the Tropicalistas sounded urban pop culture. Composer and MPB producer Geni Marcondes described Nascimento’s debut album as a bridge between two competing strands of MPB—the *vanguardistas* [vanguardists] and the *nacionalistas* [nationalists] (Diniz 2012, 182).

We were missing Nascimento to happen to Brazilian popular music. There were two irreconcilable groups: one, reminiscent of the bossa nova phase, with a rich groove and rich harmony, but entirely closed off to rural musical characteristics, judging them to be poor and obsolete; the other, heir to that old line of *sertanejo* from popular music, also invulnerable to the achievements of bossa nova, relishing a slightly naive fidelity to regional rhythms and modes, or perhaps, unable to use the achievements of bossa nova for a lack of technical means or harmonic knowledge (Nascimento 1967).8

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7 “Eu acho que o pessoal valorizou muito mais a Tropicália pelo envolvimento do Caetano e o Gil. Eu falo o seguinte: eu conheço alguns livros, não conheço todos … mas você não ver, por exemplo, os caras que falam da história… Pego Angelo Motta, *Notas Tropicais* (or Cariocas?), Ele pega do início da bossa nova, de tudo do envolvimento que foi mesma na zona sul, na casa da Nara Leão, né, as pessoas que foram aproximando e fizer esse movimento da bossa nova e que estava ao redor […] Dele os caras não falam, então eu também queria saber isso. Isso é um preconceito racial? Será que chega a esse nível?”

8 “Faltava o Nascimento acontecer na música popular brasileira. Havia dois grupos inconcilíaveis: aquele, remanescente da fase da bossa nova, de rico balanço e rica harmonia, mas inteiramente fechado às características da música rural, por julgá-la pobre e obsoleta. O outro, herdeiro daquela velha linha dos sertanejos da mp, também invulnerável às conquistas da bossa nova, apregoando uma fidelidade um pouco ingênuas aos ritmos e modos regionais. Ou talvez, impossibilitado de usar aquelas conquistas por falta de meios técnicos e de conhecimento harmônico.”
Marcondes’s paternalistic overtones in regards to the “naivety” of *sertanejo* [a very popular style in Minas Gerais that could be described as analogous to North American country music with both traditional and commercial arms] musicians notwithstanding, Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina represented one of a number of precursors to MPB that did not fit neatly into the vanguard or nationalist categories. Author Paulo Vilara blames the CdEs marginalization by the media on regional prejudice:

But really, the Clube da Esquina stayed hidden, because Tropicalismo happened in São Paulo. The guys are *baianos* [from Bahia], but it happened in São Paulo. Chico Buarque is a *carioca* [from Rio]. So, that’s it. It’s an issue of ethnocentrism—no, not that, as we like to say—it’s *geocentrism* (Vilara 2012; emphasis original).  

São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have long been Brazil’s twin engines of industry, and musicians from the two cities are often better familiar with the channels of recording, marketing, and promotion. But it is not only geocentrism that explains why the Clube da Esquina has gone underrepresented. One trait considered typically *mineiro* also plays a factor: being *calado* [reticent or unforthcoming] both with the press and in everyday life.

**Fraternity and Collectivity in the Clube da Esquina**

The artists with whom Nascimento surrounded himself are absolutely critical to understanding his success, and this dissertation takes a necessarily broad approach in order to include the who-what-when-where-why-how of Nascimento’s collaboration with the Clube da Esquina. The moniker Clube da Esquina is continually debated, redefined, and challenged by the members themselves, their musical and familial heirs, the media, Brazilian music scholars, and fans. Such debates include who is and is not a “member” of the CdE, whether the collective constituted a movement or merely a group of friends, as well as competing origin stories of the CdE “sound.” As to the latter, Nascimento has lived in Rio de Janeiro since the mid-60s, but his

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musical coming-of-age was in Belo Horizonte, where his music became nearly synonymous with the term música mineira. This dissertation acknowledges Milton Nascimento as a central figure, but inevitably broadens and shifts focus to better understand his collaborative tendencies.

I chose fraternity as the central theme of this dissertation because of its pervasiveness throughout Milton Nascimento’s music, his personal relationships, and his professional relationships. Nascimento is more than the instigator of collaborative projects, he is an orchestrator of musical fraternity (See Chapter Two) with each collaborator chosen to fulfill a particular role in a given musical scenario. Nascimento’s musical collaborations began early in life. His longest collaboration has been with childhood friend, pianist, and arranger Wagner Tiso, who grew up in the same rural hometown in Três Pontas, Minas Gerais. Nascimento and Tiso met more collaborators when they moved to the capital city Belo Horizonte in 1963, including brothers Lô, Márcio, and Marilton Borges (a guitarist, lyricist, and singer, respectively), guitarist Beto Guedes, guitarist Toninho Horta, lyricist Fernando Brant, saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas, guitarist Nelson Ângelo, and drummer Paulo Braga, all from various cities in Minas Gerais. Other collaborators moved to Belo Horizonte from other states, such as lyricist Ronaldo Bastos from Niterói (Rio de Janeiro state), and guitarist Novelli and percussionist Naná Vasconcelos from Recife (Pernambuco state).

Nascimento’s first four albums employed many of the same musicians as the 1972 release Clube da Esquina, but it was this daring double album that brought recognition to them as a collective. A studio double album had never been released in Brazil, and the project featured an intense ethos of collaboration among its primary actors. While the compositions and vocals were divided between Lô Borges (then, an unknown 19-year-old songwriter) and Nascimento, the

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10 Music from the state of Minas Gerais, which means “General Mines,” named for its colonial mining industry.
11 The first two double albums in Brazil were released during that period: the studio double album Clube da Esquina and Gal Costa’s live double album Fa-tal, Gal a todo vapor, just a few months earlier in 1971.
lyrics were divided between Márcio Borges, Ronaldo Bastos, and Fernando Brant. While this is not necessarily exceptional, the collaborative nature of the album’s production was. Though Nascimento usually held the post of singer and nylon-string guitarist, the other musicians traded between various roles; for example, extraordinary lead and rhythm guitarists Nelson Ângelo and Toninho Horta played percussion, nylon-string guitar, electric bass, drums, percussion, and supplied backing vocals. This desire to perform as necessary on a secondary, tertiary, or other instrument for the good of the track resulted in unconventional and innovative bass lines, percussion parts, vocal styles and timbres, and arrangements. Wagner Tiso consistently fulfilled the role of pianist and organist, but just as importantly, facilitated the process of collaboration by notating, orchestrating, and arranging Nascimento’s and Borges’s compositions.\(^\text{12}\)

The music of Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina has brought significant national and international critical acclaim to Minas Gerais state, as well as inestimable regional pride,\(^\text{13}\), despite its development during a time of stifling socio-political upheaval. Fraternity, then, was not only a social ethos for the Clube da Esquina, but a political one as well. The collective weaved the theme of protest against the military regime into several albums, including the four albums that make up the core of the Clube da Esquina collective: *Clube da Esquina, Minas, Geraes*, and *Clube da Esquina 2* (EMI-Odeon 1972, 1975, 1976 and 1978 respectively). In 1984, and after twenty-one years of military rule, thousands of students used Wagner Tiso’s song "Coração de Estudante [Student's Heart],” with lyrics by Milton Nascimento, as an anthem for Diretas Já [Direct (Elections) Now], a civil movement calling for a return to democratic presidential elections in Brazil.

\(^{12}\) Neither Nascimento nor Borges reads music, but rather notate melodies using *solfeggio* in fixed *do* and *cifras* [chord symbols]. Tiso’s initiation with orchestral arranging on *Clube da Esquina*, led him to work with saxophonist Paulo Moura, and later to a busy career of pop orchestra arranging, conducting, and film scoring.

\(^{13}\) Idelber Avelar points out that the metal band Sepultura also brought intense regional pride to Minas Gerais in the 1980s, though to a much narrower international market.
Figure 1.2 addresses the multivalence of the term Clube da Esquina as simultaneously the name of a musical collective, the title of two albums and of two songs, and the description of a particular musical “sound.” As the collective gained notoriety, the term Clube da Esquina stretched to encapsulate conceptions of musical collaboration, production, and aesthetics within (and beyond) MPB [música popular brasileira].

**Figure 1.2 What is the “Clube da Esquina”?**

- **who: a collective of performers, composers, lyricists, arrangers, and producers**
  - Most frequently named: Milton Nascimento, Borges and Márcio Borges, Beto Guedes, Ronaldo Bastos, Toninho Horta, Fernando Brant, and Wagner Tiso
  - Additional collaborators: Robertinho Silva, Luiz Alves, Nelson Ângelo, Nivaldo Ornelas, Novelli, Naná Vasconcelos, Tavito, Tavinho Moura, Rubinho, Flávio Venturini, Paulo Braga

- **what: two albums and two songs**
  - *Clube da Esquina* by Lô Borges and Milton Nascimento (EMI-Odeon 1972)
  - *Clube da Esquina 2* by Milton Nascimento (EMI-Odeon 1978)
  - Also associated with Clube da Esquina: *Minas* by Milton Nascimento (EMI-Odeon 1975); *Geraes* by Milton Nascimento (EMI-Odeon 1976); *Angelus* by Milton Nascimento (Warner 1993) as the unofficial “Clube da Esquina 3”
  - “Clube da Esquina” by Milton Nascimento, Lô Borges and Márcio Borges recorded on *Nascimento* (Odeon 1970) and *Milagre dos Peixes ao vivo* (EMI-Odeon 1974)
  - “Clube da Esquina No. 2” by Milton Nascimento and Lô Borges recorded without lyrics on *Clube da Esquina*, and with lyrics by Márcio Borges on Lô Borges’ *Via-Láctea* (EMI-Odeon 1979) and Milton Nascimento’s *Angelus*
  - Solo albums by various collaborators

- **when: mid-1960s until the early 1980s**
  - Some would argue that Clube da Esquina exists until today with continued collaboration on recordings, tours, and projects by familial heirs

- **where: from the mountainous, southeastern state of Minas Gerais, based primarily in the capital city Belo Horizonte**
  - also including other collaborators from Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Recife, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay, and the USA
  - recording sessions in Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, New York and Los Angeles

- **why: a collaborative ethos**
  - collective artistic production of musical projects
  - egalitarian approach to songwriting, repertoire selection, and vocal/instrumental roles on recordings
  - non-egalitarian distribution of profits following record label contracts and artist representation

- **how: a particular aesthetic approach to musical production**
  - stylistic fusion of regional guitar and voice traditions, samba, bossa nova with jazz, American film music, anglo-American progressive rock, Latin American song and guitar traditions, and individual innovation
  - collaborative decision-making for album production and design
  - tendency toward intertextuality within albums and across albums
  - timbral preference of poly-vocality, of falsetto, and of percussion dominating the drum set
Figure 1.2 (cont.)
◆ how: a musical style or sound
- dense harmony, hybrid of modalism and functional harmony, and unconventional chord progressions and cadences
- angular melodic construction over a wide tessitura
- distinct guitar strumming techniques not influenced by samba or bossa nova
- frequently introspective and ambiguous texts dominated by themes of fraternity and often unconcerned with rhyme schemes

The name Clube da Esquina also conveys two important aspects about the collective’s social relations that recur throughout my research. First, the choice of *esquina* [corner] conveys informality—the image of a spontaneous meeting of people where two streets meet, such as at a corner bar in a particular neighborhood. Second, *clube* [club] conveys friendship—a group of friends that meet again and again in different permutations and at different moments in life forming a close bond. As such, I define the Clube da Esquina as a musical collective of musicians, lyricists, producers, and arrangers led by composer-performer Milton Nascimento, that began collaborating in Belo Horizonte in 1963 throughout the 1970s and beyond.

Nascimento commemorated his 50-year career with the tour *Travessia* [Journey], and I attended performances in April 2012 at the Palácio das Artes in Belo Horizonte and in October 2013 at the Barbican Centre in London. At a key moment during each show, Nascimento put down his guitar, sat on a tall chair, and asked the audience to sing his song “Canção da América [Song of America],” 14 with lyrics by Fernando Brant, accompanied by his band as he listened quietly from the stage, hands folded across his lap. As I sang along, I was struck by how clearly I could hear each phrase intoned by the crowd, particularly in London:

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Amigo é coisa para se guardar
de baixo de sete chaves
dentro do coração
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A friend is something to guard
beneath seven locks and keys
inside your heart

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14 Crucially, this “America” is understood by Brazilian audiences to mean a shared identity among South Americans, a sentiment that many Brazilians felt the necessity to clarify to me as a North American.
Recorded at the close of the 1970s, “Canção da América” might stand today as Nascimento’s greatest anthem to friendship, a theme that this dissertation will show not only pervaded his music, but his relationships as well.

In Thomas Turino’s terms, the Clube da Esquina is a cultural cohort, or a “social group that forms around the activity itself,” which in this case was music-making in Belo Horizonte in the 1960s (Turino 2008, 113). Crucially, the Clube da Esquina was never a band. Rather, the tight-knit group of friends coalesced around listening to, composing, recording, and performing music. Turino has described the feeling he gets from achieving a state of sameness, or oneness, in musical performance with his collaborators as akin to Victor Turner’s communitas:

> a possible collective state achieved through rituals where all personal differences of class, status, age, gender, and other personal distinctions are stripped away allowing people to temporarily merge through their basic humanity (Turino 2008, 18 quoting Turner 1969).

In the space of performance, I have certainly experienced this myself. In the still of a rubato section, in which I paced my breathing and singing to meld exactly with a doubled saxophone melody, supported by piano, guitar, and double bass, the mind’s focus is on the musical—tempo, pitch, interpretation, dynamics—rather than the personal details of my bandmates, such as their political affiliation, ethnicity, social class, or gender. This type of experience of communitas can certainly happen in non-musical settings as well—such as extended conversation, sport, or other group physical activity, like meditation or dance—but would seem to depend to some degree on social familiarity and trust.

Performers may reach a state of communitas in performance, but they also have to work together in less idealized environments and relationships. For the members of the Clube da Esquina, they talk about their friendship in terms of music-making, but their closeness pervaded these less idealized spheres as well, such as rehearsals, recording sessions, contract negotiations with recording studios, personal relationships, songwriting, album design, and production.
contend that the political situation in post-dictatorial Brazil created an environment in which youth groups banded together around many different forms of activity, including music and protest, and the Clube da Esquina cultural cohort resonated particularly strongly with other youth. Lyricist Fernando Brant has explained:

> At the end of the 1960s, the beginning of the 70s, we were experiencing, in this country, a violent and bloody dictatorship, and revolutionary movements emerged in the world pushed forward by the youth of that generation. Ours was a pacifistic and cultural revolution: we wanted to change the world with our songs, with our justified rebellion (Estanislau 2008, 39). \(^{15}\)

Yet, not all Clube da Esquina members were political, and were separated in age across a decade—when the 1964 coup occurred, Milton was 22, while Toninho Horta was 16, and Lô Borges was just 12. Guitarist Toninho Horta recalls his friendship with Lô Borges in the early 1970s:

> We had a great friendship at a time when all we thought about was writing songs, hanging out at bars, or singing to our girlfriends; the words media and success didn’t exist to us. All of a sudden, our gatherings intensified and, in the blink of an eye, we were all at the recording studios at EMI-Odeon, recording a double album, which was totally new at that time (Estanislau 2008, 48). \(^{16}\)

Though politics may not have united these friends directly, the political situation, broadly speaking, spurned a counterculture that bound middle-class youth together. Shelemay has referred to music as a type of community-in-process, in which music-making is more than the performance of identity, but an act that helps to “establish, maintain, and reinforce some sense of collective identity” (Shelemay 2011, 368). As Figure 1.2 attempted to show, the Clube da Esquina was active in various locations (Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro), had a loose, often serendipitous, organization and structure, and its members considered themselves as much a group of friends as it did a musical collective.

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\(^{15}\) “Fim dos anos 60, começo dos 70, vivíamos, o país, uma ditadura violenta e sanguinária, e no mundo, emergiam os movimentos revolucionários que a juventude de seu tempo promovia. A nossa era uma revolução pacífica e cultural, queríamos mudar o mundo com nossas canções, com nossa rebeldia justa.”

\(^{16}\) “Era grande a nossa amizade, numa época em que pensávamos somente em criar canções, rodar os bares, ou cantar pra namoradas (não existia a palavra mídia ou sucesso pra nós). De repente, os encontros se intensificaram e, como num piscar de olhos, estávamos todos nos estúdios da EMI-Odeon, gravando um disco duplo, que era novidade na época.”
A musical community does not require the presence of conventional structural elements nor must it be anchored in a single place, although both structural and local elements may assume importance at points in the process of community formation as well as in its ongoing existence. Rather, a musical community is a social entity, an outcome of a combination of social and musical processes, rendering those who participate in making or listening to music aware of a connection among themselves (Shelemay 2011, 364).

For the Clube da Esquina, making music in the late 1960s and early 1970s under Brazilian dictatorship helped the Clube da Esquina foster a sense of fraternity, and the success of their music fostered a broader regional solidarity based on anti-dictatorial sentiment and a fusion of rural and urban habits and values. Furthermore, the Clube da Esquina’s listenership could be described as Turino’s *cultural formation*, a social entity “with broader, more pervasive patterns of habits,” such as preferring certain musical styles, a distaste for marketing, an admiration for intensive collaboration, informality, thick textures, intertextuality, and a sense of brotherhood.

**Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina: State of the Research**

Histories of Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina have been overwhelmingly homegrown. Since the publication of lyricist Márcio Borges’s 1996 memoir on his involvement in the Clube da Esquina, several Portuguese-language biographies and collections of interviews have been published on the Clube da Esquina generally (Vilara 2006; Estanislau 2008), on Wagner Tiso (Coelho Silva 2009), on Toninho Horta (Arruda Campos 2010), and on Milton Nascimento (Dolores 2008; Amaral 2012), the former by a journalist from his hometown in Três Pontas, Minas Gerais, and the latter by a collaborating musician-lyricist. Notably, with the exception of Arruda Campos (who hails from São Paulo state), the six remaining authors are from Minas Gerais and three of those are from Belo Horizonte, being either close friends of or fellow CdE collaborators with Milton Nascimento (Vilara, and Borges and Amaral, respectively). The others are professional journalists (Coelho Silva, Arruda Campos, and

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17 All five are greatly valuable sources when used, as with any work, while considering the possible biases of their authors. Borges is one of three main lyricists of the Clube da Esquina, while Amaral is an occasional lyricist since the 1980s and Vilara was a close childhood friend of many in the Clube da Esquina. Dolores hails from Milton Nascimento’s hometown, while Estanislau is a native of Belo Horizonte.
Dolores) and one is a graphic designer (Estanislau). Authors of Portuguese-language academic articles have profiled Milton Nascimento (Ulhôa Carvalho 1990; Avelar 2001; Borém and Lopes 2014), and, in the last ten years, many Brazilian scholars have formulated theses and dissertations about Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina in the areas of poetry, history, sociology, philosophy, and music composition (Fernandes Vieira 1998; Viveiros Martins 2009; Rodrigues 2000; Assis Garcia 2000 and 2006; Nunes Leal 2005; de Oliveira 2006; Nicodemo 2009; Lopes 2010; Silva 2011; Diniz 2012).

Curiously, until the release of a songbook by Nascimento’s long-time guitarist and musical director Wilson Lopes (2015), no collection of sheet music for Milton Nascimento and his collaborators had ever been published in Brazil. Numerous volumes exist for Nascimento’s contemporaries—often referred to as *os grandes estrelas da MPB* [the great stars of MPB]—such as Ivan Lins, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Chico Buarque, and Djavan, particularly the well-regarded series of songbooks by collector and editor Almir Chediak.\(^{18}\) Though these artists have multiple volumes in the Chediak series, not one of Nascimento’s hundreds of songs are captured in print—nor those by Beto Guedes or Lô Borges. Several of Toninho Horta’s songs were included in the five volumes of the *Songbook Bossa Nova* series featuring various artists.\(^{19}\) In 2016, Lô Borges and Beto Guedes both released songbooks with Editora Gomes in Belo Horizonte, and for more than two decades, Toninho Horta has been compiling a book called the *Livrão de Música Brasileira* [Big Book of Brazilian Music], which will be an annotated songbook of popular music from the early 20\(^{th}\) Century to the present, though it has yet to be published.

\(^{18}\) Ivan Lins, Caetano, Djavan, and Gil have two volumes each, while Chico Buarque has four. Tragically, Chediak died in a home invasion in 2003 as he was editing a João Bosco songbook, a celebrated composer from Minas Gerais. It is possible Chediak hadn’t yet invited Nascimento to collaborate, or that Nascimento declined an offer.

\(^{19}\) “Beijo Partido” is in *Bossa Nova Vol. 4* while “Aqui ô!,” “Bons Amigos,” and “Litoral” are in *Bossa Nova Vol. 5.*
For domestic and international audiences alike, sheet music has been an important way to learn MPB songs, whether readers utilize standard or tab notation. Without sheet music, musicians who want to adopt the repertoire of the Clube da Esquina must rely on musical resources other than notation, such as online cifras [chord symbols] or their own transcriptions. Until Lopes’s 2015 songbook, the only published sheet music of Nascimento’s songs appeared in The Latin Real Book by Sher Music in 1997. Though Nascimento had recorded with Wayne Shorter as early as 1974, the editors selected “Vera Cruz” and “Novena” (Nascimento and Márcio Borges) from the 1993 release Ángelus. The recording featured jazz stars Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Pat Metheny, among others, and the songs were likely chosen for the improvisation sections utilized in the recordings, since they are not popular in Brazil.

Portuguese-language publications about Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina, then, have primarily not come from the Brazilian academy nor from music publishers, but from personal connections or out of regional solidarity. Meanwhile, two arms of English-language writing have devoted book chapters or overviews to the music of the Clube da Esquina: those that address Brazilian popular music for a general audience (McGowan and Pessanha 1991; Schnabel 1998; Beraldo 2014) and the others for a scholarly audience (Perrone 1989; Perrone and Dunn 2001). Thus far, research on Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina from scholars in the fields of anthropology, musicology, and ethnomusicology has been scant (a notable exception is Ulhôa 1995), though important work has been produced on other topics of the popular music of Minas Gerais (Reily 2002; Lucas 2002; Ulhôa 2000).

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20 Published by Sher Music, the collection includes a third song, much lesser known to Brazilian audiences, “Don Quixote,” which appeared on the 1988 album Nascimentos, recorded with Herbie Hancock, Robertinho Silva, Naná Vasconcelos and João Batista in Rio de Janeiro. The collection also featured three songs by Toninho Horta—“Mountain Fight” from the 1988 album Diamond Land, “Aqui, Ó” from Horta’s debut album Toninho Horta in 1980, and the obscure “Meu canário vizinho azul” from the self-titled album.
Literary theorist Charles Perrone’s *Masters of Contemporary Brazilian Song* and translator Ricardo Pessanha’s and journalist Chris McGowan’s *The Brazilian Sound: Samba, Bossa Nova, and the Popular Music of Brazil* boast impeccable introductory chapters on the music of Milton Nascimento and each, to varying degrees, highlights the importance of the songwriting collective the Clube da Esquina (CdE) to his success. Each takes the mountainous landscape, colonial mining industry, rural agricultural lifeways, and political history into consideration in depicting constructions of *mineiridade*. Both chapters capture, quite poetically, many aspects of rurality, the circumstances surrounding *mineiro* traditional musical styles, and how Nascimento and his collaborators have depicted them in their work. The capital city of Belo Horizonte, however, receives surprisingly short shrift as the bustling metropolitan foil to rural life in Minas Gerais, and in the lives of these artists in particular. Belo Horizonte is mentioned in passing, but as a mute(d) backdrop to the musical collaboration that took root and blossomed there. Excerpts reveal a tendency to use mystical or exotic language in reference to Nascimento and the CdE’s artistic production:

Standing in a class by himself, Milton Nascimento breathes the rural simplicity and colonial grandeur of Minas Gerais and exhales a powerful universality. He speaks with secular motivation, intones sacred motives, and figures a mythical temporality (Perrone 1989, 216).

The rolling green hills of Minas Gerais hide many secrets. They [*mineiros*] have a reputation in Brazil for being quiet, complex, mystical, and respectful of tradition (McGowan and Pessanha 1991, 112).

These authors downplay Nascimento’s worldly sophistication—engaging and compelling as their writing most certainly is—and they inadvertently perpetuate tropes that leave *mineiridade* to seem frozen in time.

Perrone’s chapter opens with a series of quotes by (mostly) Brazilian journalists asserting the difficulty in defining and describing Nascimento’s musical sound. With descriptions like “totally unknown rhythms,” “mysterious, intriguing, and challenging,” and “absolute formal liberty,” Perrone declares musical categorization a problem for other authors, choosing to focus
instead on lyrical analysis. Perrone identifies the main lyrical themes of the Clube da Esquina in the 1970s, and of Nascimento in the 1980s, as friendship, travel, charity, black consciousness, and pan-latino social justice. His analyses are well supported by socio-historical factors and conditions; he shows how prominent characteristics attributed to mineiridade are in turn celebrated, stretched, and challenged by the collective. Perrone’s emphasis on Nascimento’s collaborative nature with the Clube da Esquina is laudable, but due to his meticulous and wide-ranging lyrical analyses, individual lyricists and their interactions with Nascimento remain undifferentiated.

Conversely, McGowan and Pessanha’s chapter leaves ample space to emphasize not only Nascimento’s collaboration with the Clube da Esquina, but to highlight the solo careers of its central composers. The authors make excellent use of interviews with Nascimento, which name his characteristic musical attributes as mixed meter, unconventional guitar strumming and fingerpicking patterns, and a hybrid of regional song forms with open-ended compositional approaches from jazz and film music. The interview also uncovers attitudes about musical influences and aesthetics crosscut by rural-versus-urban habits and values, which are complemented with details about Nascimento’s upbringing, his move to Belo Horizonte, and his initial struggles as a professional musician. The chapter stands as a solid introduction to Nascimento and the main figures of the Clube da Esquina, but that they come to represent the entirety of popular music from Minas Gerais surely ruffled a few feathers among Brazilian readers. The introduction to the book clearly acknowledges leaving out “música sertaneja, Amerindian music, and traditional music in the South and Central-West” of Brazil, but the single paragraph listing out the names of “more” mineiro artists—such as rock bands Skank, Jota
Quest, and Pato Fu, heavy metal pioneers Sepultura, and soft rocker Flávio Venturini—certainly shows the authors’ acceptance of MPB as the hegemonic música boa [good music] of Minas.

The first Portuguese-language book on Milton Nascimento’s music was published by Clube da Esquina lyricist Márcio Borges in 1996. *Os sonhos não envelhecem: Histórias do Clube da Esquina* [Dreams do not grow old: Stories of the Corner Club] is an exceptional and irreplaceable memoir, reissued in a seventh edition in 2011. By using the word histórias [stories] in the subtitle, Borges is fully cognizant of the book as a partial memoir, not an impartial biography—he tells “stories” about the Clube da Esquina, rather than a definitive “history.” The most striking instance of his partiality is Borges’s representation of his and younger brother Lô’s friendship with Nascimento in Belo Horizonte as the origin of the Clube da Esquina. Though some of Nascimento’s very first hit songs were the fruit of their collaboration, his account flies in the face of Nascimento’s youth spent gigging throughout Minas Gerais with lifelong friend and musician Wagner Tiso, with whom he recorded a debut album featuring original material. Borges’s work has been widely quoted in academic theses and dissertations, but not always with the proper caution to its partiality. The book centers on the music of Milton Nascimento and Borges’s tangential career starting with Nascimento’s move to Belo Horizonte in 1963 until the recording of Ângelus in 1993 in New York. Though often lacking specific dates or even years, Borges’s rough chronology offers tremendous detail about social relations of the major figures of the Clube da Esquina—rehearsals, collaborative processes in and out of the recording studio, and musical and political activities in 1960s and 70s Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro. Crucially, Borges does not hold back in reflecting on his own emotional reactions to coping with the dictatorship as well as Nascimento’s ballooning fame and success.
Journalist Maria Dolores’s biography provides an important counterpoint to Borges’s book (2006). Like Milton Nascimento, Dolores was raised in the rural *mineiro* town of Três Pontas and interviewed more than 60 of Nascimento’s collaborators, family members, and friends in writing her book. Unfortunately, these are rarely quoted directly within the text, or even cited (though the acknowledgments list out the names of the interviewees). Though Dolores’s chronology of events is more accurate than Borges’s memoir, it dwells less on the Clube da Esquina collective and sheds little light on musical meaning or contemporary *mineiridade*.

Chico Amaral’s recent biography of Milton Nascimento (2012) is remarkable, then, for its varied approach. The central aspect of the book is a 160-page interview/conversation between the author and Nascimento, the longest and most detailed to date. This interview is framed by a cogent analysis of Nascimento’s musical influences, numerous interviews with collaborators, and 14 lead sheet-style transcriptions of songs with brief notes about idiosyncratic compositional and interpretive features. Amaral is a long-time friend of Nascimento’s, having written lyrics for several of his songs, but he is 15 years his junior. On the one hand, Amaral’s musical activities have been peripheral to Nascimento’s career—primarily lyric-writing, recordings, and tours with Nascimento’s collaborators and other *mineiro* artists—which has allowed the biography to maintain a higher degree of objectivity than that of Borges. On the other hand, their artistic association and friendship allowed for detailed interviews and musical analyses. Aside from two recent theses (Rodrigues 2000; Lopes 2010), Amaral’s work is one of the most significant Portuguese-language contributions with a musicological approach to emerge on Nascimento, and though the author often departs from his role as impartial interviewer—elaborating on shared experiences or inside jokes—these detours humanize, rather than mythologize, Nascimento.
This brief listing of works is indicative of the gradual progress that research on MPB has made over the past twenty years. Notably, progress has been slowest among musicologists, whose work through the 1970s and 80s has primarily followed nationalistic impulses to investigate Brazilian classical music as a first priority, particularly composers Heitor Villa-Lobos and Camargo Guarnieri, and cosmopolitan popular music of the early twentieth-century as a second priority, such as composers of *maxixe*, *lundu*, and *choro*. As in the US, courses in popular music performance have been slow to enter the academy in Brazil. In 2009, while the University of Southern California established its first course in popular music performance, the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais [Federal University of Minas Gerais state] in Belo Horizonte established a course in popular music performance to be taught alongside its classical music course (established in 1925). From 2006 to 2008, all of the articles in the UFMG peer-reviewed journal *Per Musi* featured choral, operatic, chamber, and symphonic music as the center of research, as well as theoretical articles on education and perception. By 2014, half of the articles centered on popular music, such as pop, rock, and samba, suggesting that the addition of popular music performance studies correlates with research output in the area. Notably, the most highly-regarded Brazilian university—Universidade de São Paulo (USP), established in 1934—offers classical music performance only.

Many authors have fixated on the impact of Tropicália in discourses of popular music and nationalism. However, this has meant that artists who chose not to engage in nationalist rhetoric have been passed over for serious inquiry in the humanities. Milton Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina were unconcerned with musical nationalism precisely because *mineiridade* is only held

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21 Certainly, jazz entered the academy in the United States relatively quickly, but it is no longer a contemporary popular music. University popular music programs include Berklee College of Music in Boston, the Musicians’ Institute in Los Angeles, McNally Smith College in Minneapolis, Tennessee State University in Nashville, and the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, but the norm certainly continues to be classical and jazz styles.
up to represent region, rather than Nation. Nascimento’s collaborations with the Clube da Esquina used regional identity as a “universal” trait, much like the Liverpudlian Beatles came to symbolize an alternative, working-class representation of Britain. Nascimento has recorded relatively little in English, yet has achieved a long international career of live performance singing in Portuguese. Consequently, Nascimento’s work represents brasilidade outside of Brazil more often than it does at home. By adopting international styles filtered through a Brazilian identity, Nascimento did not seek to sound international, but supranational; his musical production is recognized for its mineiridade, while also having “universal” significance.

**Minas Gerais: At a Glance**

Minas Gerais is routinely characterized as a window into Brazil’s economic and colonial past whose distinguishing features most often include the mountainous landscape, the mining and agricultural industries, the strong presence of the Roman Catholic church in civic and cultural life, a political reputation of off-the-record negotiation, and a general disposition of reserved skepticism and aloofness. Though contemporary mineiros often embrace these tropes of mineiridade, social histories rarely contextualize them into the present and leave the reader’s imaginary of Minas Gerais as predominantly archaic and somber. Much historical writing about Minas Gerais tends to focus on the central mountainous region due to the great economic impact of the Ciclo de Ouro. Historian and mineiro João Camillo de Oliveira Torres published *O Homem e a montanha* [Man and the Mountains] in 1944 with the subtitle, “introduction to the study of the influences of geographic location on the formation of the mineiro spirit.” Torres was born and raised in Itabira, Minas Gerais in 1915, just three years before the establishment of the Itabira Iron Ore Co. The company grew throughout, and following, his lifetime to become the multinational corporation Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, the largest and second largest producer, respectively, of iron ore and nickel in the world. Crossing a part of the Serra do Espinhaço
mountain range, Itabira lies 100 km east of Belo Horizonte, where Torres taught history at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. UFMG is also where his cousin, the acclaimed poet and novelist Carlos Drummond de Andrade, worked as a journalist and essayist.

In a preface to the second edition of the book, UFMG history professor João Antônio de Paula wrote that Torres’s work broke with the ideas of environmental determinism professed by even the most progressive scholars at the opening of the 20th Century, like Euclides da Cunha (Torres 2011, 16). Likened to Ruth Benedict’s highly controversial *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) andOctavio Paz’s *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950), Torres described his work as a type of “ecology of the *mineiro*,” studying the social relations of 18th-century Minas in the face of mountainous living (Torres, 64). Torres’ book pulled from his own experience as well as numerous archival sources and historical works; there are rich descriptions of the interiors and style of 18th-century mining houses, typical cuisine, utensils and artifacts, divisions of labor and traditional ofícios [trades], irmandades [brotherhoods] within the Catholic Church, Franciscan orders, and the power of municipal chambers. Its greatest limitation is its scope—it covers only the colonial period and only the central mining region.

It is useful, then, to compare Torres’ work—a success in its time and still a reference today evidenced by its reprinting in 2011—to the edited collection *Minas Gerais*, featuring 22 chapters on *mineiro* history and culture (Starling et al 2011). In this work, Antônio de Paula described his home state as a “mosaic, polyphonic,” yet much of the book circumscribes the same geographical space and timeframe as Torres’ book. Eight chapters are dedicated to the colonial era: history, theater, festivals, mulatto sculptor Aleijadinho, domestic life in mining vilas [towns], and farming in the 18th Century, with just a few chapters expanding into the 19th Century. The nine remaining chapters center on important *mineiro* figures: 20th-century
politicians, artists, and intellectuals, including author João Guimarães Rosa, poet and essayist Carlos Drummond de Andrade, anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, film director Humberto Mauro, photographer Sebastião Salgado, visual artist Lygia Clark, and Milton Nascimento. Six chapters focus on other social groups or themes, including an overview on mineiridade, historical and contemporary indigenous groups, the social history of the viola [10-string guitar], artisans from the northeastern Jequitinhonha region, modernism, and fashion.

Themes that emerge as un- or under-represented, then, are the western and southern regions of the state, quilombos [colonies of former slaves and runaway slaves] and Afro-descendants, the Brazilian worker and land ownership, women in historical writing, agricultural economies of the 19th and 20th centuries, and LGBT issues. The chapters on indigenous groups and Jequitinhonha artisans, to name just two, are most certainly a welcome departure from Torres’ ignorance of these aspects of mineiro history. But for a collection that strives to represent Minas Gerais as a polyphonic mosaic, lighter-skinned male voices continue to ring more forcefully in historical writing, even when the writers are female. Quilombos in Minas Gerais—of which the largest reached 10,000 inhabitants by the 1740s—received a page here or there (Starling et al 39), and enlightening as these passages are, they make no attempt to connect these past enslaved voices with Afro-descended contemporary counterparts—especially surprising in light of the fact that more than 200 communities in contemporary Minas Gerais self-identify as quilombolas, many of which are seeking legal ownership of their lands (Programa Comunidades Quilombolas).

Disappointingly, Minas Gerais deemphasizes the contributions of the Brazilian worker, particularly the rural agricultural worker, and this dissertation takes on collective labor as a theme. The CdE’s music is widely seen as representing Minas Gerais precisely because it helps
listeners to imagine rural and urban perspectives that are often absent from official histories.

Both Torres and the editors of *Minas Gerais* seemed keen to emphasize the urbanity of colonial Minas Gerais, suggesting perhaps a resistance against the stereotypes other Brazilians have about *mineiros* as *caipiras* [hicks] and the region as an unsophisticated, rural backwater. Historians are, of course, correct that urban settlements were the norm in central colonial Minas Gerais, but at that time, there were also always rural agricultural counterparts staking out new territories throughout the state for enterprise and subsistence farming. With the recession of the Ciclo do Ouro in the late 19th Century, *mineiros* overwhelmingly turned to agricultural economies as well as the mining of other materials, like iron and copper, a period of history which is hugely underrepresented in *Minas Gerais*.

The compendium was conceived and edited by professors from UFMG (a federal, and therefore public, university), and funded by the private foundation Fapemig [Foundation of Support for the Research of the State of Minas Gerais], which declares its guiding principles to be “commitment, autonomy, universality, excellence, ethics.” The collection, however, also bears the logo of Vale, the aforementioned multinational mining company founded in Itabira in 1942 and currently maintaining mines and processing facilities in fourteen states and in nine other countries in North America, the Middle East, China and Southeast Asia, Africa, and Australia. The book was conceived as a project in parallel with the construction of the Memorial Minas Gerais-Vale, an interactive museum dedicated to *mineiro* cultural and political history. Located on the Circuito Cultural Praça da Liberdade—a collection of public buildings surrounding the governor’s palace in central Belo Horizonte—its main exhibition rooms coordinate directly with many of the chapters in the volume, including one room dedicated entirely to the Gold Era.

Without a doubt many, many people will benefit from the more than 10 museums, cultural
centers, archive, and library—all freely accessible and with intensive programming for student groups—but the development of a book in parallel with the museum leaves me conflicted. The chapters on the artisans of Jequitinhonha, popular celebrations, and on Milton Nascimento himself are incredibly rich and profound explorations into Afro-descended, indigenous, and working class cultural experience. However, focusing exclusively on artistic production rather than on how these groups intersect with the political and economic history of Minas Gerais leaves a lot of messy, uncomfortable truths in silence.

During the first quarter of the 20th Century, Belo Horizonte was still in its infancy, having been inaugurated in 1897 as a developmentalist project for the new state capital. A century earlier, the waning of gold and gem mining caused mineiros to turn to agricultural pursuits. With continued slave importation through the mid-19th Century, mineiros pursued subsistence farming and commercial agricultural production of cattle, dairy, corn, and coffee for local, regional, and (on a small scale) international markets, as well as manufacturing (Bergad 1996). By the late 1930s, the first blast furnaces for steel mining opened at the Belgo Mineira in João Monlevade, just 100 km east of Belo Horizonte. This eastern region expanded to be called the Vale do Aço [Steel Valley] with the establishment of three more mining operations in the 1950s: the state-owned Acesita [currently Aperam] in Timóteo; Usiminas in Ipatinga (currently headquartered in Belo Horizonte across the street from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais); and the German conglomerate Mannesmann, including a plant in the southwestern Barreiro neighborhood of Belo Horizonte (Brito and Horta 2002, 2).

After the election of President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-61), his administration’s Plano de Metas [Target Plan]—with the famous slogan 50 Years in Five—helped spur expansions into other industries, such as energy, transportation, and civil construction, which Brito and Horta link
to the growth of *mineira* cities by a rate of 5.49% each year in the 1950s. The economic expansion, however, didn’t last and Minas faced a steep recession in the 1960s:

This reality projected itself on Minas, which maintained a stagnated agriculture and quite low industrial investments. Despite the available economic infrastructure, there was no capital to expand the industrial sector and to modernize agriculture. As a consequence, *mineira* emigration to other states snatched the top national ranking from the *nordestinos* [Northeasterners]. According to the 1970 Demographic Census, 2,041,748 state residents in the 1960s emigrated to the rest of the country, the greatest number in history—an average of 204,175 people per year! (Brito and Horta 2002, 4).

Those that relocated within Minas Gerais moved to Belo Horizonte, the Vale do Aço, or the western Triângulo region. By the 1970s, an even greater rural-to-urban exodus resulted from aggressive fiscal incentives from federal development institutions to expand manufacturing, civil construction, and commercial agricultural (Brito and Horta 2002, 5). By the end of the dictatorship in 1985, these new industries stabilized, out-migration leveled off, and Belo Horizonte had risen to the third largest metropolitan area in Brazil. Despite this period of industrialization, negative cultural associations between rurality and Minas Gerais linger throughout Brazil, including within Minas Gerais itself, perhaps due to the delayed mechanization of agriculture. Farming has long been associated with manual labor and an arduous—and undesirable—working life.

In attempting to deconstruct the rural/urban dichotomy in the context of Minas Gerais, I turn to anthropologist Christine Yano’s work on Japanese *enka* music. She uses the term rusticity to describe a cultural, rather than geographical, distance from a center of cultural production and notes that rusticity is both “reviled as a cultural backwater and celebrated as a cultural repository” (Yano 20). In Brazilian culture, cuisine, literature, art, and music are the most widely praised cultural productions from Minas Gerais, with cuisine having particularly close

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22 “Essa realidade se projetou sobre Minas, que manteve sua agricultura estagnada e os investimentos industriais bastante baixos. Apesar da infraestrutura econômica disponível, não havia capital para expandir o setor industrial e modernizar a agricultura. Como consequência, as emigrações mineiras para os outros estados arrebatabam dos nordestinos o primeiro lugar no “rank” nacional. Segundo o Censo Demográfico de 1970, 2.041.748 residentes no estado nos anos 60, emigraram para o restante do país, o maior número da sua história — uma média de 204.175 emigrantes anuais!”
associations with *caipira* [country hick] culture. However, praise of these *mineiro* creations is often in comparison to their *eixo* Rio-São Paulo counterparts. Musician João Antunes explained:

> The only food that is considered truly national is *feijoada* [bean stew with beef or pork served with rice, manioc flour, and kale]. All other foods are considered regional. So, for example, *churrasco gaúcho* [barbecue from Rio Grande do Sul] is one, and *churrasco goiano* [barbecue from Goiás] is another. *Peixada capixaba* [fish from Espírito Santo] is one, and *baiana* [Bahian fish] is another. But, yes, it’s good to compare [food and music], because the quintessential national music is samba. Samba, like *feijoada*, came from Bahia, but established itself in Rio, when it was the capital of Brazil (Antunes 2013).

Other *mineiro* foods, such as the ubiquitous *pão de queijo* and *tutu à mineira*—a type of feijoada in which the beans are mashed and whipped into a consistency similar to mashed potatoes—are often praised as the “comfort foods” of Brazil. When I began classes towards a diploma in translation in London, UK, I was the only non-Lusophonian in my class. When the only *mineiro* in the class introduced himself, he said, “Hello, my name is Felipe. I am from Belo Horizonte, and now you know where to find the *pão de queijo,*” to which the rest of the class knowingly chuckled and nodded. As much as Brazilian historians emphasize mining as essential to understanding *mineiro* social history, I would argue that agriculture is equally important. Otherwise, Felipe might have introduced himself by saying, “Now you know where to find the gold or iron ore.”

Yano describes *enka* music as a tool to express collective nostalgia about Japan’s rural past, and some of Nascimento’s most treasured songs do precisely this for Minas Gerais. For example, the gold-encrusted innards of churches throughout Minas Gerais shape *mineiro* cultural memory around a narrative that glorifies mining in the same moment that it falls silent on the contributions of agricultural laborers. The popular songs of the CdE have become a hugely influential resignification of cultural memory by actively shaping memory while also doubling as

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23 “A única comida que é considerada nacional mesmo é a feijoada. Todas as outras comidas são consideradas regionais. Mas, por exemplo, churrasco gaúcho é um, goiano é outro. Peixada capixaba é uma, baiana outra. Mas é bom pra comparar sim. Porque a música nacional por excelência é o samba. O samba, como a feijoada, veio da Bahia mas se firmou no Rio, quando ela era o capital do país.”
a commercial commodity. Like *enka* for Yano, the collective nostalgia surrounding rusticity in
the music of the CdE binds *mineiros* together around respect for traditional agricultural practices
and admiration for natural landscapes and lifeways. The music particularly resonates with fans
from similar *caipira* spaces (São Paulo, Goiânia, parts of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, and
Ceará) as well as those from *interior* spaces with different socio-historical circumstances, such as
Brazilians from Bahia or my memories of growing up in central Wisconsin. This collective
nostalgia works to resignify interior lifeways from representations of “backwardness” or
“provinciality” to representations of spiritual connectedness to nature or fraternity around
collective labor. The music of Nascimento and the CdE cognitively maps both city and country,
and in doing so is adept at portraying *mineiro* identity as falling somewhere in between.

**Chapter Summaries**

This dissertation analyzes the significance of Milton Nascimento and the Clube da
Esquina in light of several broad social and historical circumstances. Chapter One introduced
how *mineiros* see themselves in relation to the political and economic circumstances of the
region, including the colonial mining and agricultural industries, the presence of the Catholic
Church in spiritual and musical life, and the fusion of both rural and urban lifeways. The success
of the musical output of the Clube da Esquina is due in part to its incorporation of and
interpretation of core *mineiro* habits and values rooted in these circumstances. The collective’s
domestic and international commercial success has been a catalyst for the redefinition of *mineiro*
identity around key themes expressed in the music, including fraternity, collaboration, and the
resignification of a marginalized regional minority as a world citizen. Despite the popularity of
other styles in Minas Gerais, such as *música romântica* [romantic pop or light rock music, such
as top-selling artist Roberto Carlos], *música sertaneja* [country music], rock, metal, *choro*, and
samba, the music of Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina has been actively consecrated as an index of state pride.

Members of the Clube da Esquina are quick to blame the dearth of Portuguese- and English-language musical biography and scholarship about Nascimento’s music on regional prejudice. Wagner Tiso suggests that a mythology arose surrounding Milton Nascimento in the 1970s when he joined Tiso’s band Som Imaginário. Contemporary journalism linked Nascimento’s personal decision to disengage with media to mineiro stereotypes of conservatism and reticence. On the other hand, the collective is just as quick to claim reticence as a primary mineiro characteristic, including a widespread tendency against engagement in marketing and self-promotion. In an interview with local television host Daniella Zupo in Belo Horizonte, Toninho Horta poked fun at himself for never having been a rei de marketing [king of marketing], and when I interviewed him, he blamed it on what he saw as a widespread mineiro habit of keeping one’s projects “close to the chest” (Horta 2012). His self-deprecat ing attitude, however, did not stop him from agreeing with Zupo’s assertion that the Clube da Esquina was worthy of wider recognition. Likewise, Ronaldo Bastos has said, “the Clube da Esquina was never forgiven for not having surrendered to the ‘media’” (Estanislau 2008, 54). When Clube da Esquina was released, Nascimento’s well-known distaste for interviews resulted in the newspaper Estado de Minas describing him as a “sphinx, enigmatic, introverted—the artist that only speaks through his music” (Estanislau 2008, 27).

Later chapters focus on the fact that the most active years of musical production from the Clube da Esquina coincided with the rise and the fall of the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-85). I analyze the experiences of Milton Nascimento and his collaborators with state censorship

25 “O Clube da Esquina nunca foi perdoado por não ter feito média com a ‘média.’”
26 “Milton Nascimento—esfinge, enigmático, introvertido—o artista que só fala através de sua música.”
in order to tease out strategies of coping with intense repression, including the preference for fraternity and cohesiveness. No English-language publication has discussed in detail the censorship of the albums *Milagre dos Peixes* [Miracle of the Fishes] (EMI-Odeon 1973) and *Milagre dos Peixes ao vivo* [Miracle of the Fishes Live] (EMI-Odeon 1974), while the few Portuguese-language publications that do mention them, do not sufficiently analyze the sound of the music on these records and how it might contribute to its meaning. Each recording was a response to state censorship, and, to different extents, utilized wordless melodies, strident timbres, dense textures, and experimental form and instrumentation in order to express dissent. The popular success of both albums demonstrates the power of sonic components, and not lyrics alone, in communicating resistance. The frequent use of multiple and overlapping voices, male choruses, and thick textures on these albums also reinforced the importance of a collective response to political problems.

A final theme that pervades each chapter is listening. In his introduction to *Performing Rites*, Simon Frith described his frustration at being unable to convince dear friends to understand his affinity for the British pop group, the Pet Shop Boys. He observed that as fans of music, our persuasive energies are focused on “getting people to listen the right way […] about ways of listening, about ways of hearing, about ways of being.” The introduction and conclusion of the dissertation include my own particular way of listening to Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina as points of departure and arrival. The chapters in between look at listening from various vantage points. In their formative years, for example, the members of the Clube da Esquina cite listening to music as one of the major activities that bound them together. Later, the act of listening became a form of political resistance when audiences chose to listen to albums and performances by artists subjected to censorship. That censorship, in turn, caused Nascimento to
alter his performative strategies by adopting wordless singing, thereby challenging his audiences to listen in new ways. Finally, as an ethnographer, I challenge readers to try a type of deep listening drawn from the sphere of audio engineering in order to consider Nascimento’s musical influences and compositional style in new ways.

This dissertation is organized into three major sections in two-chapter pairs. While Chapter One introduces the overall topic at hand, Chapter Two introduces the theme of fraternity in the social lives and music of Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina. I position Milton Nascimento as an orchestrator of musical fraternity by analyzing his preference for collaborative musical production in the studio recording of the double album *Clube da Esquina* (EMI-Odeon 1972). The collective’s rehearsals, in-studio jamming and arranging, collaborative composition, and interchangeable musical roles all contributed to the album’s distinct sound. Furthermore, I explore how market forces—specifically record labels and copyright—and Nascimento’s own ambitions for new collaborative relationships both stimulated and hampered collaborative activities throughout various points in the CdEs trajectory.

Chapters Three and Four analyze collectivity in two spaces: the yin of collective labor and the bucolic countryside in the *mineiro* interior and the yang of the urban street corner. Nascimento’s sixth and seventh albums *Minas* and *Geraes* (EMI-Odeon 1975 and 1976) explore *mineiro* identity through the two lenses of urbanity and rusticity, respectively, and my arguments use these albums as a jumping off point. Chapter Three explores Yano’s rusticity in the context of large waves of rural-to-urban migration within and beyond Minas Gerais in the 1950s and 60s. Nascimento’s music draws upon *música sertaneja raiz*—classic country, also called *música caipira*—, a style that has traditionally drawn scorn from upper middle-class and elite music-

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27 *Música sertaneja raiz* [literally, roots country music] is a politically correct term for *música caipira* [literally, hillbilly or hick music] that came about in the 1980s, when electric *sertaneja* became widely commercialized.
lovers, and his earnest performances of songs like “Cio da Terra [Heat of the Earth]” show pride and respect for mineiro agricultural workers and the rustic lifeways that permeate the state. Meanwhile, songs by CdE collaborators Beto Guedes and Toninho Horta use nature and mountainous landscapes in their music to signify self-discovery, intimacy, and spirituality—the thoroughly bucolic experience of middle-class urban-dwellers.

Chapter Four takes the city as a central theme in the music of the Clube da Esquina by weaving together personal accounts of urban life in Belo Horizonte and the significance of the esquina [corner] as a key meeting place in mineiro social life. The chapter introduces the cinema as a central belorizontino social space and a key influence on Nascimento’s compositional style. Here, I introduce sonic field analysis, a tool for analyzing how scale, texture, orchestration, and audio engineering actively shape musical meaning.

Chapters Five and Six take collectivity as a political position by exploring Milton Nascimento’s responses to the censorship of recordings and live performances in 1973 and 1974—the peak of the dictatorship’s anos de chumbo [leaden years]. Despite immense pressure from government censors and record label executives, Nascimento and his collaborators chose to release the largely wordless album Milagre dos Peixes in 1973, and sonic field analysis helps to show how its vocal-percussive fusions, audio mixing techniques, and dense textures constructed a posture of political dissent. Though Nascimento adapted to and thrived despite censorship, many niche artists could not. Chapter Five includes the story of Clube da Esquina collaborator Sirlan Antônio de Jesus, whose career ultimately succumbed to state censorship.

Chapter Six analyzes how the double album Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo—recorded live with the Orquestra Sinfônica do Rio de Janeiro (EMI-Odeon 1974)—presents its contestatory stance through the careful interplay between critical songs, pop song covers, and the landmark
use of a psychedelic rock band beside a symphony orchestra. By combining countercultural sound connotations with those of an upper-class Brazilian institution—the symphony orchestra—Ao Vivo aimed to construct an attitude of dissent that would be palatable far beyond student intellectuals to reach the middle classes and conservative elite. The chapter opens with an analysis of Nascimento’s participation in a live performance marking the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose clandestine live recording was prohibited from release until the abertura [political opening] in 1979, and re-released in 2015.
CHAPTER 2


“Music brings [people] together. Bituca, to me, is like music, because he brings [people] together. I have never seen Bituca divide [people]. He might step away from something that he doesn’t like, but he is incapable of dividing [people]. Now we’ve reached the point of our conversation. This is the essence of the Nascimentian spirit: to unite. His very silence, his very attitude unites [people]” ~ Nelson Ângelo on Milton Nascimento (Amaral 2013, 307).

Introduction: “Neste clube a gente sozinha se vê [In this clube, we alone see ourselves]”

Among Nascimento’s profound musical talents as a composer, vocalist, guitarist, and performer, is perhaps his greatest talent as an orchestrator of musical fraternity. By this I mean that he has an extraordinary ability to seek out, stimulate, and foster musical collaboration. Music is, by nature, a highly collaborative endeavor, but this case is noteworthy for several reasons. First, audiences have identified fraternity as one of the collective’s most powerful lyrical themes, but also a powerful creative theme—their music was composed, recorded, produced, and performed in intensive collaboration. Second, this ethos of fraternity has inspired the adoption of similar models by contemporary songwriters in order to overcome market challenges in Belo Horizonte. The objective of this chapter, then, is to elucidate the dynamics of the collaborative process that resulted in the album Clube da Esquina (and other albums), and that has led to the cluster of significances surrounding the moniker. The Clube da Esquina was not a band. Rather, the term has come to mean a collective of collaborating artists—composers,

28 Bituca is Milton Nascimento’s nickname from childhood. According to Nascimento’s sister Elisabeth, he belonged to a study group in school called Botocudo, after the name Portuguese colonizers gave to various indigenous groups in Bahia, Espírito Santa, and Minas Gerais that wore large disks embedded in the lower lip. The nickname morphed into what was deemed (apparently) more affectionate: Bituca [cigarette butt].

29 “A música é agregadora. O Bituca, pra mim, é música, porque ele é agregador. Eu nunca vi o Bituca desagregar. Ele até sai de perto de uma coisa que ele não gosta, mas é incapaz de desagregar. Nós agora chegamos no ponto da nossa conversa. Essa é a essência da alma nascimentiana: agregar. O simples silêncio dele, a simples atitude dele agrega.” Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author’s.
performers, arrangers, lyricists, producers—as well as a distinct “sound” or style of MPB (
*música popular brasileira*), and, some would argue, a musical movement.

The Clube da Esquina’s output throughout the 1970s saw many groundbreaking achievements. Some were artistic: the distinct blend between regional *mineiro* instrumental and song styles with jazz, rock, and film music; the sharing of performing roles and lyrical duties within the collective; a peculiar approach to timbre and texture. Others were commercial: the release of the first studio double album in Brazil; the crediting of composer Lô Borges (then totally unknown) alongside a seasoned pro; the financial investment by the record company Odeon to allow an unfettered collaborative process to unfold in the studio. Still other achievements were aesthetic: record production as a fraternal endeavor; a recognizable “sound” within MPB emulated by succeeding generations. Though the Clube da Esquina is defined by these negotiations of artistic, commercial, and aesthetic production, the trajectory of the collective was also profoundly shaped by limits upon their collaboration. Other authors have fallen into the trap of describing the process of collaboration among the collective in utopian terms (Viveiros Martins 2009), but in reality, some of their limits can be traced to divergent goals, differing tastes, overlapping generations within the collective, and market constrictions (Diniz 2012).

Another challenge in writing about the Clube da Esquina is to separate the investigation into the collective’s constructed ethos of fraternity from the investigation into performative acts of collaboration. The difficulty here is that the concepts are interconnected: the former—the construction of a fraternal relationship in life and in music—means how fraternity was *imagined* by the Clube da Esquina, which I investigate through the analysis of song lyrics, album packaging, press releases, and interviews. The latter—performative acts of collaboration—means
what fraternity looked like in practice, such as the rehearsal process, how collaborators were
selected for recording projects, how creative and commercial decisions were made, how
resources were shared, and how well (or poorly) friendships survived this process. Fraternal
musical interactions need not be a part of creating music that “sounds” fraternal or that “means”
fraternity to listeners. Conversely, musicians who are the best of friends may not produce music
that speaks about friendship, or produce music in a participatory or egalitarian manner. In the
case of the Clube da Esquina, fraternity was both consciously constructed in the music and
purposefully enacted during its creation and in the musicians’ social lives generally. It would be
difficult, indeed, for the everyday social interactions to live up to the striven-for ideal expressed
in the music, especially as the image of a fraternal collective became valued by fans and linked
to the socio-political overtones of the 1970s. Recordings are painstakingly crafted digital
archives, while human musical relationships are far messier affairs, subject to feelings of doubt,
jealousy, betrayal, and estrangement, alongside trust, gratitude, respect, and admiration. There is
no denying Nascimento’s status as an international superstar in comparison to his compatriots
and his desire to collaborate with an ever-widening net of musicians as well as Nascimento’s
dominance within the recording industry led to chinks within the collective’s fraternal ideology.
The final section of this chapter, therefore, delves into some of the tensions that arose among the
Clube da Esquina as well as the economic and commercial obstacles that made collective work
challenging.

This chapter focuses on the album *Clube da Esquina*, co-credited to Milton Nascimento
and Lô Borges, (EMI-Odeon 1972) as well as the first solo projects of Lô Borges, Beto Guedes,
and Toninho Horta, which largely consisted of other permutations of the same musicians and
lyricists. Other scholarship tends to focus only on Nascimento’s recorded work, and this is not
surprising, since he is the axis around which creative activity revolves in the CdE. Fans often consider the stunning recordings Minas (EMI-Odeon 1975), Geraes (EMI-Odeon 1976), and Clube da Esquina 2 (EMI-Odeon 1978), alongside the original double album, as the CdE’s official collected works—with Minas and Geraes most often indicated as favorites by the most devoted fans. Though this chapter doesn’t allow time to delve into these other works, subsequent chapters will touch on them. Rather, I wish to show here how the collective’s collaborative ethos clearly extended into the solo recorded work of Guedes, Horta and Borges, even if Nascimento’s own participation was minimal. Contemporary audiences and cover bands routinely refer to individual tracks from these other albums as making up the core repertoire of the CdE. In fact, the repertoire of the Clube da Esquina as a collective is so extensive that fans tend to identify with particular CdE collaborators over others, so that two fans can have different ideas of which CdE repertoire is essential, and even whose sound is the quintessential CdE “sound.”


The central figure of the Clube da Esquina is undeniably Milton Nascimento. Nascimento is a composer of rare imagination in every aspect—melodically, rhythmically, harmonically, texturally, and when he chooses to write words himself, lyrically. But one of his most-underrated skills is as an orchestrator of musical fraternity. Not only does Nascimento tend toward collaboration, but his specificity about with whom he collaborates is key to the variety of styles, yet coherence of expression, that his music displays. It is tempting to look at Milton Nascimento’s decades of popular acclaim and conclude that his success was inevitable. Success in the music industry, however, is never inevitable. Broad popular success as a musician is most often due to many years of persistent activity as well as the artist’s ability to adapt to market conditions.
Like so many musicians, Nascimento spent his teens playing bailes [dances], parties, and other social functions in his rural hometown of Três Pontas, in south-central Minas Gerais state. At the age of 15, Nascimento worked as a DJ for Rádio ZYV36 in Três Pontas, where his father was a director, and his programs featured a broad mix of Brazilian and American music, and, on alternating days, music from France, Italy, Spain, and Latin America (Amaral 2013, 34). By age 17, Nascimento had already performed in three bands, all of which covered a large variety of domestic and international pop music of the era, including the songs of Tin Pan Alley and American cinema, bolero, and samba. The success of early tours in southern Minas Gerais led to an invitation for childhood friend and pianist Wagner Tiso and Nascimento to perform in Belo Horizonte with composer Pacífico Mascarenhas’s vocal group Evolussamba. At 20 years old, the two friends settled permanently in the capital city, also performing together in the Berimbau Trio (the house band of the club Berimbau) specializing in bossa nova, jazz, and regional styles. These early experiences—of both consistent activity and adaptation to market conditions—prepared Nascimento to be a confident stage performer as well as a budding composer armed with a repertoire of original material.

One of the strongest influences on the music industry and on the course of Brazilian popular music, especially MPB, were the televised song festivals from 1965 to 1972. Sean Stroud’s article “É para o povo cantar [So that the people can sing]” details quite succinctly the power dynamics involved in the festivals: the explosion and steady nationalization of the television industry, the growth of record labels and their alliance with TV producers, the dictatorship’s desire to control content, and the audience’s desire to express socio-political ideals through musical style. The tension between these forces stimulated artists to great heights of creativity, but often within quite narrow and prescriptive aesthetics. In terms of musical style,
musicologist Sean Stroud concluded that, “the festivals not only provided yearly evidence of the fragmentation of MPB into various splinter groups, such as iê-iê-iê, Tropicália, protest song, and the like, but they also accelerated a process of fragmentation, particularly in 1967 and 1968” (Stroud 2000, 111).

Though Nascimento’s appearance at the 1967 Festival Internacional da Canção is often thought of as his debut on the national stage, his debut as a singer came in June of 1966 at the II Festival de MBP in São Paulo. There, Baden Powell invited Nascimento to perform Powell’s composition “Cidade Vazia [Empty City],” with lyrics by Lulu Freire. The song placed fourth overall, and with his newfound confidence and accolades for his abilities, Nascimento moved to São Paulo. Though he found some work as a singer, guitarist, or upright bassist, Nascimento regarded the move as a failure. He had thought the festival competition would open up new opportunities, but he was overwhelmed by the fierce competition of the nightclub circuit. In 1967, Nascimento’s mentor, the singer Agostinho dos Santos, entered three of Nascimento’s compositions into the second Festival Internacional da Canção in Rio de Janeiro, and “Travessia [Journey],” with lyrics by Fernando Brant, was voted second place for Best Song. Thrust upon the national stage once again, Milton Nascimento appeared, at least to audiences, to be an overnight success, and journalists described him as one of the fresh, new talents of the festival (de Mello 2003, 235). He followed up on the momentum of the festival by releasing his self-titled debut album with the short-lived record label Codil, earning him such characterizations as “conservative,” “traditional,” and “serious.” His repertoire came to be categorized as toada moderna (“A voz da esfinge” 1972)—a label perhaps meant to specify narrative song with roots
in *caipira* guitar and vocal styles of southern Minas Gerais (*toada*) fused with modern elements, such as bossa nova.\(^{30}\)

Despite poor sales of *Milton Nascimento*, record labels were optimistic about Nascimento’s potential, and, between the United States and Brazil, he averaged the release of one album per year for the next decade. The first four albums sold only modestly, which may have been due to Nascimento’s decisive turn away from song festival competitions. In 1968, “Sentinela [Sentinel],” with lyrics by Fernando Brant, was selected as one of twelve finalists for TV Record’s IV Festival de MPB. Unfortunately, the festival was marred by vehement booing with some factions supporting Roberto Carlos, others the various Tropicalistas (Os Mutantes, Tom Zé, and Gal Costa), and still others supporting Chico Buarque. Under pressure to satisfy audiences, two judges gave the somber “Sentinela” zero marks out of ten in order to guarantee, some have argued, its disqualification (Vilara 2006, 68; de Mello 2003, 328). As a result, Nascimento chose to tour relentlessly throughout the late 1960s as an opening act for Marcos Valle, among others, as well as touring as a solo act for shows sponsored by anti-dictatorship student organizations (see Chapter 6). In this way, Nascimento developed a reputation of solidarity among student protestors and clandestine operatives—even if these masses of fans could not always afford to buy his records. As lyricist Márcio Borges pointed out:

…at a time in which people were nearly all exiled or self-exiled, Nascimento’s shows were very important to the *movimento estudantil* [student resistance movements]. They were a conduit for communication, opening up the floodgates and collective emotion (Vilara 2006, 120).\(^{31}\)

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\(^{30}\) Notably, *toada moderna* fell out of use just a few years later, and I have never heard any member of the Clube da Esquina describe a particular song as a *toada*. Anthropologist and folklorist Luís da Câmara Cascudo defines *toada* as “Tune, song, ditty; [Cantiga, canção, cantilena],” before describing a broad range of definitions from other researchers (Cascudo 2012, 688). McGowan and Pessanha have paraphrased Milton Nascimento describing the *toada* as “a short stanza-and-refrain song, usually with a sentimental melody and narrative lyrics,” which varies by region (McGowan and Pessanha 1991, 113).

\(^{31}\) “…na época em que o pessoal estava quase todo exilado e auto-exilado, os shows do Nascimento eram muito importantes para o movimento estudantil. Eram um canal de comunicação, extravasamento e emoção coletiva.”
By 1970, pianist Wagner Tiso founded the band Som Imaginário specifically to accompany Nascimento, and the resulting music blossomed with a boisterous countercultural attitude. During an 8-month run in various theaters in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Milton Nascimento and Som Imaginário reveled in electrified jazz and progressive rock experimentations within their own songs as well as Nascimento’s original repertoire. Though critics did not appreciate Nascimento’s new “Black Power” hairstyle and the abandonment of a suit and tie for shirtless vests and bare feet, they continued to find merit in his voice and compositions. His 1970 album *Nascimento*, featuring Som Imaginário, Lô Borges, Toninho Horta, and Naná Vasconcelos, sold more than 5,000 copies (“Espetáculos: A nova travessia” 1970; “A voz da esfinge” 1972).

Milton Nascimento was not an overnight success, but, rather, a diligent and dedicated artist. Nascimento’s many years of persistent action on stage and in the recording studio built undeniable fan loyalty. He also adapted to market conditions, specifically the growing popularity of psychedelic rock and jazz fusion of the 1970s. Nascimento turned to trusted childhood friend Wagner Tiso and new friend percussionist Naná Vasconcelos to help reinvent his sound, and to Belo Horizonte collaborators Lô Borges, Beto Guedes, and Toninho Horta to contribute their own pop- and jazz-oriented songwriting to his overall sound.

**Clube da Esquina: Recording Studio and Collaboration**

The economic and social conditions surrounding the recording of *Clube da Esquina* facilitated intensive collaboration. In 1971, Milton Nascimento entered into talks with Odeon for a third album with the record label, his fifth recording overall. From the beginning, the project was a collective effort. Most collaborators were friends from his years in Belo Horizonte, while others had been members of Som Imaginário or played the club circuit in Rio de Janeiro. The collective included four composers and three lyricists at its core (along with many other
contributors), and as they wrote, it became apparent that they were capable of producing material of both high quality and great variety. Before the recording session in Rio de Janeiro, Nascimento gathered together Lô Borges (composer/guitarist), Beto Guedes (composer/guitarist), Nelson Ângelo (composer/guitarist), and Rubinho (drummer) from Belo Horizonte, as well as Ronaldo Bastos (lyricist/producer) from Niterói and Robertinho Silva (drummer) and Luís Alves (bassist) from Rio de Janeiro for a month of rehearsals at a beach house in Piratininga, Niterói.

Stemming from his tendency to oversee activities at the beach house, lyricist Ronaldo Bastos became an unofficial producer for Clube da Esquina. Nascimento’s previous three domestic records had sold poorly, between two and three thousand copies each when the sale of ten thousand copies was considered a success. Bastos’s role in the making of Clube da Esquina was critical, since he helped to persuade the record label to allow the unprecedented recording of a double album (Museu CdE, Toninho Horta). Bands such as The Byrds, Bob Dylan, and The Rolling Stones had all released double albums by 1972, but none had been attempted in Brazil. Odeon not only agreed to fund a double album, but they also agreed to double bill the album; it is credited to Milton Nascimento and then 19-year-old Lô Borges. Odeon gave Nascimento and his collaborators several weeks to record the album with near free reign of the studio from morning to evening.

Despite the intensive rehearsal period in Niterói, only a few arrangements were ready before the recording sessions began. The studio, therefore, became a musical laboratory; arrangements—introns, endings, musical form, and instrumentation—were made during lengthy sound checks in the studio, and often to the bemusement of the audio engineers. Ronaldo Bastos

32 Although Gal Costa technically released the first double album in Brazil in 1971—Fa-tal - Gal a todo vapor by Phillips—it was comprised of live recordings from a series of concerts, rather than studio recordings.
relayed an anecdote that recording engineer Nivaldo Duarte used to tell about recording the collective:

We arrived, this gang of long-hairs, sat down and started rehearsing—because at that time there weren’t many tracks, there wasn’t this thing of sixteen tracks, so you had to record nearly everything at the same time and afterwards add the tracks together. And while you played, this guy started to understand what it was that would happen and started to mic [the instruments]. The guys would play for hours—the record labels at that time had studios. So Ornelas [Duarte] would say, ‘Good, okay. Now everything is ready. I set up the microphones—let’s record!’ And the guys would say to him, ‘No, but we’re not recording this song now. We were just composing this song. We’re recording a different song.’ From this story, you can see the atmosphere of the Clube da Esquina recording sessions (Museu CdeE, Bastos).33

Performer-composer Sirlan credits this fertile (if frustrating) atmosphere to Odeon’s artistic director Milton Miranda and executive producer Adail Lessa (Mendes 2012). Miranda’s philosophy was to use proceeds from the most popular artists on the label—such as drummer Nascimento Banana and singers Clara Nunes and Pery Ribeiro—to invest in up-and-coming or niche artists like Milton Nascimento and Egberto Gismonti (Insituto Cultural Cravo Albin, “Milton Miranda”). Composer-performer Sirlan told me in an interview what it was like to work with Milton Miranda:

He was a man of impressive sensibility and he had this spirit. He would say to us, ‘No, do what you like to do. Don’t worry. We have people that sell, don’t worry. Register this project.’ And he would come to the studio to see us record, to follow along with us, giving support, you know? The president, the guy that was in charge, came and embraced you, teased one, joked with another, to give you support and to put you at ease (de Jesus 2012).34

The investment from the record label meant that the conditions for recording—and especially for collaborative songwriting—were optimal. The studio became an experimental space where songwriting, arranging, and orchestration often occurred on-site. While this enabled musicians to

33 “A gente chegava, aquele bando de cabeludo, sentava e ficava ensaiando – porque naquela época não tinha muito canal, não tinha esse negócio de 16 canais, então você tinha que gravar quase tudo ao mesmo tempo e depois somar os canais. E enquanto você tocava, o cara começava a entender o que é que ia acontecer e começava a microfonar. Os caras ficavam tocando horas – as gravadoras naquele tempo tinham estúdio. Aí o Nivaldo Duarte dizia: ‘Bom, então tá. Agora tudo pronto, já microfonei, vamos gravar’, e o pessoal dizia pra ele assim: ‘Não, mas não é essa música que a gente vai gravar não; a gente estava aqui só compondo essa música. A gente vai gravar outra música’—por essa história, dá pra ver o ambiente da gravação do Clube da Esquina…”

34 “Era um cara de uma sensibilidade impressionante e tinha esse espírito. Dizia pra gente, ‘Não, faz o que cês gostam de fazer. Preocupa não. Quem tem, vende. Não preocupa. Registra a obra dessa. E ia no estúdio ver a gente gravar, acompanhar, dando força, entendeu? O presidente, o cara que mandava ia lá e te abraçar, encher com um, brinar com o outro, pra dar aquele apoio e te deixar a vontade.”
feel at ease and spontaneous, it also meant that the recording engineers had ample time to set up around the musicians, to understand how arrangements would unfold, and to tweak levels and equalization before any recording began.

With some groups this open format could have proved disastrous, but the Clube da Esquina collaborators had great rapport and trust. After all, in high school, Nascimento had already lived with childhood friend and pianist Wagner Tiso’s family in order to attend a better school in a different town. Upon arriving in Belo Horizonte in 1963, Nascimento spent so much time at the Borges residence that the family of eleven children began to call Nascimento the twelfth son. This type of open, communal support may not have been unique behavior in Belo Horizonte, or Brazil generally; many children lived with their parents until marriage, or if they attended university, they often lived with relatives or friends of the family. Nascimento’s experiences still reveal, however, that social relations among members of the Clube da Esquina were particularly close knit. Even before the month-long rehearsals at the beach house, many of the preparations for *Clube da Esquina* took place in Belo Horizonte. Guitarist Nelson Ângelo explained that formal rehearsals were only a part of the collaborative process:

So, what you could call rehearsals were very much our coexistence, since the albums always received everyone’s support. Our lyricist friends always participated a lot in the production […] on every album that would be recorded. […] We had many meetings: various Bigodoaldos, various Maletas [meetings held at bars and restaurants] […] We met and said, ‘So this song will be like this, it will open and so on…’ Then Nascimento would say, ‘No, let’s see if we can get a choir singing something there.’ Then someone else, ‘Let’s splice this song with that other one.’ And the time passed… (Ângelo 2012).

Fraternity was more than an ethos, but was actively constructed through collaboration and socialization, and the belief in mutual support extended to other areas of their lives as well. At least three different members of the Clube da Esquina have revealed through books and interviews extraordinary acts of friendship and loyalty when they concealed clandestine operatives in their homes during the dictatorship (Borges 2011, 119; Antunes 2007; Tiso 2012).

**Clube da Esquina: Musical Collaboration**
The collaborative process helped to generate numerous sonic innovations on *Clube da Esquina*. Nascimento selected musicians that grew up with the sounds of Minas Gerais, but who also had other interests, such as jazz, progressive rock, and film music. He also invited two of Wagner Tiso’s friends from his years playing in samba-jazz trios in Rio de Janeiro and who had already appeared on *Nascimento* (EMI-Odeon 1970), drummer Robertinho Silva and bassist Luiz Alves. Robertinho spoke fondly of his experience as a stranger among the *mineiros*:

I remember that the first time that I played with Nascimento, I played for nearly a week without sitting down at the drum set. Because I listened to a lot of bossa nova, I listened to a lot of jazz, I listened to instrumental Brazilian music, that came from the 1950s. So, music from Minas was music that took me by surprise. I thought, ‘*Caramba*, what different and beautiful music!’ And they gave me a lot of creative liberty. No one imposed anything (Museu CdE, Robertinho Silva). 35

Two ideas from this are important. First, for this drummer from Rio, music from Minas Gerais was markedly different from his own experience. Despite radio, recordings, and national touring circuits, some regional musical styles still remained quite geographically bounded at this time.

After all, Marcus Pereira’s *Música Popular do Brasil* series—collections of ethnographic recordings of regional popular and folk musics—were first distributed in 1973 (Stroud 2008, 143). Second, though the Clube da Esquina used regional musical styles from Minas Gerais, they were open-minded about who interpreted them and how. For Robertinho, the creative liberty he mentions resulted in a sound that was dominated by percussion instruments and a hybrid approach to the drum set—quite different from the set patterns of bossa nova or jazz, but also not exact reproductions of *mineiro* music. Both factors had a profound impact on the overall sound of the album.

35 “Eu lembro que a primeira vez que eu toquei com o Nascimento, fiquei quase uma semana sem sentar na bateria. Porque eu ouvia muita bossa nova, ouvia muito jazz, ouvia música instrumental brasileira, que vinha já dos anos 50. Então a música mineira foi uma música que me pegou de surpresa. Falei assim: “*Caramba*, que música diferente e bonita!” E eles me davam muita liberdade de criação. Ninguém impunha nada.”
The opening track “Tudo que você podia ser [Everything that you could be]” illustrates this quite well (Hear Clube da Esquina, Track 1). The song is written by brothers Borges and Márcio Borges, whose work is often praised for its pop and rock influences, particularly the Beatles. The song is just three minutes long, and the percussion enters only at the close of the second verse (0:50). First, the hi-hat enters at right, quickly followed by a shaker at left, then congas at far right (1:12), and the rest of the drum set is mixed tightly together just right of center. Finally, the bass enters at the midpoint of the track (1:23).

In April 1972, Walter Silva of the Folha de São Paulo published a lengthy rant against the poor quality of rock and pop being imported into Brazil and concluded:

Take the example of [Gilberto] Gil and Milton Nascimento, who threw away all of their true popular culture, to assume a fake, imported culture (Silva 1972).

Juxtaposing this track and that quote, one can observe just how strongly the ideology of musical nationalism raged from the mid-1960s well into the 1970s, yet it seems to have raged with an extraordinary deafness. To my ears, this track is a mature fusion of regional, national, and international influences, each respected in equal measure as valid cultural expressions. Certainly, that is easy to say in hindsight, and even easier for American ears raised on the classic rock of the 1960s and 70s, but it does show the type of conservative ears that were writing about popular music in the era. One of the qualities that shows it is not merely derivative of international pop and rock is the centrality of guitars as the foundation of the groove. American rock, in particular, often uses the drum set and bass to dictate the backbeat groove that characterizes the genre. But here, the rhythmic foundation is firmly determined by the guitars, while the percussion, drums, and bass reinforce or elaborate that groove, not surprising from a region of Brazil that is widely

36 Nascimento’s audio and video archives are all freely accessible at http://www.jobim.org/Nascimento/. To stream “Tudo que você podia ser,” click Audio & Video, then View List, then select the album Clube da Esquina, and choose Track 1.

37 “Vejam o exemplo de Gil e Milton Nascimento, que jogaram fora toda a sua cultura popular verdadeira, para assumir uma cultura postiça, importada.”
admired for its Iberian-descended guitar traditions. When the drums and percussion do reinforce the groove, which is only during the choruses, the audio engineer emphasizes the shaker, rather than the drum set, as the most important element. This is Mineiro rock, with a capital M, not Brazilianized American music.

*Clube da Esquina* is notable as much for its egalitarian delineation of musical roles as for its distribution of compositions—Nascimento and Borges composing twelve and eight songs, respectively, while each of the three lyricists Márcio Borges, Fernando Brant, and Ronaldo Bastos contributed six songs. Historian Luiz Henrique Assis Garcia has stated that:

> The alternation of songwriting partnerships, almost always in pairs, produced a variety of styles and forms, but simultaneously ensured a coherence in the diversity, principally after the studio production of the tracks (Assis Garcia 2000, 29).³⁸

The execution of these songs also shows how performers fulfilled musical roles based on what was needed, rather than what was their main instrument. Performer-composer Beto Guedes has released twelve solo albums and—though he is greatly admired today for his romantic and optimistic pop sound—his first two albums fused a harder-edged progressive rock with influences from his hometown of Montes Claros in northern Minas Gerais, where his father was a composer and clarinetist of *choro* and *serenata*. Due to this early exposure to multiple instruments and then his later obsession with the Beatles, Guedes became a multi-instrumentalist with a peculiar sound of his own.

As one can see from the highlighted boxes in Figure 2.1, guitarist Beto Guedes split his time between lead voice (*voc*), backing voice (*coro*), electric guitar (*guitarra*), bass (*baixo*), and even percussion (*percussão*) on *Clube da Esquina*. Of the 10 musicians on the album, six of them are guitarists, but since all of them play multiple instruments in a huge range of styles,

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³⁸ “A alternância de parcerias, quase sempre em duplas, produziu uma variedade de estilos e formas, mas implicou, simultaneamente, na coerentização da diversidade, principalmente após a produção das gravações em estúdio.”
trading roles allowed each one’s individual tastes and talents to be used at the opportune moment. Though Nascimento has long incorporated electric guitar in his music, he rarely plays it himself, and the album benefits from Guedes’s passion for progressive rock. The song “Pelo amor de deus [For the Love of God]” begins as a gentle samba with acoustic guitar and surdo (large bass drum), interrupted by a militaristic snare drum (Hear Clube da Esquina, Track 17). Guedes’s distorted electric guitar in dialogue with Wagner Tiso’s electric Rhodes transforms this samba into a lumbering, hallucinatory expression of outrage. With lyrics by Fernando Brant, the song speaks sarcastically of moments in life that drive you to the brink, such as the image of a rat loose among a collection of sentimental family photos—spine-tingling.

| 1972 [Milton Miranda] |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Tudo que você podia ser | Milton           | Lô              | Tawito e Toni  | Wagner           | Milton           | Beto            | Robertinho      |
| Calis                  | Milton           | Milton           | Wagner           | Luiz Alves       | Robertinho      |      |      |
| Trêm azul              | Lô               | Beto, Lô e Toni  | Lô e Toninho     | Wagner           | Beto            | Robertinho      |
| Salidas e bandeiras No. 1 | Milton e Beto     | Milton           | Nelson Ângelo    | Beto            | Luiz Alves      | Lô e Toninho    |
| Nuvem ciganas          | Milton           | Lô e Beto        | Milton           | Beto            | Luiz Alves      | Lô e Toninho    |
| Caio e canela          | Milton e Lô      | Toninho           | Tawito          | Wagner           | Luiz Alves      | Beto            |
| Dos Cruces             | Milton           | O Povo           | Tawito e Mil    | Beto            | Wagner           | Robertinho      |
| Umgrassol da cor de seu | Lô               | Beto, Lô e Toni  | Tawito e Nels   | Wagner           | Lô              | Beto            |
| San Vicente            | Milton           | Tawito           | Lô              | Wagner           | Beto            | Luiz Alves      |
| Estrelas               | Lô               | Wagner, Beto     | Lô              |                  | Beto            | Luiz Alves      |
| Clube da Esquina No. 2 | Milton           | Milton           | Lô e Nelson Ângelo | Luiz Alves | Robertinho |
| Pulsagem da Janela      | Lô               | Beto e Milton    | Nelson Ângelo    | Lô              | Beto            | Luiz Alves      |
| Me Deixa em paz        | Milton e Aladine Costa | Milton       | Wagner           | Luiz Alves       | Nelson Ângelo, Lô, Beto e |
| Os Povos               | Milton           | Milton           | Nelson Ângelo    | Luiz Alves       | Robertinho      | Tawito          |
| Salidas e bandeiras No. 2 | Milton e Beto     | Milton           | Nelson Ângelo    | Beto            | Luiz Alves      | Lô e Toninho    |
| Um Gosto de sol        | Milton           |                  |                  | Milton           |                  |                 |
| Pelo amor de Deus      | Milton           | Lô               | Milton           | Beto            | Nelson Ângelo, Luiz Alves | Robertinho |
| Ulla                   | Milton           | Milton           | Tawito           | Wagner           | Luiz Alves       | Beto, Toninho   |
| Trêm do doido          | Lô               | Lô, Beto e Milton | Milton           | Beto            | Wagner           | Toninho         |
| Nada será como antes   | Milton e Beto     | Milton           | Seto             | Wagner           | Toninho         | Robertinho      |
| Ao que val saucer       | Milton e Beto     | Milton           | Seto             | Wagner           | Luiz Alves      | Robertinho      |

Figure 2.1 Table showing the roles of each artist on Clube da Esquina. Squares in light blue show the involvement of Beto Guedes with five different musical roles.

Part of Clube da Esquina’s distinctive sound comes from Nascimento’s conscientious homage to Iberian and Latin American song styles. Nascimento knew it would be possible to portray the styles represented in the songs “Dos Cruces [The Crosses]” and “San Vicente” because of his extensive jam sessions with musicians in Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro.
Saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas, who would play on Nascimento’s 1973 album Milagre dos Peixes, told me in an interview that his house became a gathering place for Nascimento and friends to listen to records on his stereo:

“It was an event to listen to something. We listened to a lot of Spanish music, me and Nascimento… We spent hours improvising Spanish music. Then, we got hold of a disc by Manitas de Plata and Manolo Labrador [flamenco guitarists], and we spent hours improvising with Spanish folkloric music (Ornelas 2012).”

So, just as with jazz, pop, and rock, this reinforces the idea that for those who rehearsed and performed with Nascimento, incorporating influences was less about static imitation and much more about fluid reconstruction. In remembering his collaboration with Nascimento in the Berimbau Quartet—the house band, which also included Wagner Tiso and Paulo Braga, of the short-lived club Berimbau in the Maletta Building in Belo Horizonte—Ornelas spoke to author Chico Amaral about the great trust he and Nascimento had developed together as improvisers:

“It’s a shame that the best things I did with Bituca were never recorded; they were live. Bituca would smile that half-smile of his, sideways; it looks like he isn’t liking it, but he is. When he did that stuff: pááá [Singing]—he would turn towards me…[Laughs] […] We did those interminable fade-outs: pááráá [Singing a motive], and me: pááráá [Singing a response]. It was really great, really in the moment, right, Chico? (Amaral 2013, 299).”

Though Ornelas didn’t perform on Clube da Esquina, the interweaving of his saxophone with Nascimento’s voice created a deep emotional impact on subsequent tracks, such as “Fé cega, faca amolada [Blind Faith, Sharp Knife]” and “Beijo Partido [Broken Kiss]” on Minas and throughout the live performance of Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo (see Chapter 6).

The song “Nuvem Cigana [Gypsy Cloud]” sheds light on the roles of the two remaining composers of the collective and the principle arranger: Toninho Horta, Lô Borges, and Wagner Tiso. Throughout Wagner Tiso’s collaboration with Nascimento, he had been developing his

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39 “Era um acontecimento ouvir alguma coisa. A gente ouvia música espanhola … eu e o Nascimento … ficava horas improvisando música espanhola. Depois a gente conseguiu um disco de Manitas de Plata e Manolo Labrador (flamenco guitarists), e a gente ficava improvisando aquela fólclore espanhola por horas."

40 “É uma pena que as melhores coisas que eu fiz com o Bituca não foram gravadas, foram ao vivo. Bituca abria assim aquele sorrisinho meia boca, de lado; parece que não está gostando, mas está. Quando ele fazia o negócio: pááá—ele olhava pra mim assim de lado…[risos] (…) A gente fazia aqueles fades intermináveis: pááráá, e eu: pááráá. Era muito bom. Muito na hora, né, Chico?”
skills as a musical director and arranger, first as the founder of Som Imaginário, then during rehearsals for *Clube da Esquina*. As songs developed, he often suggested which parts should be played by whom, led rehearsals, and notated chords, melodies, and other important themes for the rhythm section. In 1968 and 69, Tiso had performed with composer-clarinetist Paulo Moura, during which Moura began to teach him about arranging and orchestration. As one of few that read musical notation, Tiso regularly transcribed Nascimento’s and Borges’s songs for other arrangers, and in the case of “Nuvem Cigana,” he debuted his first arrangement for studio orchestra, adding yet another dimension to the sound of the *Clube da Esquina*. In respect to his relationship with Nascimento, Tiso’s extensive knowledge of harmony in general, and Nascimento’s peculiar harmonic tendencies in particular, made him a leading figure in helping others to understand how best to interpret Nascimento’s music. In 1975, Tiso accompanied Milton Nascimento and Robertinho Silva to Los Angeles in order to record alongside Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter for the latter’s album *Native Dancer* (Capitol Records). Tiso described an interaction between the musicians while recording Nascimento’s song “From the Lonely Afternoons”:

> In that part at the end that has a triplet feel, Wayne suggested that we just keep playing straight instead. Bituca looked at me, making a ‘no’ signal like this with his index finger. I said, ‘No, Wayne, it has to be this way. That rhythm is so that we arrive in the key a bit skewed on purpose, but in time. If we don’t [play it that way], it won’t have that effect (Amaral 2013, 270).”

It should be stressed that this anecdote cannot be explained away by Nascimento’s discomfort with speaking English, since Nascimento and Tiso would have had relatively similar levels of comprehension and ability in 1975. Rather, it shows Nascimento’s reluctance to theorize about or explain his own compositions. Since Tiso played electric organ alongside Herbie Hancock’s

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41 “Naquela parte, no final, que tem uma acentuação ternária, o Wayne sugeriu que a gente fosse reto mesmo. O Bituca olhou pra mim, fez um não assim com o indicador. Eu falei: ‘Não, Wayne, é desse jeito mesmo. Aquela rítmica é pra chegar no tom meio torto mesmo, mas no tempo. Senão não ia ter esse efeito.’”
piano, Nascimento left it to Tiso to explain, thereby avoiding a direct disagreement with the artist who had invited him to record.

Guitarist Toninho Horta is known by his most dedicated fans as a prolific multi-instrumentalist, though he is best known internationally as a guitarist. In fact, Horta plays most of the instruments on his first recording project *Terra dos Pássaros*. For *Clube da Esquina*, Horta explained how the ample time available in the recording studio encouraged musicians to share musical roles:

> Many times everyone woke up late. When they passed through the front hall of this building, where the EMI studio was located at the beginning of Rio Branco there in Rio [de Janeiro], there was a café that served marvelous beer. And so you couldn’t resist. The guys that woke up late would hang out there. ‘Where is everyone?’ ‘Downstairs having a drink.’ You would record a song and head downstairs to have a beer, and then whoever was there already, would head upstairs. So, the interesting thing is that we never coincided. If you take a look at the credits of each song, it doesn’t line up. Sometimes I attacked the bass, sometimes we lacked guitar, so I played that. Everything was very spontaneous. I helped to organize the rhythm section tracks, made up introductions, endings. My contribution was much more about that…(Museu CdE Horta).

Despite being one of the most technically proficient and versatile guitarists in Brazil, Horta played bass, percussion, sang backing vocals, and created introductions and endings for others to perform—and he appears to have been perfectly happy to contribute in this supporting role for the good of the project. After all, Horta was already firmly established as a studio musician, and had come to Odeon fresh from recording with either Gal Costa or Elis Regina, thus missing out on the Niteróí rehearsal (Museu Clube da Esquina, Horta).

Lô Borges composed “Nuvem Cigana” and seven other tracks for *Clube da Esquina*, and his contribution as a rock songwriter is often praised for the stark contrast it provided to Nascimento’s more serious, introspective nature. This is certainly true for songs like “Paisagem

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“da Janela [Window Landscape]” or “Trem Azul [Blue Train].” However, that is not the only contrast; of all Nascimento’s songwriting talents and profound themes, he wrote very few songs about romantic love. Nascimento has numerous songs about other types of love—love for family, loyalty among friends, respect for indigenous Brazilians, admiration for Elis Regina, and universal love—, but not romantic love. Lô Borges’s voice made “Girassol da cor de seu cabelo [Sunflower the color of your hair]” a hit song, but in the case of “Nuvem Cigana,” he provided Nascimento an opportunity to sing a popular love song—even if the lyrics by Ronaldo Bastos are fairly obtuse (Hear Clube da Esquina, Track 5). For the Clube da Esquina, the sound of rock alone didn’t attract a broad fan base, but rock and the theme of romantic love most certainly did.

Finally, the graphic design of the album reinforced the theme of fraternity. No one could agree on the album’s name, until photographer Cafí (Carlos da Silva Assunção Filho) and lyricist Ronaldo Bastos drove through the country and photographed two boys playing on the side of the road. The age difference and ethnicities of the boys provided an obvious allusion to Nascimento and Lô Borges. The photograph became the front cover, with no other lettering visible. The absence of text on the front cover broke yet another music industry standard, though the title and artists’ names are included on the back cover (See Figures 2.2 and 2.3). The rear page also included a photo of barefoot boys and girls—including Nascimento and Borges as the tallest figures (at rear, left and right)—which indexed the “Corner Club” as informal, fraternal, and youthful. The final design of the album artwork also communicates a method to the madness—organization, cohesion, and intention—rather than the chaos its recording process may have seemed.

After the release of CdE, the focus of the Brazilian music press remained on Nascimento as a solo figure throughout the first half of the 1970s, though other collaborators received cursory
mention in Nascimento’s profiles. Borges released his debut album the same year as Cde in 1972, receiving brief, but positive reviews. In September 1975, Veja did a feature on Borges building up to his sophomore release, in which it was revealed that he was earning $1,000 cruzeiros per month from Cde royalties, which was a steady blue-collar income for the era (“Os, apesar de tudo, estreantes” 1975; Lovell 1994). Self-doubt delayed the project, and A Via Láctea debuted a full four years later. It was only in November 1975 that the term Clube da Esquina was used in the press to characterize the collective musical production of Nascimento and friends in a three-page feature on the album Minas (de Souza 1975a, 107). In the article, Nascimento calls Minas “the real Clube da Esquina, where everyone participated in its creation,” thereby using the moniker as an index of collaborative unity and egalitarian music-making (de Souza 1975a, 109). The album became Nascimento’s best-selling record—20,000 pre-ordered and 32,000 in the first year of its release—and the moniker for his collaborators stuck (Bahiana 1980, 47).

**Clube da Esquina: The Lyricists and Lyrical Themes**

From the beginning of Nascimento’s musical career, his song lyrics have often spoken about fraternity and solidarity. This is true of both the lyrics he composed himself as well as

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43 “…o verdadeiro Clube da Esquina, onde todos participaram da criação.”
those written by his three principle lyricists—Márcio Borges, Fernando Brant, and Ronaldo Bastos. With the exception of Ronaldo Bastos who is from Niterói, Rio de Janeiro state, most of the Clube da Esquina either grew up in Belo Horizonte, or moved there from rural towns in Minas Gerais to attend university. Belo Horizonte is scarcely a century old, founded in 1896, more than three hundred years after Rio de Janeiro, but, despite its youth, the mining and agricultural industries made it the third largest metropolis in Brazil by the 1960s. Unlike the coastal cities of Rio, Salvador, Recife, and São Paulo, the mountainous city of Belo Horizonte retains a colloquial character, affectionately referred to as the grande cidade pequena [big small town].

During university, Nascimento worked steadily as a crooner in an instrumental trio, but he rarely played his own music. He befriended brothers Marilton and Márcio Borges, and Nascimento soon became a fixture in the Borges household, first through singing in a vocal quartet with the former and later through songwriting with Borges, a budding film critic. Nascimento has described moving to Belo Horizonte as a moment in which he suffered enormous self-doubt. In Três Pontas, Nascimento and Tiso transcribed an enormous number of popular songs of the era in order to perform the latest hits (Tiso 2012). Their transcriptions, however, were incomplete due to the weak signal of the local radio station (often lacking low and mid registers), which led them to fill in the harmonic structure from their own imaginations. Years later in Belo Horizonte, Nascimento went out to hear other musicians of his generation playing at a bar, and when they played songs that he knew, he realized with horror that he played the songs completely differently. Marilton convinced him that his way of playing wasn’t wrong, but could be his strength and set him apart from his peers. This story has been told and re-told to

44 Strictly speaking, São Paulo is not a coastal city at about 45 mi from the ocean. Relatively speaking, it is close when compared to Belo Horizonte, which lies more than 310 mi from the coast in Espírito Santo state.
demonstrate not only Nascimento’s individuality, but his personal struggle in learning how to fit in within a new musical community (Borges 1998; Borém and Lopes 2014, 26).

Nascimento himself only began performing his own compositions a few years later at the encouragement of friends. After repeated viewings of the François Truffaut film *Jules and Jim* one night in 1964, Borges dared Nascimento to become a composer. Inspired by the story of friendship between the two men in the film’s love triangle, they composed three songs from the resulting emotions (Borges 2011, 68; Amaral 2013, 39). The story, while captivating, is more origin myth than stark truth—in fact, Nascimento had already composed many other songs, but he considered them derivative of the era and Tiso considered them an early phase before their exposure to modern jazz (Borém and Lopes 2014, 27; Museu Clube da Esquina Tiso). After fruitful collaboration with Borges, Nascimento invited another friend—who had never written lyrics before—to collaborate with him, journalist Fernando Brant (Museu CdE, Fernando Brant), then after the success of “Travessia,” he invited Ronaldo Bastos to write lyrics (Museu CdE, Ronaldo Bastos). As Nascimento’s musical collaborations extended to other younger composers—especially Lô Borges, Toninho Horta, and Beto Guedes—cross-pollinations between the composers and lyricists occurred resulting in a thriving songwriting collective.

Themes of fraternity within the body of work by the Clube da Esquina ranged from everyday loneliness (“Amigo, amiga [Male Friend, Female Friend]” by Nascimento and Bastos) to nostalgia for youth (“Manuel, o Audaz [Manuel, the Bold]” by Horta and Brant) and from viewing the victims of torture and assassination as fallen friends (“Menino [Boy]” by Nascimento and Bastos) to expressions of solidarity toward indigenous Brazilians (“Ruas da Cidade [City Streets]” by Borges and Borges). By 1967, Nascimento and several other collaborators had moved to Rio de Janeiro, but it is clear from interviews that the collective

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45 Museu Clube da Esquina will heretofore be used interchangeably with its abbreviation Museu CdE.
continually shuttled between Belo Horizonte and Rio to continue working together. Guitarist Toninho Horta remembers:

I was already a studio musician. After I recorded with Elis [Regina]—I had been in Rio de Janeiro since the end of the 1960s—I always traveled with Lô Borges. We traveled via Útil or Cometa [bus companies] to Rio, always by bus. We always slept on each other’s shoulder; each hour we took turns sleeping. We traveled by train via Vera Cruz [train company]. This was already during the period of the [live] show for Clube da Esquina (Museu CdE, Toninho Horta).46

Fraternity, then, was not only an ethos, but was actively constructed through social relations, such as musical collaboration and mutual personal support.

One of Nascimento’s earliest songs is a melancholy portrait of friendship. He wrote both music and lyrics for “Morro Velho [Old Hill],” which debuted at the 1967 Festival Internacional da Canção alongside “Travessia” and “Maria, minha fé [Maria, my faithful one],” all of which were recorded on his self-titled debut album (Codil 1967). “Morro Velho” tells the story of a plantation owner’s son and a young farmhand—as the lyrics say, respectively, “filho do branco e do preto [son of the white man and of the black man].” Their heartfelt friendship is slowly eroded by the divisions of race and socioeconomic class until the plantation owner’s son becomes the farmhand’s boss. The song closes with the final dissolution of the friendship into an unequal relationship of power:

Já tem nome de doutor
E agora na fazenda é quem vai mandar
E seu velho camarada
Já não brinca, mas trabalha

He already has the title of doctor
And now, on the farm, is who is in charge
And his old companion
Doesn’t play anymore, but works

“Maria, minha fé” is an ode to platonic friendship with words and music by Nascimento. The song is dedicated to Maria Amélia Boechat, a childhood friend from Três Pontas. She was the first to introduce Nascimento to Villa-Lobos’ Bachianas Brasileiras No. 4, 3rd Mvmt, which Nascimento would later record as “Caicó” on Sentinela. She brought many LPs home to

Nascimento from Rio, where she studied piano (Amaral 2013, 34), and the song alludes to this shared love of listening to music:

| Minha fé, minha vida, meu trabalho | My faith, my life, my work |
| tudo feito pra Maria | everything done for Maria |
| há Maria atrás do som | Maria is there behind the sound |
| atrás da cor | behind the color |

Listening proved an important activity for bonding over new musical influences. When Milton lived with the Tiso family in Alfenas in order to complete high school, Wagner Tiso’s mother bought a record she thought sounded strikingly different from what Nascimento and Tiso regularly listened to: the Tamba Trio’s *Avanço* (Phillips 1963) featuring pianist Luiz Eça. Tiso recalled that upon receiving his mother’s gift, “we went out on the veranda there at the house in Alfenas, turned it up loud, and stayed there just listening” (Amaral 2013, 255-56).47

This idea of fraternity became a template for future hits, in which the protagonist is portrayed as feeling the heavy burden of a struggle he must face alone, yet simultaneously acknowledging that either others are facing the same burden, or that the struggle will be met with help, or at least praise. Brothers Borges and Márcio Borges wrote the song “Clube da Esquina [Corner Club]” along with Nascimento for the 1970 album *Nascimento*. The opening lyrics read like a diary entry of the experiences of young musicians surviving under the oppression of dictatorship:

| Noite chegou outra vez | Night arrived once more |
| de novo na esquina os homens estão | again on the corner are the men |
| todos se acham mortais | all of them think themselves mortal |

The use of mortal, here, is notable in that youth is most often associated with immortality. The song, though sentimental in tone, is also realistic: Brazilian youth of the 1970s were uncomfortably awakened to their own mortality. The song offers up fraternity as one of the few remaining aspects of civil life in which one could seek refuge under the military regime. Other

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47 “A gente ficava na varanda lá da casa de Alfenas, botava alto, ficava ouvindo aquilo.”
songs in this vein include “Outubro [October],” “Courage,” “Amigo, Amiga,” and “Nada será como antes [Nothing Will Be As it Was].”

By contrast, “Para Lennon e McCartney [To Lennon and McCartney]” is an autobiographical celebration of the very act of collaboration taking place between its composers, Borges and Márcio Borges and Fernando Brant. The verse acknowledges the composers’ admiration for, and comparisons to, the songwriting team Lennon and McCartney, but also resigns them to the fact that most South American music remained unknown to the stars of British pop:

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Porque vocês não sabem
do lixo ocidental
não precisam mais temer
não precisam da solidão
todo dia é dia de viver
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Because you don’t know
about the occidental trash
no need to be afraid anymore
no need to be alone
every day is a day for living

The chorus, however, takes the fact of this postcolonial legacy of inequality in stride and celebrates music as a space where they can be proud of their own background as mineiros—with references to colonial gold mining and the regional stereotype of being caipira [country hick] (Viveiros Martins 2009, 52). The song also acted as a space in which their musical achievements could be elevated from a paternal to a fraternal relationship with international pop musicians:

```
Eu sou da América do Sul
eu sei, vocês não vão saber
mas agora sou cowboy
sou do ouro, eu sou vocês
sou do mundo, sou Minas Gerais
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I am from South America
I know, you don’t know [us]
but now I am a cowboy
I come from the gold, I am you
I am of the world, I am Minas Gerais

The process of songwriting in the collective was nearly always music first, lyrics second. Often, the composer had a theme or topic in mind, and then selected a lyricist based on their attributes and interests. Lyricist Márcio Borges explained his view of the songwriting process:

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It is important to have a talk beforehand, to know from your partner what happened at the moment in which he composed the song, what was his state of mind, what was he thinking, if the song was for someone, what that song means to him internally. Without this conversation beforehand about the song itself, your work falls short of what it could be. Because at the moment in which you search for this total integration
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with that sentiment, and you subjugate and humble yourself to it, that is when you find the magnificence of the lyric (Vilara 2006, 125).\footnote{“É importante ter um papo antes, saber do parceiro o que foi que rolou na hora em que ele compôs a música, qual era o estado de espírito dele, o que ele estava pensando, se fez a música para alguém, o que aquela música significa interiormente para ele. Sem essa conversa antes sobre a música em si, o trabalho sai aquém do que ele pode. Porque na hora em que você busca essa integração total com aquele sentimento e você se subjuga e se humilha, é onde você acha a grandeza da letra.”}

There is, then, a significant intimacy between composer and lyricist. In order to speak to internal beliefs and feelings, the composer and lyricist must develop a relationship of trust and empathy in order to work together productively. Amongst themselves, the lyricists also developed a spirit of cooperation. Borges created the idea of an alter ego that he termed “Socorros Costa”—the invented first name “Socorros” is derived from the Portuguese word for help (socorro), while “Costa” is both a common Portuguese family name, and the noun for back and/or shoulders. In other words, this imaginary persona allowed one lyricist to ask another for help in completing a lyric, thereby taking a burden off their shoulders and without sharing songwriting credit.

A prime example of the use of Socorros Costa is for the lyrics for Milton Nascimento’s song “Vera Cruz.” Borges describes the protagonist as an everyday woman lost in the treacherous waters of Vera Cruz, but that her story also served as a metaphor for the lost mother-country of Brazil, alluding to the country’s original name Vera Cruz coined by the explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral (Borges 2011, 118). Borges explained that he wrote copious verses for “Vera Cruz,” and only with the help of lyricist Fernando Brant was the final version selected (Borges 2011, 326). Nascimento’s song “O que foi feito de vera/O que foi feito deverá” was an expansion of this idea from “Vera Cruz,” of sharing lyrical duties, only this time, each lyricist was given the melody and asked to write an independent set of lyrics. The titles are homophones with differing, yet related, meanings. The first is an anti-dictatorial lament meaning, “what was done to the mother-country Vera [Cruz],” while the second imagined a democratic Brazil, “What was done should be…” Ronaldo Bastos expanded the idea of Socorros Costa to his role as the
producer of several albums by Beto Guedes and Toninho Horta in the late 1970s and 80s. Bastos explained that if the word “coração [heart]” came up too often, for example, then he and the other lyricists on the album—often Márcio Borges and Murilo Antunes—would tweak individual songs to improve the overall aesthetic (Museu CdE, Ronaldo Bastos).

Historian Viveiros Martins has noted a tendency for intertextuality within and across albums as a further index of fraternity among the Clube da Esquina (Viveiros Martins 2009, 105). For example, he points to a shared theme that serves as a contrast to the main verses of the songs “Cais [Pier]” and “Um gosto de sol [A taste of sun]” on Clube da Esquina, both by Nascimento and Ronaldo Bastos. In Figure 2.4, the piano theme from “Cais”—the second track of CdE—is based in C minor and uses a stepwise descending bass melody to touch on V1maj7 and iv chords, and particularly lingering on a Bb7sus chord to resolve up to III, or the relative major key. In this way, the theme loops twice and fades out, as if to signal to the listener that the rest of the journey that “Cais” speaks of in the lyrics—launching yourself from a metaphorical pier into a new reality—can be taken in the imagination. In Figure 2.5, the piano theme returns in the song “Um gosto de sol”—chosen as the penultimate track of CdE—with a string orchestra. Taking up two-thirds of the track, the theme is nearly twice as long, and, just after the excerpt shown here, makes use of a whole-tone motive based from B-natural in order to provide extra tension before continuing to loop the theme. Again, these themes in themselves communicate nothing of friendship or loyalty, but taken together with what Viveiros Martins calls the anti-commercial lack of names on the album cover along with the photo of two small boys (Viveiros Martins 2009, 39), as well as the dual credit to CdE and the communal spirit of CdEs creation, the themes come to mean fraternity, rather like a soundtrack to friendship. Six years later on Clube da Esquina 2, the theme returns to close the final track of the album “Que bom amigo
[What a good friend],” music and lyrics composed by Nascimento and dedicated to his continuing collaboration with Lô Borges. This time, the theme isn’t separate from the song, but supports the main melody (See Figure 2.6). Heard for the first time in a major key—Db—Márcio Borges describes it as a joyous return to both the musical theme and its portrayal of friendship (Borges 2011, 341). The theme—intimately familiar to any fan by 1978—plays as Nascimento sings the opening lines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Que bom, amigo</th>
<th>It’s good, friend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poder saber outra vez que estás comigo</td>
<td>To be able to know again that you’re with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizer com certeza outra vez</td>
<td>To say with certainty again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a palavra amigo</td>
<td>the word friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se bem que isso nunca deixou de ser</td>
<td>Although this never stopped being so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1979, Lô Borges released his sophomore album A Vía Láctea [The Milky Way] and featured the song “A Olho Nu [With the naked eye]” that continues, though much more loosely, an intertextual trajectory. The protagonist wishes for a close friend to make it through a difficult moment by seeing it “with the naked eye” and by leaving behind o velho cais [the old pier], a reference to Nascimento’s “Cais.” Though Borges’s song doesn’t feature the theme of the three aforementioned songs, his musical structure is certainly inspired by it: he writes a verse-chorus form at a medium tempo, followed by an instrumental coda at a faster tempo.

These few examples show that fraternity was actively constructed within the Clube da Esquina’s song lyrics and social relations. The songs imagine spaces for friendship and solidarity in a variety of circumstances—existential angst, racism, and in confronting the dictatorship. The privileging of fraternity by the Clube da Esquina was particularly meaningful in the 1970s, the worst period of human rights abuses during the Brazilian military dictatorship. In the 1970s and until today, audiences have recognized and connected with the construction of fraternity in the lyrics of the Clube da Esquina, and this is particularly apparent among Brazilian ex-pats’ displays of emotion at Nascimento’s concerts abroad.
Figure 2.4 Musical example from “Cais,” prepared by the author with adherence to Amaral’s transcription (2013).
Figure 2.5 Musical example from “Um gosto de sol,” prepared by the author.
Figure 2.6 Musical transcription of “Que bom amigo,” prepared by the author.
Clube da Esquina: Limits on collaboration

Collaboration was the key aspect to the success of the album *Clube da Esquina*, not only in terms of creating an original sound in MPB, but also for helping to launch the individual careers of the artists known by that moniker. In exploring the many advantages of their creative process, it is meaningful to shed light on the limits to their collaboration. For the Clube da Esquina, music became a space to idealize friendship, but commercial demands often prevented the reproduction of that ideal in the marketplace. First and foremost, the Clube da Esquina was never a band. Wagner Tiso formed Som Imaginário specifically to accompany Nascimento in 1970, but they were always billed as Milton Nascimento and Som Imaginário—two separate entities—and indeed Som Imaginário as a band recorded three albums (including occasional guest appearances from Nascimento). Likewise, Nascimento did not record exclusively with the members of Som Imaginário, but continued to collaborate with other musicians from Belo Horizonte, Rio, Recife, and from abroad.

So why not form a band including all of the composers—Beto Guedes, Lô Borges, Toninho Horta, Wagner Tiso? The simplest answer seems to be that it didn’t occur to them to do so. One reason might be the differences in generation. In 1972, Nascimento and Tiso were approaching 30, while Beto Guedes and Lô Borges were a full decade younger, not even out of their teens, and the invitation to contribute to *CdE* was to be their first professional opportunity outside of Minas Gerais. Toninho Horta fell cleanly between these two generations, but had already gained acclaim as a superb studio guitarist for some of Rio de Janeiro’s best singers—including Elis Regina, Gal Costa, and Joyce—as well as amassing an impressive body of original compositions. Second, the market tendency for MPB as a genre, and much popular song in general, was strongly singer-songwriter focused, a trend spurred on by the song festivals. In 1972, the 10 top-selling artists in Rio de Janeiro were predominantly solo acts, including Jair
Rodrigues, the sambista Zuzuca, Caetano Veloso, Roberto Carlos, Gal Costa, Tim Maia, and
Martinho do Vale, while most of the bands listed that year were foreign, including Sly & the
Family Stone and Santana (USA), Trio Galleta (Argentina), the Bee Gees (Australia), Led
Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and the Rolling Stones (UK) (IBOPE 1972). Brazilian popular music
groups certainly existed, such as vocal groups MPB4 and Quarteto em Cy, and instrumental
ensemble the Zimbo Trio and groups led by Egberto Gismonti, Paulo Moura, and Hermeto
Pascoal; but solo singers continued to dominate the charts.

Odeon’s years of investment in Nascimento had finally paid off with *Clube da Esquina*,
and so the albums *Minas* (1975), *Geraes* (1976), and *Clube da Esquina II* (1978) were also
highly collaborative, though the number of collaborators ballooned. After all, Nascimento’s
success meant that he steadily encountered new opportunities, and his personal ethos of
collaboration meant pursuing them and creating yet others. The ever-expanding collective meant,
however, that there was less and less time to feature the original collaborators, sometimes
resulting in feelings of neglect or disappointment. Sociologist Sheyla Diniz has plunged deeply
into the mire of interviews and memoirs of the 1980s and 90s to reflect on the fracturing of the
Clube da Esquina (Diniz 2012, 142-147). Tension between Nascimento and his original
collaborators ranged the gamut from differences in political affiliation and artistic aesthetic to
personal feelings of jealousy and disappointed expectations. Diniz pointed to a measured
interview from Toninho Horta explaining that Nascimento’s departure from Odeon resulted in a
more commercial aesthetic with the record label Ariola, while the Borges brothers and Guedes
all bemoaned their minimal participation in *Clube da Esquina II* due to nearly innumerable guest
appearances—Chico Buarque, Elis Regina, Francis Hime, Grupo Tacuabê, Danilo Caymmi,
Paulo Jobim, João Donato, Jacques Morlenbaum, César Camargo-Mariano, Gonzaguinha, Joyce, Boca Livre, and many more.

Nascimento’s conception of friendship was very broad, and perhaps his position of power and musical influence stopped collaborators from expressing their frustration directly. Diniz covered every possible angle from the available interviews in her analysis of the dissolution of the CdE, but the issue of money remains an elephant in the room. Aside from royalties, were musicians paid for performing on Nascimento’s albums? (One assumes so). Or was there a social contract in which performing for the good of a musical project resulted in increased visibility generally, and potential support for future projects? I can only speculate and did not feel that my 18 months of fieldwork allowed me to get close enough to ask any of the CdE members questions of personal finance; I was already asking difficult questions about experiences under dictatorship, and throughout my own performing in Minas Gerais, the subject of getting paid was one of the touchiest. After CdE, all subsequent recordings were credited only to Milton Nascimento, since after all, the inclusion of Lô Borges’s name by Odeon took considerable convincing, and short of forming an official band, Nascimento was the one under contract with the record label.

According to Lô Borges’s copyright income, one might assume that all of the composers and lyricists received royalties for their songs, and that, after CdE, Nascimento would have received performance royalties (the income from the sale of physical albums). However, the mid-70s were, in fact, a tumultuous period for establishing direitos autorais [copyright] in the music industry. Historian Assis Garcia notes that artists banded together to found Sombrás—the Sociedade Musical Brasileira [Brazilian Musical Society]—in 1975, an organization to oversee
the collection of royalties (Assis Garcia 2000, 123; citing de Souza 1975b, 76). In lyricist Márcio Borges’s memoir, he revealed that:

Every time someone recorded one of my songs, I automatically signed a contract of cessation of rights with one of the EMI-Odeon publishers. That intrigued me; I always left there with the impression that I was giving something of mine to someone else, in return for nothing (Borges 2011, 292).49

Though Borges’s memory for timelines is cloudy, somewhere between 1972 and 1974, he and Bastos filed the paperwork to establish Três Pontas Edições Musicais, Ltd, a music publishing company to administer copyright royalties on behalf of Nascimento and his three principle lyricists, and, like other publishers, under the management of Odeon itself (Borges 2011, 293). Though it doesn’t answer the question of how Nascimento’s collaborating musicians got paid for their work, it proves that, within the constrictions of the music industry, Nascimento and his collaborators did strive for ethical remuneration.

The Clube da Esquina as a collective was not an egalitarian fraternity in financial terms, but rather had a particular distribution of power. Rock bands are infamous for their grand break-ups, but a songwriting collective that never committed to being a band in the first place, naturally has a more nebulous web of relations. Each artist had their own leverage within the industry, particularly in terms of record labels, and a range of incomes from music. The three lyricists did not live solely from their songwriting royalties, but pursued careers in publicity, radio, politics, literature, and music production. Likewise, Nascimento’s primary musical collaborators—Beto Guedes, Lô Borges, Toninho Horta, and Wagner Tiso—pursued solo careers as well as playing in the bands of other musicians. This is, of course, not to say that these artists should have formed a band. Bands have the advantage of shared income from copyright royalties, but there is often a trade-off in developing one’s distinct musical identity within the marketplace. For the

49 “Cada vez que alguém gravava uma música de minha autoria eu assinava automaticamente um contrato de cessão de direitos com uma das editoras da EMI-Odeon. Aquilo me intrigava; sempre saía com a impressão de estar dando algo meu para os outros, a troco de nada.”
Clube da Esquina, the model of the collective had many artistic advantages, and their case provides great insight into how power relationships are negotiated at the micro and macro level (e.g. personal versus commercial). Fernando Brant and Ronaldo Bastos have remained vociferous protectors of direitos autorais [copyright] for musicians and lyricists, and in 2010, the pair were elected, respectively, as Director-President and Director of Communications and Social Assistance for the Brazilian Composers Union (União Brasileira de Compositores 2010).

Guitarist Nelson Ângelo’s experience as a member of the Clube da Esquina has raised some interesting issues about collective composition and authorship. Ângelo is remembered today as part of the Clube da Esquina (at least in Minas Gerais), but is rarely listed among its primary songwriters or in journalistic summaries of the group. He has contributed compositions and/or performed on at least eight of Nascimento’s albums since 1969, accompanied Nascimento on several tours, and along with a modest solo career, he also toured with Egberto Gismonti and recorded frequently in the 1970s with then-partner Joyce.

In May 2012, my friend guitarist João Antunes (son of CdE lyricist Murilo Antunes) and I invited Ângelo to be a featured artist on our recording of his song “Sacramento [Sacrament]” with lyrics by Nascimento. Known as a quirky composer and an empathic collaborator, he listened intently to our ideas about reinterpreting the song and suggested pushing further to really deconstruct the song. Though he was obviously proud of the composition, he had a spirit of Zen-like non-attachment to its form and stylistic interpretation. We knew that many of our peers retained certain formal, textural, and interpretive elements in their cover performances out of respect for Nascimento’s original recordings, but Ângelo believed that covers should diverge and strive for something new. With Ângelo on electric guitar and João playing violão, I sang “Sacramento” as a slow jazz ballad with short improvisational interludes from Ângelo. Later,
however, we collaborated with an electronic effects artist to remix the song, incorporating wind-like sounds to denote isolation and abandonment and delay effects to create disorientation and bewilderment indicated in the lyrics. The change in texture was quite stark and some of the guitar work had heavy effects processing, but, to our delight, Ângelo was very complimentary.

A week later, I flew to Rio de Janeiro to interview Ângelo about his time as a Clube da Esquina member. He spoke animatedly about his fond memories growing up in Belo Horizonte and particularly Nascimento’s gift of facilitating collaboration.

There was a very great generosity on the part of Nascimento, who mixed his own career with those of his friends as featured artists. Nascimento always greatly valued human sonority; there were a lot of people singing. And there was never censorship of anything, or of anyone, but always great care for it to come across as beautiful and musical. On the album Clube da Esquina, I played a lot of percussion, electric guitar, and sang in the coro. Then on Clube da Esquina 2, I wrote arrangements, played piano, viola, electric guitar ... there are songs I wrote and songs written jointly with Bituca (Museu CdE, Nelson Ângelo).[^50]

But there was also an undercurrent of dissatisfaction about how the history of the Clube da Esquina is often told—both by the press and by other members.

Ângelo played electric and nylon-string guitars on Clube da Esquina’s 21 tracks, but as one of six guitarists on the album, his electric guitar parts are often assumed by fans to be the work of guitarist Toninho Horta, who went on to have a higher profile solo career. During the interview, Ângelo began to sing themes from CdE that were immediately recognizable to me, and I often joined in singing along (Ângelo 2012). To my embarrassment, after we sang the intro to “Paisagem da Janela [View from the Window]” together—a song that still receives frequent airplay on regional and national stations—I asked if it was Toninho Horta who played the introduction. In fact, Ângelo had invented the riff at a rehearsal and performed it on 12-string for the recording session. That day, Ângelo sang introductions and interludes to many other CdE

songs, including “Saídas e Bandeiras” as well as the intro to one of Nascimento’s most popular songs to perform on tour today, “Canção da América [Song of America].”

Introductions are powerful triggers for musical memory. Turino has spoken of the metonymic function of indices—in which a part comes to stand for the whole, in this case an intro comes to stand for the song (Turino 2014, 196). As a child of the late 1970s, I grew up with American classic rock, and I always feel a pull of nostalgia when I hear the intro guitar riff to “Sweet Home Alabama” by Lynyrd Skynyrd. Though I am from Wisconsin and have never been to Alabama, the Southern rock revival—with bands like the Black Crowes—was so strong during my teens that it brings back vivid memories of summer parties in open dairy farmer’s fields. This sentimental feeling grew even stronger while living in England, where classic rock, and particularly Southern rock, is practically non-existent on the radio. Turino has noted that “a song, genre, or style that is part of the practices of a particular region or social group can index that region or social group” (Turino 2014, 196), and for mineiro fans since the 1970s, Ângelo’s introductions have served as powerful indices of CdE songs that are a shared collective memory of mineiro musical production and regional solidarity.

Ângelo also contributed compositions, such as “Canoa, canoa [Canoe, canoe]” and “Simples [Simple],” to Nascimento’s later albums, but his role on Clube da Esquina, arguably Nascimento’s most beloved album, was as a rhythm guitarist and a pivotal creative force in rehearsals and arranging sessions—roles that don’t garner much official recognition. For Nelson Ângelo, I doubt very much that he ever wanted co-authorship, but rather feels conflicted within a complex set of relationships around musical collaboration, friendship, and notoriety. In the end, Ângelo is content in the knowledge that Nascimento personally recognizes and appreciates his contributions.
As for other Clube da Esquina collaborators, fame from *CdE* brought fruitful opportunities. The same year in which *Clube da Esquina* was released, performer-composer Lô Borges was contracted as a solo artist. He released his debut solo album in the latter half of 1972 to positive reviews, and, by 1975, *Veja* reported that he was using the income from copyright royalties to write songs toward his second album *Via Láctea* (EMI-Odeon 1979). Self-doubt, however, stopped Borges from releasing anything immediately, and rather he waited four years to accumulate more life experience and a solid repertoire of new compositions.

Likewise, Wagner Tiso performed with a wide variety of other artists, while also making a career as a film score composer and orchestral arranger. In 2013 and 2014, Tiso staged reunion concerts for Som Imaginário in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte, as well as an unprecedented performance of Brazilian composer Taiguara’s censored album *Imyra, Tayra, Ipy, Taiguara* (EMI-Odeon 1975) featuring many of the original musicians. Tiso has continually shown his solidarity with Clube da Esquina collaborators and served as arranger for Beto Guedes’s live DVD recording *Outros Clássicos* in 2010, a repertoire entirely chosen by Guedes’ many Brazilian fans.

For Beto Guedes and Toninho Horta, the path from Clube da Esquina member to solo artist was not straightforward. In 1973, what was intended as separate debut albums became a single album shared between Guedes, Horta, and two other composers—Clube da Esquina bassist Novelli and singer-flautist Danilo Caymmi. Officially released under the names of all four artists, the album wryly became known as *Os quatro no banheiro* [Four Guys in the Bathroom] due to the cover art (See Figures 2.7 and 2.8). The original talks with Odeon proposed a solo album for each artist, but in the end, the record label felt it was safer to invest in a single compilation album. Toninho Horta explained the album artwork:
The cover photo portrays how they squeezed us. We are standing around a toilet and Cafi [photographer Carlos da Silva Assunção Filho] snapped the photo from above in an EMI bathroom to show just how much EMI had constricted us in order to make that disc. The payback we gave them is that the musical part is really gorgeous (Museu CdE, Horta). \(^{51}\)

*Figure 2.7 and 2.8* Cover art (front and back) for the album known as “Os quatro no banheiro,” officially titled *Beto Guedes Danilo Caymmi Novelll Toninho Horta* after the contributing composer-performers (EMI-Odeon 1973).

In 1975, Milton Nascimento lent a helping hand to the career of Beto Guedes by featuring his voice on Nascimento’s song “Fé cega, faca amolada [Blind faith, sharp knife],” with lyrics by Ronaldo Bastos, and Novelli’s “Minas” on the album *Minas*. He also played electric guitar on “Idolatrada [Idolized]” and “Trastevere” and *viola* on “Paula e Bebeto” (Castro 2013, 11). The album became Nascimento’s highest-grossing record to date, and later that year, the pair teamed up again to release a 45 rpm recording of Guedes’s scathing song “Caso você queira saber [In case you want to know],” with lyrics by Márcio Borges (See Figure 2.9). The critical acclaim gained attention for Guedes as a composer, as well as an innovative interpreter of the Beatles—the B side featured a decadently languorous interpretation of Lennon and McCartney’s “Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown).” In 1977, Beto Guedes secured his own contract with EMI-Odeon and released *A Página do Relâmpago Elétrico* to great acclaim, followed by the release of nine more albums over the next 20 years.

\(^{51}\) “A foto da capa retrata como eles espremeram. Ficamos em volta de uma latrina e o Cafi bateu a foto de cima num banheiro lá da EMI, pra mostrar o quanto que a EMI nos comprimiu pra fazer aquele disco. O troco que a gente deu é que a parte musical é belíssima.”
Nascimento invited Toninho Horta to record with him in Los Angeles, the guitarist’s first trip to the US, alongside fellow Clube da Esquina members Novelli and Robertinho Silva as well as jazz legends Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock. Following the tracking of what would be the 1976 album *Nascimento*, Nascimento gave what Horta would describe as “Um presentão dele [a great big present from him]” (Museu CdE Horta). Knowing that Horta had accumulated a vast repertoire of compositions, Nascimento donated his leftover studio time and tapes at the Shangri-La Studios in Malibu, and there Horta recorded his first basic tracks. The album is billed as Toninho Horta and the Orquestra Fantasma [Phantom Orchestra], making light of Horta’s carefully constructed rough tracks to imitate orchestral parts recorded with mini-moog and guitars with effects pedals (See Figure 2.10). These rough tracks remained as he and producer Ronaldo Bastos continued to add tracks over the next three years at a plethora of studio locations, until finally rerecording them with two different orchestras from Campinas and Rio de Janeiro (Horta 1979). With the success of the first album, Horta quickly followed it up with a self-titled album in 1980. Notably, there is less sharing of roles among the Clube da Esquina on

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52 Horta’s liner notes credit the Village Recorder in Los Angeles and Paramount Studios in Hollywood, as well as Estúdio Vice-Versa in São Paulo and Estúdio Transamérica in Rio de Janeiro.
these albums, largely due to Horta’s prolific performances on acoustic and electric guitars, bass, drums, vocals, and even piano, but the participation of collaborators is no less.

**Figure 2.10** Cover art from Toninho Horta’s *Terra dos Pássaros* [Land of the Birds] (EMI-Odeon 1979), named after the Gibson model “Birdland” he used to record the album.

**Conclusion: Contemporary Musicians and a Legacy of Collaboration**

The legacy of the Clube da Esquina in the city of Belo Horizonte today is readily perceptible: their songs are frequently played on the official state radio station Rádio Inconfidência; Nascimento’s current guitarist Wilson Lopes is a professor at UFMG, where Toninho Horta has often given guest lectures and performances; sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews of various members of the Clube da Esquina have taken up music as their profession. Moreover, lyricist Márcio Borges has had a physical impact on the landscape of the city. In 2006, Borges produced a thematic tourism guide for Belo Horizonte, including a map with locations significant to the development of the Clube da Esquina, each one commemorated with individualized metal plaques (See Figures 2.11a, b, c, and d). In 2013, Borges received funding from the Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the state government and state university, to develop the Museu Clube da Esquina, a physical museum and cultural center to be located at the Praça da Liberdade, which also houses the governor’s palace, civic organizations, and a new development of museums and cultural spaces called the Ciclo Cultural [Cultural Cycle].
The contemporary generation of professional musicians is, in general, enormously proud to have the Clube da Esquina as a fundamental part of their musical heritage. At the same time, many contemporary musicians find it limiting to be defined by them or compared to them. In terms of musical style, the contemporary generation certainly carries vastly different degrees of influence from the Clube da Esquina, but one legacy that I noticed quite strongly was the ethos of collaboration. Though there are many initiatives that I could mention from the canção nova [new song] scene in Belo Horizonte, one of the most exciting is called the Coletivo ANA. The name ANA comes from a series of concerts initiated in 2013 called the Amostra Nua de Autoras.
[Nude/Raw Exhibition of Female Authors]. Eight up-and-coming singer-songwriters divided themselves into pairs and performed concerts of new repertoire in venues throughout Belo Horizonte. The collective’s (now defunct) website states that one of the objectives was to “strengthen the scene of original music and incentivize feminine participation in the compositional atmosphere.” Though the objective of ANA is much the same as that of the Clube da Esquina—to gain visibility for budding composers—their effort comes with a keen awareness of the past marginalization of the feminine within the arts scene. Though many female musicians (primarily singers) were involved in the Clube da Esquina as guest artists—such as Elis Regina, Nana Caymmi, and singer-guitarist-composer Joyce—none was considered integral to its process of collaboration. What is more, Coletivo ANA’s method of collaboration strives for a more egalitarian distribution of performance and profit. The eight composers maintain their respective artistic names and have concurrent independent projects, but they perform music together in various permutations, including the release of a collective CD this year. They even consider the challenge of childcare during rehearsals and performances as one that can be solved collaboratively.

Reminiscent of the aforementioned Os quatro no banheiro, the album A Outra Cidade [The Other City] was released in 2003 by three formidable performer-composers—Kristoff Silva, Makely Ka, and Pablo Castro. Unlike the album nicknamed “Four Guys in the Bathroom,” the invention of a record label, the composers chose to pool their financial and creative resources to release a joint album. A Outra Cidade similarly features a kaleidoscope of friends and peers as guest artists throughout the disc, while each composer manages to maintain their individual voice. The collaboration was so successful for the young composers, that they celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2013 in order to publicize the recent releases of solo projects by Silva, Ka, and
Castro—*Deriva, Cavalo Motor*, and *Anterior*, respectively. Echoing what many Clube da Esquina members have said about their collaboration, Makely Ka has remarked:

> We never formed a band. We are three composers that joined together to record an album. But this hypothesis isn’t ruled out. If an invitation should come up or an interesting project, we’ll look at the possibility with fondness (Girão 2013)\(^5^3\).

Though some contemporary artists may still complain of the oversaturation of having grown up with the Clube da Esquina in their ears, musical style is not the collective’s only legacy. This new generation creates a fresh sound, but they are creating it through a familiar methodology—the ethos of musical fraternity.

In this chapter, I dissected the term Clube da Esquina—as a sound, an album, and an artistic collective—and its musical reception in Brazil. The CdE has rejected the label of musical movement, preferring the collective name Clube da Esquina to describe their status not as a band, but as a loosely-organized, tightly-knit network of collaborators. The collaborative ethos among Nascimento and the CdE clearly extended into solo recordings by Beto Guedes, Toninho Horta, and Lô Borges, not only Milton Nascimento’s output. Furthermore, the balanced approach into investigating the collective’s idealistic social relations alongside real aesthetic and economic limits upon them allowed for grey areas to form between the CdEs utopian construction of fraternity and the messier human relations surrounding music as a commodity.

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\(^5^3\) “Nunca formamos uma banda. Somos três compositores que se juntaram para gravar um disco. Mas essa hipótese não está descartada. Se surgir convite ou um projeto interessante, vamos estudar a possibilidade com carinho.”
CHAPTER 3

“MPB WITH THE FACE OF MINAS”: CLUBE DA ESQUINA, RUSTICITY, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MINEIRIDADE

Introduction: Finding Tonho and Cacau

For the 40th anniversary of the landmark album *Clube da Esquina*, the culture division of the newspaper *Estado de Minas* published more than eight articles celebrating different aspects of the album’s creation, its significance for Milton Nascimento’s career and *música mineira*, and its longevity among Brazilian and international fans (Brant and Marcelo 2012). There were interviews with Nascimento, composer Lô Borges, and lyricist Fernando Brant—each highlighting friendship as a key theme to the album—alongside editorials on the album as a pivotal reference for succeeding generations of musicians. Another article dedicated itself to the unlikely objective of locating the anonymous boys pictured on the album cover (See Figure 3.1). Fans frequently—and erroneously—identify the album cover as Borges and Nascimento. Seated side by side on a scrubby hill of red clay in front of a barbed-wire fence, the boy on the left is young and light-skinned, while the one on the right is a few years older and dark-skinned. For fans, the friendship displayed between the boys in the photo has become an index of Nascimento and Borges’s collaborative artistic production and personal friendship, as well as a symbol for the unpretentious nature of the CdE collective. The revelation of the whereabouts of *os meninos da capa* [the boys from the album cover] received a hero’s welcome by fans of Nascimento and the CdE; the story quickly spread to other state papers and national publications, like *Rolling Stone Brasil*, and the image of the pair holding the album cover of their younger selves adorned the Facebook feeds of innumerable of my Brazilian contacts (See Figure 3.2).
Figure 3.1 and 3.2 Album cover of *Clube da Esquina* (EMI-Odeon 1972) by Milton Nascimento and Lô Borges. Photo by Cafi (right). Tonho and Cacau holding the album *Clube da Esquina* in 2012 with their childhood images visible on the cover. Photo by Túlio Santos (left).

The photo was taken by Clube da Esquina\(^{54}\) photographer Cafi [Carlos da Silva Assunção Filho] while en route to lyricist Ronaldo Bastos’s family fazenda [farm/country estate]. Cafi called the image particularly powerful since it was taken in the early 1970s, an era when many artists had been exiled from Brazil: “It was like a thunderbolt. It is a strong image. The face of Brazil [*Foi como um raio. É uma imagem forte. A cara do Brasil*]” (Brant and Marcelo 2012).

So which face of Brazil did Cafi see represented in the photo? And had the face of Brazil changed in 40 years? Perhaps the photo symbolized Brazilian racial democracy—a concept denounced as myth by scholars and citizens alike over the past two decades. Literary critic Sérgio Sant’anna titled his 1972 review of *Clube da Esquina* for a Belo Horizonte weekly as follows:

*Milton Nascimento, Lô Borges. O branco e o preto, capa do disco: gente*

Perhaps Cafi saw in the photo loyalty between friends, without regard for race, but with particular regard for a shared geographical and socioeconomic status: rural poverty. Fans likely see in the photo both of these possibilities and others. Finding Tonho and Cacau in 2012

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\(^{54}\) Heretofore referred to as CdE.
provided readers with a rare moment to reflect on 40 years of mineiro social history and attitudes toward rural life through the lens of an ordinary friendship.

The grown-up boys from the album cover—Tonho and Cacau (José Antônio Rimes and Antônio Carlos Rosa de Oliveira, respectively)—were born and raised just across the Minas Gerais border in Rio de Janeiro state and living in circumstances quite unlike those of their famous counterparts. Tonho’s and Cacau’s parents had been lavradores [agricultural workers who till and prepare soil and plant and harvest crops], and the young friends grew up amidst farm life in Rio Grande de Cima, just 12 mi north of Nova Friburgo. The commemorative article hints at the precarity pervading the two men’s lives. Today, Tonho stocks shelves in the frozen foods section of a supermarket and lives with his mother, wife, and two daughters, while Cacau is divorced and working as a gardener and painter in a small coastal town following 2011’s disastrous mudslides. These details were reported straightforwardly, but as the journalists delved deeper, a sinister fetishization of the caipira [country bumpkin] began to emerge. When reporters showed Tonho the album cover, he recognized his image instantly and the article described the moment in which it was taken:

‘Someone in the car yelled at me and I smiled. I was eating a piece of bread that someone had given me, because I was starving to death, and as usual I had no shoes. Even today I don’t like to wear shoes much. But I never knew that I was on an album cover. My mother might even get choked up. We never had photos from when I was a boy,’ said Tonho, who has never heard of Milton Nascimento, nor of the Clube da Esquina. ‘Is it the young man who was minister [of culture]?’ he inquired (Brant and Marcelo 2012).

The article seems to position Tonho and Cacau, not for a sensitive portrayal of the lookalikes that had become unwittingly famous, but for a grotesque punch line. First, the journalists reveal

Tonho’s childhood poverty; his hunger could have been exaggeration, his shoelessness a

55 The floods and mudslides of January 2011 across several central mountainous regions of Rio de Janeiro claimed the lives of more than 900 people and left more than 35,000 homeless.
56 “Alguém do carro me gritou e eu sorri. Estava comendo um pedaço de pão que alguém tinha me dado, porque eu estava morrendo de fome, e para variar descalço. Até hoje não gosto muito de usar sapato. Mas nunca soube que estava na capa de um disco. A minha mãe vai ficar até emocionada. A gente nunca teve foto de quando era menino’, disse Tonho, que nunca ouviu falar em Milton Nascimento, tampouco em Clube da Esquina. ‘É aquele moço que foi ministro?’, indagou.” All translations are the author’s, unless stated otherwise.
personal preference, but the lack of family photos seems to clinch his humble circumstances.

Then, the journalists reveal Tonho’s total ignorance of the popular music for which his own image has become a potent symbol, when he confuses Milton Nascimento with the former Minister of Culture Gilberto Gil. The journalists’ fetishization of rural poverty and their sensationalization of Tonho’s ignorance of (or perhaps indifference to) pop culture did not serve to celebrate mineira culture, but rather reinscribed cultural distance and an urban-rural divide.

Turning to Cacau’s life, we discover that he saw the album cover at a record store while living on the Rio de Janeiro state coastline. Again, the journalists’ coverage is unsettling:

“I put my hand over my photo and just stared at that expression. I thought it really was me and ended up buying the CD, because they didn’t have any more LPs. I just wanted one to hang on to,” Cacau emphasizes, who during the entire report never unglimed himself from the record that belonged to one of the journalists from the Estado de Minas. “I’ll steal this one for myself,” he joked (Brant and Marcelo 2012). Both Tonho and Cacau seemed deeply moved to find their faces on an album cover that had become so famous. Yet, the reporters mocked Cacau’s joke about “stealing” their colleague’s LP after just having revealed that he had only bought the CD version as a keepsake (in other words, he didn’t own, and likely couldn’t afford, a CD player). Yesterday’s album cover boys, who are today’s ordinary men, were used by the reporters as emotional cultural capital for the 40th anniversary of Clube da Esquina in a way that betrays the humble dignity that very photo has come to glorify. Stories like these help to chip away at the myth of globalization and to view more clearly the limits of the long reach that Western-capitalist cosmopolitanism would seem to possess. Despite globalizing tendencies, the sharp split between elite and working classes—and even between middle and working classes—means that there are still plenty of spaces in which

57 Cacau means “cocoa” in English. It is unclear how Antônio Carlos earned this nickname, but could be race-related.
58 “Coloquei a mão sobre a minha foto e fiquei reparando aquele olhar. Achei que era eu mesmo e acabei comprando o CD, porque o LP não tinha mais. Até queria um para poder guardar”, frisa Cacau, que durante toda a reportagem não se desgrudou do álbum que pertence a um dos jornalistas do Estado de Minas. ‘Vou roubar este pra mim’, brincou.”
people do not have access, either by choice (disinterest) or by circumstance (lack of funds or recreational time), to what many consider to be mainstream cultural flows.

Despite the paternalistic tone of the journalists, the album cover is and always has been a powerful representation of everyday friendship within a rural landscape. As children, the boys played football and marbles, took fruit from local vendors, and swam beneath waterfalls and at a little beach along the Rio Grande. The article celebrates the longevity of their friendship, especially in the face of hardship, and surely it is this that the photographer Cafí found so striking as the face of Brazil. The boys’ families moved to different neighborhoods in their 20s, and Tonho emphasized that it was tough to maintain friendships while working 12-hour shifts. What the music of the CdE, and of Nascimento in particular, resonates with so strongly is the idea that Minas Gerais is a place in which friendship and loyalty are valued so highly, not only in and of themselves, but because they are necessary for survival. The strength of a friendship can be measured by the obstacles scaled in order to maintain it. As Tonho summed it up:

*Cada um tomou seu rumo, mas sempre que a gente se vê é uma farra. Amigo é amigo, né? Para toda a vida. We each took a different path, but when we see each other it’s always a riot. A friend is a friend, right? For life* (Brant and Marcelo 2012).

**Minas Gerais: Yano’s Rusticity and the Mineiro Urban/Rural Dichotomy**

The 1972 double album *Clube da Esquina* represented a sea change in critical reception for Nascimento, a foot in the music-industry door for his collaborators, and unprecedented recognition for the musical production of Minas Gerais. But this recognition came hand-in-hand with confusion about how to make sense of Nascimento’s music not only within the burgeoning field of MPB, but in relation to regional stereotypes of *mineiridade*. Many authors writing about the music of Milton Nascimento and the CdE have focused on rural themes that highlight the lifeways of the interior of Minas Gerais state (Perrone 1989; McGowan and Pessanha 1998; Canton 2014). *Mineiro* identity is often described in relation to the topography of the mountains,
hills, and rivers of this vast state, larger than California, smaller than Texas, (IBGE).\textsuperscript{59} Few authors (Viveiros Martins is one) have tempered their musical analyses with the historical processes of urbanization and industrialization throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century in Minas Gerais, during which families migrated to the new capital city of Belo Horizonte as an alternative to Rio and São Paulo. Chapters Three and Four attempt to deconstruct the rural-urban binary to discover how mineiridade has been resignified by the music of Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina.

In her book on \textit{enka} music, Christine Yano analyzed how nation has been imagined in Japan. Yano states that “the symbolic split in twentieth-century Japan is therefore not so much city versus country (although this is still a relevant dichotomy) as it is Tokyo versus not-Tokyo” (Yano 2003, 19). Indeed, in twentieth-century Brazil, the term \textit{eixo} Rio-São Paulo [pronounced AY-shoo; Rio-São Paulo axis] denotes an axis of national production where Rio de Janeiro dominates the media, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, government, and multi-national headquarters and São Paulo is a hub for financial, technological, and manufacturing industries. Like Yano finds with Tokyo, the \textit{eixo} Rio-São Paulo as the heart of national cultural production is defined against Belo Horizonte—or Curitiba or Goiânia—as a \textit{não-eixo} (non-axis). Since many of the Japanese cities commonly labeled with rural descriptors have well over a million inhabitants, Yano prefers the concept of “rusticity” for her analysis. Where rurality connotes country living, sparse population, farming, hunting, and agricultural activities, Yano argues that rusticity is “based not on population density, strict geographic location, or even economic base, but on cultural distance from a single national center” (Yano 2003, 20).

Throughout the period of the Old Republic (from Independence in 1889 to the Revolution of 1930), Minas Gerais held great political power as part of an unofficial system of \textit{café-com-}

\textsuperscript{59} According to IBGE, Minas Gerais has an area of 586,522 square kilometers.
leite [coffee with milk] politics. Where São Paulo and Minas Gerais represented the coffee and dairy oligarchs, respectively, presidential power alternated between these two economic powerhouse states for decades, until the first coup of 1930. Getúlio Vargas, then-governor of Rio Grande do Sul, overthrew the democratically-elected President Júlio Prestes, former governor of São Paulo, with help from Minas Gerais and sugar-producing states of the Northeast (Skidmore 2010, 108-09). Though Minas Gerais continued to be a dominant force in Brazilian political life, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo have continued to dominate cultural life.

Because of Brazil’s vast land and widely dispersed population, the concept of an urban-rural dichotomy is still a powerful force both within states and across groups of states. For example, mineiros that I met in Belo Horizonte and who were from smaller towns in Minas often told me that they were from the interior. In states like Rio, São Paulo and Bahia, interior is used to mean “not coastal” in opposition to the term litoral [coastal]. But in Minas, interior has come to mean almost anywhere that isn’t Belo Horizonte, a city chosen as the capital due to its location in the center of the state—surely an “interior” location. In Minas, being na cidade (in the city) is contrasted with being na roça, which means literally, in the rough, in the country, in the fields, on the farm, or any number of less-urbanized spaces. For example, I often heard da roça used to indicate someone from a very small town or village: “Ele é da roça mesmo [He is from the real backwoods],” and was often said with a knowing raise of the eyebrow. Sometimes the phrase (condescendingly) indicated the presence of an alter ego—as in, “This person may look sophisticated now, but in the past he was just a caipira [hick],”—while other times it communicated an extra measure of respect—“This person may appear to live a thoroughly urban lifestyle, but actually she has great wisdom about the natural world or rural life.” This wisdom
may have to do with coping cleverly with fewer resources, knowledge of traditional remedies, or culinary, agricultural, or artisanal skills.

Sociologist and literary theorist Antônio Cândido sought to explore cultural distance in his monograph on *caipira* society in western São Paulo state in the late 1940s. In 1940, 85% of the total *mineira* population resided in cities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants, and 54% lived in towns with fewer than 10,000 people. Published in 1975, Cândido emphasized the importance of differentiating between “rústico” and “rural.” He theorized that, though *rural* in Brazil expresses geographical location, it is often used interchangeably with pejorative terms, such as *rude* [uncultivated, coarse] or *tosco* [rough, crude]—perhaps stemming from perceptions about *caipira* modernity. In 1947, for example, infrastructure was virtually nil in the *caipira* community of Bofete in northeastern São Paulo state. Though electric lighting and few radios had arrived in some buildings, the population had no vehicles, roads, bathtubs, fertilizer, veterinarians, newspapers, cinemas, associations, or bookstores, and most crops were consumed locally (1975, 119). By 1954, Bofete had 15 vehicles, a health clinic, running water, and electricity in most buildings, but no sewage system and only bars had radios and refrigerators.

The well-known dictionary known as *Aurelião* contains over 67 (!) regional synonyms for *caipira*, including *caboclo* [ethic term for mixed Portuguese and indigenous heritage], *roceiro* [of the *roça*], and *sertanejo* [of the *sertão*]. Other terms for rural peoples connote regional animals [*beira-corgo*, common horse; *jacu*, rainforest bird], indigenous people [*botocudo*, from Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo], beliefs [*catimbós*, practitioners of syncretic ritual], or supposed

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60 *Aurelião* is the affectionate nickname, meaning “big Aurélio,” which refers to the unabridged dictionary edited by Aurélio Buarque de Holanda Ferreira, a distant cousin of historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda. See [http://www.chicobuarque.com.br/critica/crit_leite_ipsilon_isabel.htm](http://www.chicobuarque.com.br/critica/crit_leite_ipsilon_isabel.htm).
disposition [casca-grossa, rude or crude] (ABH Ferreira 2010, 384). These markers of
difference inevitably included secondary definitions with pejorative connotations—including
tacky, coarse, uneducated, and ignorant—showing that along with this enormous diversity of
rustic peoples and lifestyles throughout Brazil, come negative popular associations between rural
inhabitants and assumptions about their practices and characteristics.

Turning back to the search for Tonho and Cacau, the journalists described the men’s
initial feelings at meeting them as “ressabiado [wary]” and “desconfiaram [were mistrusting].”
The reporters spent two paragraphs describing how Tonho’s 69-year-old mother called
throughout the interview to make sure that he wasn’t being kidnapped, while Cacau admitted that
he had moved out of town just before the press arrived because he suspected the “reporters” were
actually lawyers or police regarding his alimony payments. Cacau even self-consciously worried
what people would think when they learned the image was of himself as a child and not Milton
Nascimento. The reporters’ willingness to feed an obsession with the trope of the caipira and
summary dismissal of their concerns as rural naivety confirms that rural prejudice persists in
contemporary mineiro society.

The suspicion and fears these rural families—black and white—expressed are likely
borne out of relevant experiences in the precarious lower echelons of the working classes—
exploitation by landowners, the instability of contract work, fear of authority figures. They are
anything but naïve about how the world works. Cândido’s research noted that, though
infrastructure was slow to change in caipira society, social (re)organization was subject to the
dramatic peaks and valleys of coffee production in the 40s and 50s (1975, 116). While caipiras
had long produced their own food, clothing, and even housing through mutual cooperation,

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61 Caipira was defined as “…habitantes do campo ou da roça, particularmente os de pouca instrução e de convívio e
modos rústicos e canhestros [inhabitants of the fields or farms, particularly those of little instruction and of rustic or
uncouth social relations].”
latifundiários [large estate landowners] were enticing some caipiras into alternate work arrangements: salariados [salaried workers], parceiros [share-croppers], and sitiantes [small-scale subsistence farmers who provide occasional labor for landowners]. Tonho and Cacau’s parents were likely to have experienced great turmoil as agricultural workers and pushed their sons towards jobs in service or construction.

In the mid-20th Century, rural-to-urban immigrants within Minas Gerais witnessed the rapid growth of metro Belo Horizonte, with its civic construction projects, administrative headquarters, and cultural amenities, and the simultaneous dwarfing of colonial-era urban centers. In 1934, the Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional [SPHAN—Historic and Artistic Patrimony Service] implemented a law protecting the architecture of the colonial period, including churches, public buildings, and town halls. Geographer John Dickenson has noted that since fazendeiros [farm owners] often maintained spare, functional farms, wealth was more concentrated in urban spaces, meaning that these sites preserved an “elite aestheticism” rather than popular cultural patrimony (1994, 20-22). This contributed to the reimagining of cities—such as Ouro Preto, Mariana, Diamantina, and São João del Rei, the so-called cidades históricas—as provincial relics in comparison to modernist construction projects in Belo Horizonte.

Rusticity in Minas Gerais is also defined by aesthetic judgments as they relate to living conditions. The 2008 National Survey of Basic Sanitation found that at least 33 Brazilian municipalities were without a rede geral [general network] of water supply, mostly in the states of Paraíba and Piauí (in the northeast) and Rondônia (in the central west) (IBGE 2008, 26).

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62 Dickenson notes that by the late 1980s, just three afro-Brazilian sites were listed for protection—the São Luis slave market, the Palmares quilombo, and a terreiro de candomblé in Salvador (1994, 22).
63 The National Survey of Basic Sanitation was inaugurated in 1974 and has undergone several overhauls throughout the 1980s and 1990s.
Furthermore, of those with running water, 18% of Brazil’s total population has no access to sewage collection. Much of northern Minas Gerais lacks this sanitary service, including scattered communities in the state’s most heavily populated central region, affecting more than 600,000 inhabitants, or 31.1% of the state (IBGE 2008, 27-8). For those domiciles without sewage systems, septic systems are a plausible alternative, but only 14 municipalities reported using this method, with most using *fossas secas* [dry pits], perhaps due to prohibitive cost. A 2007 report from the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) suggested that access may also vary by race/ethnicity; it showed that 30% of *quilombola* communities [historical lands of escaped slaves] lacked access to running water and more than 96% lacked waste-water networks, using rudimentary septic tanks or open trenches (Cedefes 2007). If Cândido thought infrastructure was slow to develop in the 1950s, he might well be rolling in his grave at the inequality of development that persists until today—and the prejudicial attitudes that go along with it.

For most of the 20th Century, Minas Gerais placed below the national average in population growth, meaning that while Minas was an immigration destination regionally, *mineiros* also left the state, often for the *eixo* Rio-São Paulo (Brito and Horta 2002). The state’s growth was lowest during the economic recession of the 1960s, and by 1970, only 29% were living in towns with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, and nearly 27% of the total state population lived in the central region, including metropolitan BH and the Eastern steel valley. Brothers Borges and Márcio Borges were born and raised in BH, or Beagá (pronounced “bay ah-GAH”), and have witnessed the population balloon from approximately 60 thousand people in the mid-1960s to 2.5 million people in 2010. Milton Nascimento and Wagner Tiso grew up in Três Pontas (53,860 in 2010), Fernando Brant in Diamantina (45,880), and Beto Guedes in Montes Claros (361,915).
Their rural childhood experiences led to coming-of-age and adulthood in an urban environment, and a stage of transition—perhaps lifelong—of reconciling urban and rural lifeways, habits, and values. Other members of the Clube da Esquina—Toninho Horta, Nelson Ângelo, and Nivaldo Ornelas—were born and raised in Belo Horizonte, but they were the first generation in their families to do so. It is telling that the music of the CdE is rarely referred to as music from Belo Horizonte, but as music from Minas—música mineira—precisely because it expresses this rural-urban duality.

Significantly, the core repertoire of the Clube da Esquina was recorded in the 1970s, when divisions between urban and rural standards of living could still be quite stark. For fans in the 1970s, the rusticity portrayed in the music of the Clube da Esquina helped to reconcile urban and rural imaginaries at a time when the process of urbanization and industrialization was still unfolding and rural lifeways were undergoing powerful transformations. The search for Tonho and Cacau shows a lingering nostalgia for rural Brazil and finding Tonho and Cacau in São Paulo (not in Minas Gerais) reminded mineiros of a shared social history across the Southeast. On the other hand, the story of Tonho and Cacau—at least as told by Estado de Minas journalists—also shows that the ever-widening gap between working and elite classes over the last few decades has given rise to a growing indifference, incomprehension, and even hostility towards the caipira, and their urban transplant, the city hick. Tonho and Cacau are part of this marginalized, silent class, a precarious part of the working class whose parents were the last generation of pre-industrialized farmers. The music of Nascimento and the CdE has helped fans, in lieu of official histories, to reimagine these marginalized figures and their own connection to rustic spaces, and perhaps most importantly, their connection to the people that inhabit them.

Hearing Rusticity in the Clube da Esquina: Two Ways In
Case One: “Cio da Terra [Heat of the Earth]”: Rusticity, Race and Regional Identity
In 1976, Nascimento and the CdE were getting ready to release *Geraes*, the unofficial follow-up album to the critical and popular success *Minas* (Odeon 1975). A YouTube video of news coverage from that time shows Nascimento and Chico Buarque performing the closing track from the album, “Cio da Terra [Heat of the Earth],” with English narration:

The two top stars in Brazilian music: Milton Nascimento, who is black, and Chico Buarque, who is white. Despite their huge commercial success, both remain committed artists acutely concerned with the problems and hopes of their society. Nascimento’s song is about the fertile land of Brazil and the natural cycle of its soil, a song in praise of everything that the city of Rio, in which they sing, is not.

The commentator points to three intersecting issues: race, rurality/urbanity, and socioeconomic class. Nascimento and Buarque undoubtedly represent the middle- and upper-class echelons of Brazilian society. Nascimento was born to poor, working-class—and black—parents in Rio de Janeiro and adopted upon his mother’s death by middle-class—and white—parents to live in the Minas Gerais interior, while Buarque was born in Rio de Janeiro to the illustrious historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and his mother, a painter and pianist. As Nascimento and Buarque continue their performance, the video cuts to footage presumably taken on the streets of Rio de Janeiro: a woman and toddler, tired and shoeless, sit on the pavement as pedestrians stream past; afro-descended children sell food on the street; a shirtless, shoeless black teen shines the shoes of an unknown man, his torso out of frame.

The journalist was attempting to show that socio-political concerns are shared jointly by all citizens regardless of race or social status, citing the composers as prime examples. The commentator also drew a disconnect between urbanity and nature—embodied respectively in the city of Rio de Janeiro and the “fertile land” to which Nascimento’s song refers (read: Minas Gerais). Numerous laborers—many agricultural and many afro-descended—migrated from the

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64 Aside from YouTube, much of Nascimento’s discography can be digitally streamed at his archive at the Instituto Antônio Carlos Jobim: http://portal.jobim.org/pt/acervos-digitais/Nascimento-nascimento.
65 See the YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYrtVbyPWKg
66 Though Buarque de Holanda wrote many books, his most famous was his first in 1936 *Raízes do Brasil* [Brazil’s Roots], containing his sociological theory of the *homem cordial* [cordial Brazilian man].
Northeast and the Central-East to Rio (and São Paulo) in the mid-20th Century in hopes of finding less back-breaking opportunities. However, others took their places and continued to work in commercial and small-scale agricultural economies crucial to feeding the growing megalopolis of the eixo Rio-São Paulo in the 1970s. The lyrics to “Cio da Terra” speak of painstaking manual labor—threshing wheat and cutting cane, processing them for sustenance—and celebrate the irreplaceable knowledge of how to care for fertile soil, the “heat of the earth.”

Debulhar o trigo  Thresh the wheat
Recolher cada bago do trigo  Reap each stalk of the wheat
Forjar do trigo o milagre do pão  Forge from the wheat the miracle of bread
E se fartar de pão  And satiate yourself with bread

Decepar a cana  Hew the cane
Recolher a garapa da cana  Reap the husk of the cane
Roubar da cana a doçura do mel  Rob from the cane the sweetness of honey
Se lambuzar de mel  Get smeared with honey

Afagar a terra  Caress the earth
Conhecer os desejos da terra  Know the desires of the earth
Cio da terra propícia estação  Heat of the earth propitious season
E fecundar o chão  And fertilize the ground

Though spirituality is not overtly, or even indirectly, mentioned in the lyrics, the mood has an austere profundity that makes it not altogether secular either. In his ethnography on caipira society, Antônio Cândido studied collaborative farming rituals, including the mutirão [collective effort] of the São Paulo interior.67 These mutual work events often included derrubada [clearing a field], roçada [trimming bushes with a sickle], plantio [planting], limpa [pruning or weeding], colheita [harvest], malhação [threshing], construção de casa [building a house], and fiação [spinning] and were performed cooperatively among neighbors (2010, 81-2). Hosts offered food, drink, and a celebration at the end of these work periods, which Cândido interpreted as a type of payment for their obligation. But an elder caipira corrected him:

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67 Mutirão [joint or collective effort] comes from the Portuguese word mútuo [mutual] and the augmentative -ão.
The *mutirão* isn’t an obligation meant for the people, but an obligation with God, for the love of those that serve their neighbors; for this [reason], no one is refused help when asked (2010, 82).

The solemn tone of “Cio da Terra” starts to become comprehensible. The *caipira* devotion to labor is equated to one’s devotion to God, and not for the mere sake of it, but for a direct return—the more prosperous one’s neighbor, the more love will be returned by god, a kind of *caipira* karma. Though the practice of *mutirão* exists in many parts of Brazil, its origins in Minas are believed to be many:

> In Minas, it [the *mutirão*] demonstrated the relationship between Iberian heritage and indigenous cultural influences that, appropriated by Africans and their descendants, resulted in a complex cultural frame that unfolds in various rural and semi-rural areas of the state (Starling et al 2011, 201).

The song references manual labor techniques, which, in the 1970s, were still the rule rather than the exception. Mechanization and other technologies (such as the use of fertilizer) transformed agricultural production only in the 1990s in Brazil, and studies have shown that small-scale producers—including those using primarily manual labor—continue to work alongside larger mechanized producers in Minas (Bastos and Gomes 2011). The song, then, communicates a high respect not only for manual labor, but also the spiritual collectivity that labor reinforces. Cascudo elaborates that laborers sang together during a *mutirão*, but that even so, it should be considered first and foremost a social institution, rather than primarily a cultural practice (Cascudo 2012, 471).

Nascimento has said that after reading a book on work songs in Mississippi, he was inspired to write “Canção do Sal [Salt Song]” about the *salinas* [salt mines] in Cabo Frio, Rio da Janeiro state, a song that Elis Regina recorded on the 1966 album *Elis* (Red Bull Gmbh).

Likewise, “Cio da Terra” could be read as a continuation of Nascimento’s Brazilian work songs

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68 “…no mutirão não há obrigação para com as pessoas, e sim para com Deus, por amor de quem se serve o próximo; por isso, a ninguém é dado recusar auxílio pedido.”

69 “Em Minas, ela demonstra as relações entre a herança ibérica e as referências culturais indígenas que, apropriadas por africanos e seus descendentes, resultaram em um complexo quadro cultural que se desdobra em várias áreas rurais e semirurais do estado.”
(Hear *Geraes*, Track 14). The song lyrics, the large number of untrained voices, and the repetitive elements of the song all evoke images of collectivity and solidarity. Each verse narrates the inner monologue of a worker in sync with his task—“hew the cane, reap the husk of the cane”—then acknowledges the benefits of hard work for the individual and the community—“satiate yourself with bread” and “get smeared with honey.” The emphasis on a large *coro* indexes community, and though the album credits Chico Buarque as a guest vocalist, he doesn’t perform as a soloist. Rather, his voice becomes intertwined with, and nearly indistinguishable from, the rich voices of the *coro*, made up of Nascimento and all of the track’s musicians. It is significant that Nascimento often chooses to supplement his recordings with both trained and untrained voices, rather than hire specialist background singers, as it demonstrates a commitment to fraternal and unpretentious values.

Though the liner notes credit no female voices, Nascimento, Vasconcelos, and the others overdubbed their voices several times using falsetto to cover all registers, assuring the interpretation of the *coro* as a unisex *povo* [people]. The song is comprised of three verses (no chorus) with a brief instrumental interlude between each one; all three verses are then repeated to complete the 4-minute song. Frequent textural changes in the accompaniment ensure that the six verses are not identical, but transform subtly from one to the next. First, Nascimento’s solo voice in falsetto alongside two guitars and percussion (0:25), followed by additional voices and instruments in each succeeding verse (0:48, 1:35, 2:20, 3:04, 3:26), including the low *surdo* and electric bass, in progressively more extreme frequency ranges.

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70 To stream the album *Geraes*, go to the Milton Nascimento Archive at www.jobim.org/Nascimento -> Click on Audio & Video -> View list -> Select *Geraes*.
71 The musicians include Milton Nascimento (viola), Chico Buarque (voice), Ângelo Angelo (guitar), Novelli (bass and surdo), Robertinho Silva (drums), and Naná Vasconcelos (percussion).
72 The song “Saudade dos aviões da Panair [Longing for Panair planes]” (*Minas* 1975) is a prime example, in which singer-guitarist Joyce sang alongside Nascimento’s friends who had scarcely seen the inside of a studio.
One of the song’s most confounding idiosyncrasies, as many musicians told me, is its rhythm and meter. Nascimento’s current lead guitarist Wilson Lopes is also a professor at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais [UFMG] in Belo Horizonte and recently transcribed, edited, and published *Songbook Milton Nascimento* (Lopes 2015). In 2011, I observed Wilson’s two seminars on The Music of Milton Nascimento, in which we discussed *compasso quebrado* [“broken” or changing meter] in the song “Cio da Terra.” Figure 3.3 shows an amalgamation of salient features from several of the song’s choruses using Wilson’s metric formulation, gleaned from hours of rehearsals. Wilson loved to emphasize how tricky the meter is by telling the class that Nascimento once corrected Chico Buarque’s performance—the song’s lyricist—before a show. Though Nascimento learned Orphéonique singing in school, he is a self-taught composer-guitarist and prefers others to notate his idiosyncratic harmonies, which often defy Western conventions of chord symbol notation.  

For example, the penultimate measures (bars 9-10) of Figure 3.3 clearly indicate D major, with a strong D in the bass and F# in the melody, while the supporting harmony highlights an E minor chord—or 9 (E), 11 (G) and 13 (B)—to exploit the open strings of the guitar.

To critics who have said Nascimento’s music sounds “wrong,” lyricist Fernando Brant argues:

> In reality, what exists first is the music. The sound comes before the theory... Right music and wrong music don’t exist. If you play it, it exists, and it is right” (Vilara 2006, 39).

In other words, Nascimento’s style is not borne out of technical deficiency or musical ignorance, but from experimentation; he prefers unconventional sounds. He plays what he means, and he

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73 Orphéonique singing refers to a movement of mass choral education in France in the early 19th C. and popularized in Brazil by composer Villa-Lobos under the Vargas regime in the 1940s. See Avelar and Dunn 2011, 57-62.

74 While many theorists might use the slash chord Em/D, this notation indicates an E minor sound over an alternate bass note, D. However, when the chord is expressed as a vertical fraction $E_{minor}/D_{Major}$, it is heard as a D major chord with the E minor notes functioning as extensions, which seems to be Nascimento’s intention.

75 “Na realidade o que existe primeiro é a música, o som vem antes da teoria... Não existe música certa e música errada, se tocar existe, e está certo.”
means what he plays. Nascimento’s rhythmic grooves can be as challenging as his harmony, often changing meter or using polyrhythms between sections. Nascimento’s guitar toque—meaning “touch” or “beat” in Portuguese, and, as a musical term, indicates a particular strumming or fingerpicking groove—is central to his songs, but one that would be difficult to reproduce in published sheet music. According to bars 1 and 2 in Figure 3.4, Wilson’s metric formulation configures them as a bar of 4/4 and a bar of 2/4. Yet, the guitar toque reveals a preference for imposing ternary figures over binary ones; Figure 3.5 shows the guitar toque could be heard as two bars of 3/4.

Looking at the song more broadly, Figure 3.6 shows that the entire melody could be expressed as 2/4. Therefore, in some instances Wilson’s preferred metric formulation reflects the melodic rhythm, sometimes a preference for 4/4, and other times it favors Nascimento’s guitar toque. Bar 9, for example (see Figure 3.6), shows an unusual ⅛ guitar toque that also emphasizes the lyric pão [bread] on beat 1. If the song were notated in 2/4 (see Figure 3.6), the word pão would fall on an offbeat anticipation of bar 9. Nascimento’s preference for odd-numbered rhythmic groupings is a tendency that goes counter to notions of “balance” and “rounded forms” in Western art music, Tin Pan Alley songs, and much commercial pop. This is not an argument for one formulation over the other, but rather an illuminating insight into Nascimento’s compositional preferences as well as the extraordinary variety of possible interpretations available to the listener. These challenges in rhythmic and harmonic notation could also explain why Nascimento’s songs have never been published until his musical director and guitarist compiled them (Lopes 2015).

76 The B section of Nascimento’s song “Sentinela” is a good example of 3 against 4, where the vocal melody is in 4/4 while the band plays in 3. Each beat of three for the band is worth a dotted half note to the melody, so that the two rhythms don’t resolve until the end of the B section—10 bars of 4/4 or 8 bars of 3.
Figure 3.3 Short rhythmic transcription of Milton Nascimento’s “Cio da Terra,” with lyrics by Chico Buarque, on Geraes (EMI-Odeon 1976). As dictated by Wilson Lopes during the course The Music of Milton Nascimento at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais; Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 2011.
Figure 3.4 Transcription of “Cio da Terra” showing melody, coro, approximate guitar voicings, electric bass, and surdo with Wilson Lopes’ metric formulation.

Figure 3.5 An alternate metric formulation for “Cio da Terra” based on Nascimento’s toque on the violão.

Figure 3.6 Melody of “Cio da Terra.” Top staff expressed in Wilson Lopes’s metric formulation and bottom staff notated in 2/4.

How can we explain Nascimento’s playing in terms of musical influence? Where does this preference for odd meters originate? Wagner Tiso and Nivaldo Ornelas have both said that Nascimento hugely admired Dave Brubeck’s *Take Five!* (Ornelas 2012). Tiso, however, clarifies that, playing with odd and mixed meter was something Nascimento experimented with growing up around *música regional* and that odd meters are a local influence. For Tiso, Brubeck’s album
only confirmed to him that odd meters and polyrhythms could be applied to commercial popular music in Brazil and be broadly successful:

Nascimento became enchanted with this compound meter thing. And with this jeito do interior [rural way], of playing very arrastado [laid back], the cataretê, the umbigada, all those things, this came along with those polyrhythms that we heard and liked. So, he brought this to his own music, some things with different rhythms; he would play reto [straight], it seemed like he was outside [of the time], but no, the timing of his singing was entirely inside. It is something very particular of his, but it is something that we heard in our childhood and in our teens (Amaral 2013, 262).

Tiso gets at something really crucial here; it is not only that Nascimento prefers odd and compound meters, but that his vocal interpretation of them is performed independently from what his guitar is playing. It is that method—of playing arrastado, or laid back—that Tiso hears as particularly mineiro.

This brief example shows it is very difficult indeed to trace lines of musical influence. Rather than tracing influence as an either/or scenario—his style is either regional or international—the use of odd, mixed, and compound meters came from both regional song and dance forms and Brubeckian playfulness, becoming something uniquely Nascimentiano.

Brazilians do not generally associate the music of Milton Nascimento and the CdE with country music, but “Cio da Terra” pays tribute to música caipira [hick or hillbilly music], though some prefer the more politically correct term música sertaneja raiz [roots country music]. The famous dupla caipira [country duo] Pena Branca e Xavantinho covered “Cio da Terra” four years after Nascimento’s recording for their debut album Velha morada [Old Dwelling] (Warner 1980), a reference to their hometown Uberlândia in the western Triângulo region of Minas.

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77 Cataretê is a rural line dance from Southern Brazil accompanied by viola, hand-clapping, and foot-stomping, and believed to have originated during the colonial period and found in São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and parts of Goiás (Cascudo 2012, 185). Umbigada is a choreographical movement in which circle dancers touch navels in order to select the next soloist, believed to be of Afro-Brazilian origin (Cascudo 2012, 705).

78 “O Nascimento ficou muito encantado com essa coisa dos compassos compostos. E com esse jeito do interior de tocar muito arrastado [dragged, entrained, swept] os catetêts, as umbigadas, aquelas coisas todas, isso vinha junto com aquelas polirritmias que a gente tinha ouvido e gostado. Então, ele trouxe isso pra música dele, algumas coisas com uma rítmica diferente; ele ia tocando reto, parecia que estava fora, mas não, o timing de cantar estava inteiramente dentro. É uma coisa bem particular dele, mas é uma coisa que a gente ouviu na infância e na juventude.”
Gerais. José Ramiro Sobrinho (Pena Branca)\textsuperscript{79} and Ranulfo Ramiro da Silva (Xavantinho) were
born in 1939 and 1942, respectively, to an afro-descended family of seven siblings, all of whom
performed manual labor on farms, in blacksmiths, and at slaughterhouses. In the late 1950s, the
dupla began singing on Uberlândia’s Rádio Educadora, and ten years later, the brothers migrated
to São Paulo, where they slowly gained acclaim while working in service and construction.

In 1986, Milton Nascimento invited Pena Branca e Xavantinho to perform “Cio da Terra”
on the monthly TV program Chico e Caetano.\textsuperscript{80} Nascimento’s imagery for “Cio da Terra” does
not come from direct experience, but largely from people and events he witnessed while
spending his holidays on fazendas in Minas (Museu CdE Nascimento). The decision by Pena
Branca e Xavantinho—agricultural laborers like those Nascimento would have observed—to
record “Cio da Terra” confirmed for Nascimento, Buarque, and their fans, that the song resonated
with those about whom it intended to speak.

Pena Branca e Xavantinho began as regional songwriters, and certainly part of their
decision to adapt a song by two icons of commercial pop would have been to attract a broader
audience, but their performance didn’t conform to Nascimento’s style. Rather, the version begins
with Nascimento’s guitar and voice, using a rubato style for the first verse (0:15), then Pena
Branca e Xavantinho join in with (a slightly stilted) vocal harmony—their guitars silent—for the
second verse (1:01), and the dupla drops out again for the third verse (1:28) as Nascimento
initiates a steady tempo. He is accompanied by percussionist Robertinho Silva before slowing
once again into rubato and fading out altogether (1:50).

\textsuperscript{79} Folklorist and violeiro [viola player] Cacai Nunes noted that Pena Branca’s stage name may have been taken to
honor the names of one of the folia de reis groups in the Patrocínio neighborhood of Uberlândia (Nunes 2011).
\textsuperscript{80} Nascimento and Pena Branca e Xavantinho’s performance of “Cio da Terra” with footage taken from Chico
Buarque and Caetano Veloso’s monthly TV program filmed at Teatro Fênix in Rio de Janeiro and broadcast by TV
Globo in 1986: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0yyFjQSos
Pena Branca e Xavantinho perform the final three verses in their own *música caipira* style and even in their preferred key. Nascimento wrote the song in A minor, but the *dupla* adapted their version to G major (2:05), sticking firmly to Western functional harmony with just three major triads—I, V, and IV (see Figure 3.7). To some ears, the change of key signals a change in mood from somber to exclamatory, but the *dupla’s* demeanor remains as sentimental as Nascimento’s. The melody is altered slightly to fit this new harmonic scheme, and the vocal harmony consists entirely of thirds.

Notably, Nascimento does not join in on the vocals (lightly strumming his guitar), thereby avoiding any caricature of Pena Branca e Xavantinho’s *caipira* dialect—thick rolled R’s and round “oh” sounds of “trigo [wheat]” and “bago [grain]” (typically pronounced “ooo” in Portuguese). Rather, Nascimento improvises a vocalese (2:17) during each *estribilho* [instrumental interlude] (Reily 1992, 345). Many of Nascimento’s rhythmic peculiarities are ironed out into a strummed 2/4 meter, in which Pena Branca keeps the pulse with the *viola* (with a DDUD pattern of downstrokes and upstrokes) and Xavantinho plucks out a prominent bass line with the thumb and occasional fingerpicking on the upper strings of the *violão*. The *dupla* does, however, share Nascimento’s interest in hemiola effects. Percussionist Robertinho Silva accompanies each 8th note with a gently shaken *caxixi* in one hand, while marking the offbeats (& of 1, & of 2) with a heavier set of *caxixi* in the other hand. At the song’s midpoint, Pena Branca e Xavantinho play a bar of ¾ (Figure 3.7, bar 8; at 2:16, 2:45 and 3:21) and when Robertinho does not alter his pattern, the *caxixi* then emphasizes the strong beats (1 and 2), until another measure of ¾ at bar 15 (2:22, 2:56 and 3:37) flips the *caxixi* back to emphasizing the offbeats.
Despite their differing musical styles, personal backgrounds, and socioeconomic positions, the television performance aimed to establish common ground. Each musician contributed to the other’s performance without adjusting or sacrificing their preferred musical styles and personae, thus demonstrating the validity and beauty of the other. The sociohistorical circumstances surrounding the composition and performance of “Cio da Terra” intersected with mineira economic history, ethnic identity, and socioeconomic class in ways that normalized, rather than exoticized, feelings of rusticity among listeners.

Though Milton Nascimento has long argued that he does not play specifically “regional” music, that he just plays music, his fans might cite “Cio da Terra” as one of many songs that help sound the rustic lifeways of Minas Gerais in a commercial popular music style. Poet and critic Sérgio Sant’anna has warned that glorifying the local has its dangers:

Figure 3.7 Transcription of Pena Branca e Xavantinho’s 1986 performance of “Cio da Terra” on the TV Globo program Chico e Caetano, showing on alternate key, harmonization, and rhythmic formulation.
Localism is a grotesque, provincial sentiment. But things that matter customarily come from some root source, dispersing itself upwards, in every direction (Sant’anna 1972).81

For Milton Nascimento, mixing these rustic influences with anglo-American pop, rock, jazz, and film music was his way of making rusticity heard far beyond the borders of Minas Gerais.

**Beto Guedes and Toninho Horta: Rustic spaces, nature and the everyday**

The music of the CdE expresses a strong connection between the human spirit, the natural world, and the everyday. Though spirituality often connotes organized religion, the music of guitarist Beto Guedes expresses a secular spirituality more in line with Zen mindfulness. In observing one’s immediate surroundings and our connectedness to it, a transcendent understanding of the nature of reality can occur—that hum of the human spirit that bubbles up in communion with flora, fauna, and wide open spaces. Observation and physical activity in these spaces offer up insights and experiences that can be more difficult to find in urban environments. Guedes’s albums in the late 1970s explored everyday themes of childhood and domestic spaces, often rural, (“Gabriel” and “Choveu”) as well as the grandiosity of nature and the modern city (“A página do relâmpago elétrico” and “Belo Horror”).

Guedes’s family moved from Montes Claros to the capital city Belo Horizonte in 1960 as part of a growing rural-to-urban shift in Brazil. Though reserved and timid by nature at 9 years old, these characteristics were compounded in BH where he was frequently teased about his thick accent, a legacy from his Bahian grandparents. Even today, Guedes is soft-spoken, dislikes giving interviews, and speaks little on stage. Friends since their early teens, songwriter Lô Borges enjoys needling Guedes about his disposition. He claims that when Nascimento invited the pair to record *Clube da Esquina* in Rio de Janeiro, Guedes’s mother told Borges, “Look, take care of Alberto. He’s a boy from the interior. He doesn’t even know how to cross the street—

81 “Bairrismo é um sentimento grotesco, provinciano. Mas as coisas que valem costumam partir de uma raiz, espalhando-se para cima, para todos os lados.”
he’s afraid of the cars in Rio” (Museu CdE, Lô Borges\(^8^2\)). Although this could be dismissed as good-natured ribbing, Borges’s joke is a typical consequence of the growing cultural distance between the megalopolis of Belo Horizonte and everywhere else in Minas Gerais. Today, Montes Claros has nearly 500,000 inhabitants, but in 1960 it was considered a small, rural city with 45,000 urban inhabitants surrounded by a rural population of 86,000 (Brito and Ribeiro 2010). Guedes describes growing up in the 1950s:

> Montes Claros was a small city, a dirt road all the way to Belo Horizonte. It was that old story: it took a long time for things to get there. So, those that had model airplanes had to work really hard in order to request them. They didn’t have them in Belo Horizonte; you had to go to São Paulo. My childhood was basically like that. A bit of the outdoors and a bit of model airplanes (Museu Clube da Esquina, Beto Guedes).\(^8^3\)

Beto Guedes’ music would seem to be at least semi-autobiographical in that it represents the reluctant urban dweller who finds solace in small-town, rustic life. His lyricists don't narrate rural agricultural activities or other traditional lifeways, but, rather, the feeling of freedom that communing with nature can bring. Like music, perhaps Guedes’s passion for flying small-engine airplanes also helps him to contemplate his place in the sprawling metropolis.

In his book on English prog rock, Macan cites its “gargantuan stage shows, its fascination with epic subject matter drawn from science fiction, mythology, and fantasy literature, and above all for its attempt to combine classical music’s sense of space and monumental scope with rock’s raw power and energy” (Macan 1997, 3). For Guedes, prog rock proved a particularly powerful choice with which to create a fusion with Brazilian—especially mineiro—styles and a platform to display his prodigious multi-instrumental talents, including guitar, viola, and mandolin.

---

\(^8^2\) “Olha, você toma cuidado com o Alberto, o Alberto é menino do interior, ele não sabe nem atravessar a rua, ele tem medo de carro no Rio.”

\(^8^3\) “Montes Claros era uma cidade pequena. Estrada de terra até Belo Horizonte. Era aquela história: as coisas demoravam demais a chegar. Então, quem tinha aeromodelo ralava muito porque tinha que pedir. Em Belo Horizonte não tinha. Tinha que vir de São Paulo. A minha infância foi basicamente isso. Um pouco de mato e um pouco de aeromodelo.”
Totally absent, however, are images of supernatural fantasy, futuristic science fiction, and elaborate stage performances.

As I interviewed Guedes at his home in Belo Horizonte, he was particularly proud of his musical production during the prog rock phase of his career. Notably, however, he has distanced himself from the bleak and bitter lyrics of his first album, the 1973 collaborative effort Beto Guedes Danilo Caymmi Novelli Toninho Horta. Guedes’s composition “Caso você queira saber [In case you wanted to know]” features a sarcastic title from lyricist Márcio Borges in which the lyrics detail a frustrated relationship:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Não quero você mais na minha casa</td>
<td>I don’t want you in my house anymore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpo e rosto em pedra</td>
<td>Body and face of stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sei o que me fere em você</td>
<td>I know what wounds me in you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eu não quero nada</td>
<td>I don’t want anything to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com seu riso indecente</td>
<td>With your indecent laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Já conheço seu tempero,</td>
<td>I already know your flavor,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seu segredo e seu suor</td>
<td>your secret, and your sweat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mas não consigo perder mais tempo</td>
<td>But I can’t lose more time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Você tem que ir embora</td>
<td>You have to leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Já começa a amanhecer</td>
<td>It’s already dawning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parece outro dia negro, ô</td>
<td>It looks like another black day, oh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This declaration is jarring for mineiros; it offends every deeply ingrained value of hospitality, geniality, and the avoidance of confrontation. Márcio Borges has been described by his peers as an “incendiary” and “provocative” lyricist (Vilara 2006, 360), and Chapters Five and Six address his most controversial, and anti-dictatorial, lyrics. I told Guedes that—knowing Borges’s and Bastos’s propensity for politically-conscious lyrics at the time—I had always assumed “Caso você queira saber” and “Belo Horror” were both highly political songs, but he disagreed. I asked Guedes how he felt about being the performing face for the lyrics of others, since people often made assumptions about his own political ideas based on those lyrics. Guedes did not quibble over this predicament: “Eu acho chato!! [It really sucks!!]”
He told me that the recording schedule for the 1973 album had gotten very behind, such that he was under tremendous pressure to submit the lyrics to Odeon (presumably for approval by censors). Guedes was delighted with the tracks he and the band recorded, and since the lyrics were completed at the last minute, he gave them only a cursory read.

Obviously, I haven’t said this because they could get offended—but those lyrics I say like this… I’ve already thought of them like this [Rolls up a newspaper to imitate a megaphone]: “Eu quero você mais na minha casa / corpo e rosto em festa / sei o que me agrada em você [I want you to come to my house more often / body and face in celebration / I know what pleases me in you]” (emphasis original).” I remember I complained once, “Shit, what are we making music for? For people to listen to. Some guy turns on his radio early in the morning, takes a shower, and then [singing]—’Não quero você mais na minha casa [I don’t want you in my house anymore].’” I confess that I don’t know with whom he is fighting. I mean, so… [Laughs] (Guedes 2012).

Guedes recorded “Caso você queira saber” as a duet with Milton Nascimento on Minas (1975) and rock singer Cássia Eller opened her 1992 album O Marginal with the song to great acclaim, so those lyrics are unlikely to ever change. However, Guedes convinced Márcio Borges to write a completely new set of lyrics for the epic prog rock suite “Belo Horror,” transforming the song from a pessimistic view of the dictatorial atmosphere in Belo Horizonte to an ode to Guedes’s love of both flight and Paul McCartney, aptly renamed “Asas [Wings].”

In the late 1970s, Guedes’s music turned increasingly towards rock romântico as prog rock declined in popularity. One of Guedes’s most enduringly popular songs is “Lumiar,” the name of a small town tucked into the Serra do Mar mountain range in central Rio de Janeiro state. The Guedes family frequently vacations there, and it is known for its dramatic natural beauty, including the state’s highest peak, Pico da Caledônia, at 2,225 meters. The name Lumiar connotes the Portuguese word lume, which means fire, blaze, or radiance, and the first verse of the song establishes the locale’s virtues:

84 “É óbvio isso não é dita porque pode ser que fica chateada—mas aquela letra eu digo assim, eu já pensei assim [Rolls up a peice of paper to imitate a megaphone], "Eu quero você mais na minha casa, corpo e rosto em festa, sei o que me agrada em você." I me lembro uma vez eu reclamava, "Porra, a gente tá fazendo música pra quê? Pras pessoas escutar. O cara vai, liga o rádio de manhã cedo, toma banho, aí: "Eu não quero você mais na minha casa [with an aggressive reading]." Eu te confesso que eu não sei com quem ele está em brigo. Quero dizer, então... [risos].”
The album sold 21,000 copies at the time of its release—three times more than predicted—and “Lumiar” became the “anthem of the peace-and-love and pro-nature youth” that flocked to the area (César Soares 2009, 5). Ronaldo Bastos’ lyrics focus on individual reflection and interaction with the natural world—“lose your fear, have a change of sky, a change of air [pra perder o medo, mudar de céu, mudar de ar],” and “spend the day grinding cane, hunting for the moon [pra passar o dia moendo cana, caçando lua].” Mineiros are often called fechado [closed off] or calado [reticent] by other Brazilians, but this sense of space to contemplate is really key to understanding mineiridade. Saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas concedes that, of course, not every mineiro is shy or retiring, and yet he believes in a relationship between climate and disposition:

Minas Gerais is the mountains. There is no sea. [On] the coast, you can always see out there [points into the distance]. Here, no. Here it’s introspective. Absolutely introspective. The mineiro is reticent. I am talking a lot right now, but I’ve spent my entire life not saying anything. The mineiro is reticent, all of the time (Ornelas 2012).

Many of Bastos’s lyrics for Guedes emphasize shared activities with loved ones, such as eating together and telling stories, and are interspersed with images of solitary pursuits, such as fishing and walking along rivers and hills.

Though Guedes’ success affords him leisure time with his family, his song “Casinha de palha [Straw house]” pays homage to the figure of the caipira, subsistence farmers and hunters that exploited natural resources to their advantage. Anthropologist Antônio Cândido described the caipira as semi-nomadic whose housing was constructed with impermanence in mind; they

85 “...hino da juventude paz-e-amor e pró-natureza.”
lived in a *rancho*, a straw shelter with *pau a pique* [wattle and daub] walls that could last anywhere from just a few years up to 15 years depending on the workmanship (Cândido, 45).

“Casinha de palha” contrasts emic/etic attitudes towards this way of life:

```
Eu moro numa casinha de palha
Que fica de trás da muralha
daquela serra acolá
De longe ela nos parece arruinada
Mas de perto ela é juncada
de baunilha e manacã
```

I live in a straw house
that sits behind the wall
of that mountain ridge yonder
From afar it looks ruined to us
But up close it is strewn
with vanilla and *manacã* leaves

Cândido wrote powerfully about a type of rustic wisdom surrounding *caipira* lifeways, marveling that everything they used and consumed (with the exception of salt and firearms) was self-produced, including cotton for cloth, clay lamps lit by cotton wicks, pig lard for oil, and even handmade bullets and gunpowder (Cândido 2010, 45-8). Accordionist and *belorizontino* Célio Balona showed great pride in this aspect of *mineiridade*:

```
He is very quiet [the *mineiro*], but he has a profound wisdom. Primarily, the people of the interior that have a philosophy, that have a way of living that is really beautiful, you know? Through their simplicity…the *mineiro* is simple, but the *mineiro* is also very sagacious, very observant (Balona 2011).
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Balona takes great pains, here, to defend the everyday *mineiro*—and perhaps “simple” here could be read as “poor,” “working class,” or “unschooled”—as having a worldly intelligence, rather than academic.

Guedes’s album cover depicts a doll modeled after the *caipira* inhabitant of the straw house, complete with a typical cotton *camisão* [long shirt] and a handmade straw hat (see Figure 3.8). The *caipira* protagonist of the song gently defends the *casinha de palha*: the house may appear shabby from afar, but its value is in the quality of the materials—vanilla and *manacã* leaves, which are long thin leaves ideal for thatching a roof or wall. Guedes’s music, however, is

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87 Though strictly speaking, Cândido’s work addresses the *caipira* region of São Paulo, it can be extrapolated to at least western and southern Minas Gerais, and similar practices occur in other regions as well.

88 “[O mineiro] é muito quieto, mas ele tem uma sabedoria profunda. Principalmente, as pessoas do interior que tem uma filosofia, que tem uma moda de viver que é muito bonito, não é? Através da sua simplicidade…o mineiro é simples, mas o mineiro também é muito sagaço, muito observador. Muito, muito observador.”

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not a caipira style at all, but an urban choro consisting of deftly interwoven lines. Flute, clarinet, and piano weave in and out of a restrained pandeiro and gently arpeggiated violão and bass. The graceful balance between the instruments lends poise and dignity to a figure who is often described in pejorative terms.

Musically, sounds of rusticity pervade Guedes’s songs, but often by degree and balanced with other sounds associated with metropolitan life, such as distorted guitars and bombastic drum sets. One of the most prominent instruments associated with rusticity is the viola—often called the viola caipira, a 10-string guitar in 5 courses—and Guedes plays it on nine of the twenty tracks of his first two albums A Página do Relâmpago Elétrico (EMI-Odeon 1977) and Amor de Índio (EMI-Odeon 1978). Despite his admiration for British rock, the construction of Guedes’s songs bear little resemblance to his idols: an overwhelming number of his songs are in triple meter and do not feature repetitive choruses. He also includes one of his father’s choro or seresta compositions (“Belo Horizonte” and “Cantar [Sing]”) on each album. Guedes’s album cover artwork gives few indications of his prog rock inclinations, serving rather to portray down-to-earth and tranquil qualities. His 1977 debut album A Página do Relâmpago Elétrico [The Page of the Electric Lightning] features a cracked and damaged photo of Guedes as a teenager overlaid by the image of a pequí (See Figure 3.9). This bitter fruit is famously revered in northern Minas Gerais, and is meant to be an homage to the Beatles’ logo for Apple Records, a Granny Smith
apple. The pequi fruit reappears on *Amor de Índio* next to a photo of Guedes wrapped in a blanket and leaning against an open window overlooking treetops.

![Figure 3.9 Album covers for Beto Guedes’ 1977 release *A página do relâmpago elétrico* and the 1978 release *Amor de índio*, photo by Cafí.](image)

Guitarist Toninho Horta’s songs, then, work within another scale of rusticity. Rather than the rural immigrant longing for the countryside, Horta represents the city kid who loves the hustle and bustle of a pulsating metropolis, the constant access to friends, and an active nightlife, but that occasionally flirts with rustic life for a sense of balance. Toninho Horta, along with Lô Borges, may represent the most urbanized of the CdE; both were born and raised in BH and their musical styles tend toward cosmopolitan genres—jazz, the American songbook, bossa nova, and rock. That said, Horta’s repertoire shows some rustic leanings—his lyricists narrate idyllic domestic scenes and intimate relationships—with which *mineiro* fans identify.

Brazilian musicians might scoff at including guitarist Toninho Horta in a section on *mineiridade* and rusticity. Horta, after all, is known around the world as one of the most versatile musicians in jazz, bossa nova, and chord-melody guitar playing—styles most often associated with urban life. For musicologist Martha Ulhôa de Carvalho, however, “even urban Minas Gerais maintains a certain provincial quality with its corners, lazy afternoons, bars, discussions, and music-making” (Ulhôa 1995, 333). She goes on to describe Nascimento’s music as evoking a “bucolic” Minas Gerais, and this could be said of many of Horta’s songs as well. The song
“Aqui, ô,” for example, is considered one of the most beautifully intricate, and most technically challenging, harmonic conceptions in Horta’s repertoire. Horta’s idiosyncratic guitar voicings, inner voice leading inherited from bossa nova, and dense extensions won over jazz guitarist Pat Metheny as one of the *mineiro*’s greatest admirers. In the liner notes to Horta’s 1988 album *Diamond Land*, Metheny proclaimed Horta to be the “Herbie Hancock of bossa nova guitarists” who “understands harmony in its most intimate ways” (Horta 1988). Indeed, teenage Beto Guedes and Lô Borges turned to Horta for lessons in harmony, as did many others *belorizontinos*. Yet, as easy as it is for foreigners and Brazilians alike to hear the harmonic sophistication of Horta’s style, the propensity for dense textures, wide intervallic leaps, and themes about intimate home life all reveal a profound *mineiro* identity.

In “Aqui, ó,” there is a mocking playfulness at work. The title combines the ubiquitous colloquialism of the word *olha* in the first-person indicative—ô—with aqui [here] to mean, “Look over here!” The lyrics poke fun at Belo Horizonte stereotypes: the plethora of administration courses and public servants [*funcionários*] (that link back to the presence of royal accountants in colonial mining areas) and conservative social mores. The latter includes courting a partner under the watchful eyes of (Catholic) family members and the *mineiro* reputation for seriousness and restraint. For local author Paulo Vilara, the song is a critique of “a certain *mineiro* way of being, a living contained by religious traditions, by secure, bureaucratic work, and by good behavior” (Vilara 2006, 61). Lyricist Fernando Brant wrote the song in order to point out the contradictions within Minas Gerais between those that complain of feeling surrounded and even impeded by the mountains and those that value conservatism:

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89 “…um certo jeito mineiro de ser, um viver contido nas tradições da religião, do trabalho burocrático, seguro, e do bom comportamento…”
Minas has these multiple characteristics: conservative and progressive, within it lives the position, the opposition, and the synthesis” (Vilara 2006, 61).³⁰

Throughout my research, I heard “Aqui, ô” performed as a tongue-in-cheek ode to Minas Gerais, often played at the peak of a lively (and drunken) gig, spurring on the audience to sing along or even get up and dance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Em Minas Gerais</th>
<th>In Minas Gerais</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alegria é guardada em cofres, catedrais</td>
<td>joy is kept safe in coffers, cathedrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na varanda eu vejo o meu amor</td>
<td>On the veranda, I see my love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tem benção de Deus</td>
<td>[They] have God’s blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>todo aquele que trabalha no escritório</td>
<td>all of those that work in offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendito é o fruto dessas Minas Gerais</td>
<td>Blessed is the fruit of these Minas Gerais</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The celebration of office employees and hiding joy in a safe may seem odd for a pop song, but, as an ethnographer, I grew to understand the song as an extension of the sarcastic and sardonic sense of humor of many of my mineiro friends. Some were quick to reassure me when they were joking, while others were content to let me understand (or not) a wry joke in my own time—and my resilience in that respect helped me earn the trust of many informants. Accordionist Célio Balona related a story about how difficult it can be to gain the trust of a mineiro:

There is a story about a mineiro, one mineiro man talking with another. Then, another person passes by on the other side of the street, and turns to this mineiro and says, “Hello, Zé!” And he replies, “Hey!” So, the other guy next to him says, “Is he a friend of yours?” And he replies, “No, I’ve been studying him for 15 years now” (Balona 2011).³¹

Like Beto Guedes, Horta is largely apolitical. In my interview with him, he explained that the dictatorship didn’t make as much of an impression on him since he was only 18 years old at the time of the 1964 coup d’état (and Guedes was a few years younger).

I never paid attention to that because I really don’t, in relation to music, practically, even though there is the law, I never…I see music for its musical aspect first. […] I always thought more about music. The

³⁰ “Minas tem essas características múltiplas: é conservadora e progressista, nela vivem a posição, a oposição e a síntese.”
lyricists—in the case of Borges, Brant, and Bastos—are who attracted a more political stance, because they were more intellectual and everything (Horta 2012).\footnote{“Eu nunca me liguei por isso porque tanto que eu não em relação a música, praticamente mesmo que tem uma lei, eu nunca...eu vejo música pro lado musical dela primeiro. [...] Sempre pensava mais em música. Os letristas—no caso de Borges, Brant e Bastos—é quem chamava uma postura mais política, porque eram mais intelectuais e tal.”}

I told Horta about my conversation with Guedes and the weight he felt at having to perform Borges’s more political lyrics despite being apolitical himself. Rather than an elaboration, Horta gave the most stereotypical mineiro response—a knowing look, a wry laugh, and two words: “É verdade [That’s true].” Though Horta deftly avoided his own feelings on the subject, he told me that Fernando Brant sensed this about him and therefore wrote very differently for Nascimento than he did for Horta. In some ways, Horta might be considered an activist today—a musical activist. He is proactive at facilitating communication between musical generations through talks and workshops, and he has spearheaded city initiatives towards making music a sustainable activity for both musicians and venue owners, but his political interests do not extend beyond the realms of music and community. Rather than political critique, the self-deprecat ing humor of “Aqui, ó” is a form of gentle social critique that is also patriotic.

To appreciate Horta’s lineage within bossa nova and jazz, Figure 3.10 compares a short passage from “Aqui, ó” with a similar harmonic progression from “Corcovado” performed by João Gilberto. While João Gilberto’s top melodic note follows a descending pattern emphasizing common tones and an economy of movement, Horta’s voicings leap around, emphasizing harmonic movement over melodic support. Horta smooths out this leaping motion by exploiting the open B string of the guitar over four bars. In comparison, Horta’s chord choices are far more dense and varied—using sharp and flat 9s, 11s, and sus chords—than Gilberto’s spare 6 and 9 chords. Finally, Horta thickens the texture even further through frequent use of parallel voicings to quicken the harmonic tempo.
Horizonte is a hole! We’re in a hole. A valley between the mountains, I mean. So we don’t have a way of seeing life. [Your] demeanor is totally different. Arriving in Minas, and in Belo Horizonte in particular, what is Belo Horizonte? A hole! We’re in a hole. A valley between the mountains, I mean. So we don’t have horizontality. So you start to develop verticality (de Jesus 2012).

Figure 3.10 Comparison in the performance styles of João Gilberto’s chord voicings on bars 5-9 of “Corcovado” (0:58-1:04, A&R 1963) with Toninho Horta’s on bars 23-31 of “Aqui, ó” (0:38-0:46, EMI-Odeon 1980).

Clube da Esquina members, musicians, writers, and audio engineers who were young adults in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s in Belo Horizonte consistently linked dense harmony and texture to the mineiro propensity for being pensive, introspective, and somber.

Time passes slowly in the mountains. So, for that reason, the seasonings marinate, the stew thickens, and sentiments verticalize. This for me is to be mineiro (Borges 2010).93

Well, people here in Minas say that people who live by the sea, at the seaside, their perspective goes a long ways, [it] leaves. Their view disappears. And so, in your head, you’re a guy that’s more …] extroverted, an outward guy. So, the sea gives you this sensation. Since in Belo Horizonte we have— I mean, Minas in general—lots of mountains, our perspective only goes up to them, to where it meets [the mountains]. Because of that, we have a thing for harmony. I think this is why the harmony here is more elaborate, you know? (de Carvalho 2010).94

Take Rio de Janeiro, there are beaches everywhere. Your horizontal vision is ample. So you have a way of seeing life. [Your] demeanor is totally different. Arriving in Minas, and in Belo Horizonte in particular, what is Belo Horizonte? A hole! We’re in a hole. A valley between the mountains, I mean. So we don’t have horizontality. So you start to develop verticality (de Jesus 2012).95

Minas Gerais isn’t so different from the rest of Brazil in terms of ebullient public gatherings, but there is no beach culture. Gatherings are at corner bars, fruit and vegetable markets, music

93 “O tempo passa devagar nas montanhas. Então, por isso o tempero entranha, o caldo engrossa, e o sentimento se verticaliza. Isso pra mim é ser mineiro.”

94 “Bom, a gente fala aqui em Minas, que as pessoas que vivem no mar, na beirada do mar, a sua vista vai longe, vai embora. A sua vista some. E ai, a sua cabeça, você é um cara mais, não sei se você vai entender essa palavra, extrovertido, um cara pra fora. Ai, o mar te dá essa sensação. Como Belo Horizonte nós temos, eu digo, Minas em geral, muitas montanhas, a vista da gente só vai até ali. Até onde ela alcança. Por isso a gente tem uma coisa de harmonia. Eu acho que por isso que as harmonias aqui elas são mais elaboradas, sabe.”


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festivals, indoor samba and forró dances, and, especially, extended family feasts at home, often on Sundays. Oliveira Viana referred to mineiro hospitality in the early 20th Century as a ritual that stoked the “lume larário [homefires],” activities that reinforce social relations among extended family, with the consequence that less time is available for other relationships (Correia Dias 1985, 76).

Another facet of mineiridade—part of this idea of homefires—is a great respect for elders. In contrast to fun-loving hits like “Manuel, o Audaz [Manuel, the audacious],” Horta shows great elder respect in his songs and his actions. Horta explained in an interview that his mother Geralda, a mandolin player, has always guided his philosophy of music and life by saying, “It is necessary to have harmony, not only in music, but also in life” (Horta 2012)96. His song “Pedra da lua [Moonstone]” exemplifies this perfectly. The moonstone is a precious gemstone with a translucent, pearl-like gleam that is often compared to the moon’s glow. Lyricist Cacaso uses the moonstone as a metaphor for his mother and his love for her at her death: “My mother, calm and serene / with your unsteady smile / dressed all in white.”97 Like Cacaso’s relationship with his mother, Horta’s mother Geralda was a central fixture in his life, and during my research in 2011, she was named an Honorary Citizen by the Municipal Chamber of Belo Horizonte. Though she appeared small and frail at the event, when she finally spoke after a long string of elegies about her musical contributions to the city, her lively voice captured everyone’s attention.

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96 “Na música, como na vida, temos que nos preocupar com a harmonia.”
97 “Minha mãe, calma e serena / Com seu sorriso inseguro / Toda vestida de branco.”
In 1971, Horta wrote the music for a short film directed by Luiz Alberto Sartori Inchausti called *Dona Olímpia*.\(^9^8\) It documents the life of a well-known *mendiga* [beggar, homeless woman] from Ouro Preto and features Horta’s wordless composition of the same name. Newspaper clippings from the 1960s describe Olímpia de Almeida Cota as a pretty girl from a noble family, who chose to make her living by recounting stories and offering words of wisdom on the streets.\(^9^9\) Though it is unclear whether this is her real history, or another one of her stories, the film captures Dona Olímpia’s typical activities, interactions with shopkeepers, and some of her short speeches. Horta used a speech from the film as an introduction to “Dona Olímpia” on *Terra dos Pássaros* (EMI-Odeon 1979):

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Ay, my children! You are young and don’t know the suffering I’ve had. And I was obligated to make a promise, to beg for alms, to go out begging to help the poor and also to make myself worthy, that I ended up without any possessions. Now, imagine, without the people knowing why I walk, begging, why I walk like a beggar, in the middle of the street, asking. And I earn everything, and a kiss, not pity, to those that need it, with the grace of God.\(^1^0^0\)
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The scene following this speech shows Dona Olímpia being greeted graciously by a shopkeeper and telling her that poor local children were asking whether she had left them any clothing. Dona Olímpia was sentient of her own appearance—bizarre apparel, hats piled with fresh flowers, walking staff, begging basket—and because Ouro Preto is a tourist destination, she knew her personality could attract donations for her own survival and that of poorer families. She regarded the poor with respect and not pity, and that is how the greater Ouro Preto community treated her in return, which the documentary and Horta’s song sought to honor.

\(^9^8\) A short clip highlighting Dona Olímpia’s eccentricities as well as the respect with which she was treated is available to stream at the Arquivo Público Mineiro: http://www.siaapm.cultura.mg.gov.br/modules/x_movie/x_movie_view.php?cid=1&lid=49.
\(^1^0^0\) “Ai, meus meninos! Vocês são novos e não sabem o sofrimento que eu passei. E fui obrigada a fazer prometa, de pedir esmolas, sair mendigando para socorrer os pobres e também valer a minha pessoa. Que eu fiquei sem coisa alguma. Agora, imagina você, vocês, que ??, sem o povo saber porque que eu ando, mendigando, porque que eu ando como uma mendiga, meio da rua, pedindo. E ganho tudo, e pro beijo a quem, não pena, a quem precisa, com a graça de Deus.”
Conclusion

This chapter opened with a critique of a state newspaper’s attempt to track down the anonymous boys pictured on Clube da Esquina’s iconic album cover. The insensitivity of the reporters in interviewing the grown men—the first in their families to break from agricultural manual labor—unwittingly exposed the continuing tensions, prejudices, and cultural distance between belorizontinos and those who live in the countryside. Meanwhile, the latter half of the chapter explored nature and landscape from a bucolic, and bourgeois, point-of-view. Beto Guedes’s characteristic hybrid of regional choro and seresta styles with progressive rock—featuring dense combinations of viola caipira, mandolin, electric guitars, and organ—was admired widely for having established a firmly mineiro rock sound. By contrast, Toninho Horta draws liberally from jazz and bossa nova, but his lyrics often focus on private, domestic spaces, and his distinctive jagged melodies and dissonant harmonies draw frequent comparisons to the mountainous landscape of Minas Gerais.

Milton Nascimento’s albums Minas and Geraes (EMI-Odeon 1975 and 1976) are two of the most beloved albums by mineiro fans, I argue, precisely because they juxtapose and intertwine rustic and urban imagery and sounds, and this is partially due to the varying perspectives of the songwriters. Fans frequently pointed out the connection between the final moments of the album Minas and the opening moments of Geraes; the song “Simples [Simple]” from Minas ends with a bombastic orchestral fermata on an A Major chord, and this same chord (and in fact the same orchestration of that chord) opens the song “Fazenda [Ranch/Estate]” on Geraes, each with music, lyrics, and arrangements by Nelson Ângelo (Viveiros Martins 2009, 38). Chapters Three and Four mirror this musical link between Minas and Geraes—Chapter Three’s ruminations on the identity formations around mineiro rusticity close with an analysis of the song “Simples,” while Chapter Four opens with an analysis of “Fazenda.”
The song “Simples” is one of the most experimental compositions/performances in the CdE repertoire—anything but simple, as the title indicates. “Simples” begins in a slow 2/4 accented by a spare electric bass, a surdo—loosened to sound flappy—, Ângelo’s stilted bossa nova batida [groove] on the violão, piano, and organ—all soaked in a shimmering reverb. The snaking whole-tone piano chords are mixed hard left and meld with the reedy timbre of the static organ at center. The whole-tone scale is often used for its symmetrical, and ambiguous, nature, and here its unmistakable eeriness is in full force (Hear Minas, Track 13, 0:00-0:15). Into this atmosphere, enters the plaintive soprano saxophone—heavily affected by delay and reverb—of Nivaldo Ornelas (0:15-0:46) with the first main theme. This 10-bar vignette gives way to Nascimento’s first entrance (0:47) just ⅓ of the way through the brief song. His voice, plaintive like the soprano sax before him, is set in the comfortable midpoint of Nascimento’s vast vocal range, but as the melody unfolds, it includes large intervallic leaps and slowly climbs towards what might normally be his head voice. Rather than switching to head voice, Nascimento stays in a powerful full voice, even willingly allowing his voice to break on the words “uma ferida [a wound]” (1:03). This emotional peak segues into another instrumental vignette.

Before continuing, I turn to the cause of the ferida [wound] (translated and adapted below as inflammation). Nelson Ângelo’s two short stanzas share identical melodies and syllabic counts, yet boast differing harmonizations and interpretations, adding strongly to its interpretation as contemporary art song. The stanzas pair elemental bodies in the natural world with human emotions, implying a cause and effect relationship.\textsuperscript{101}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{Olha} & \textit{See it} \\
\textit{a volta do rio} & \textit{The bend in the river}
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{101}In this translation, care was taken to be faithful not only to the original meaning, but also to the meter and syllabic emphasis of each phrase, so that it approximates the emotional trajectory of the song and could also be performed. A literal translation of the lyrics is as follows: Look / the riverbend / became life / the spring’s water / our sadness / the sun on the horizon / a wound // Look / the mine’s gold / became venom / the blood on the earth / became a toy / and that child / seated over there
In the first stanza, it is unclear how the basic elements of life—spring water, the sun—could create sadness and physical wounds. The second stanza, however, reveals that gold—carried by river water and revealed to the naked eye by the sun, then filtered through water by hand—caused wounds to the landscape and to the more than 600,000 slaves that mined it.

The instrumental vignette features a chromatic motive in the high strings with a disjunct motive in the low strings, piano, and bass (1:06). This is accompanied by weak-beat accents in the brass, winds, and violão and a rumbling surdo designed to disorient the listener by obscuring the meter. In the fourth vignette, Nascimento intones the first line, recitative-like, accompanied only by violão and unison double bass in arco, the melody now a whole step below that of the first stanza (1:26). The harmonization is more mournful in comparison to the sweeter first stanza, but eventually coming to the same anguished conclusion extended by a dramatic fermata before the final sublime A Major chord (1:54).

“Simples” and “Fazenda” function as expressions of the yin and yang of rustic Minas Gerais. On the one hand, “Simples” mourns a distant past of exploitation, hard manual labor, and strictly weighed, measured, and guarded wealth, while Chapter Four opens with “Fazenda,” a celebration of close familial ties and the luxury of recreation in the countryside. For mineiros, “Simples” and “Fazenda” are two sides of the same coin.
CHAPTER 4

“MPB WITH THE FACE OF MINAS”: MUSIC, FILM, AND FRATERNITY ON THE URBAN ESQUINAS OF BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL

Introduction

Just as the albums Minas and Geraes closed and opened on the same chord of the songs “Simples [Simple]” and “Fazenda [Ranch/Estate],” Chapter Three closes and Chapter Four opens with analyses of these songs. Where “Simples [Simple]” mourned the sociological and environmental aftermath of the mining industry, “Fazenda” celebrates bucolic leisure. Rather than the angular melodic intervals, through-composed harmonic progressions, and episodic vignettes that disorient and chill in “Simples,” the string- and flute-laden orchestra on “Fazenda” is cradled by the slow jaunt of a jazz-rock ballad, evoking a warm, though not saccharine, nostalgia (Hear Geraes, Track 1). Nelson Ângelo's images are those of an adult looking back at a carefree childhood, when it was easy to lose track of time, to spend all day in the fresh air, to drink water from an outdoor spigot: “água de beber / bica no quintal / sede de viver tudo [water to drink / waterspout in the yard / thirst to live everything].” Besides celebrating the natural world—the call of a sabiá [ thrush], orange trees, and mangoes—the song describes the feeling of childhood comfort and the wisdom gained from hearing stories from aunts and uncles. Sonically, Ângelo’s orchestral arrangement is lush and expansive with the only hint of rusticity coming from the twangy metallic timbre of his 10-string viola caipira (1:12-1:30). Particularly striking is the chorus of voices led by Beto Guedes that enters precisely at the mention of the sabiá, as though in imitation of its birdsong (1:32-1:44). Then, as Nascimento unleashes his full vocal prowess, the feeling transforms into the intimate human warmth of the “tios na varanda [aunts and uncles on the porch] (1:46-2:25).”
Nelson Ângelo and Nascimento have both written songs about fazendas, and the two composers’ experiences of spending time on rural estates is quite similar. Nascimento was inspired to write “Morro velho” after successive holidays spent on a fazenda owned by Wagner Tiso’s uncles (Museu CdE Nascimento); likewise, Ângelo recalls spending holidays playing football on his aunt’s fazenda in the former sugar cane hub of Ponte Nova (Tiso 2012). While Ângelo’s song highlights the pleasures of rustic leisure—and his own experience of middle-class urbanity—, Nascimento’s song reimagined the working-class lives of agricultural laborers, landowners, and their social relations, rather than his own experience of leisure. For Nascimento, the song allowed him to imagine what could have been his own circumstances had he not been adopted out of poverty:

I wrote “Morro velho [Old Hill]” when I lived in São Paulo, based on something that I nearly lived, you know, that I witnessed of some folks on a fazenda there in the interior of Minas, where we would spend our holidays with Wagner Tiso’s relatives, and there was this guy, who is the camarada [farm employee who carries out odd jobs], who was a really cool guy, with his sons there, and the train passed nearby… So “Morro velho” is a real thing. It’s not something where I am the protagonist, but this really existed, like nearly all of our songs that we write come from facts in our lives (Museu CdE Nascimento).

Where “Morro velho” reflects upon a lifestyle Nascimento observed, his own direct experience of fazenda life was that of middle-class bucolic leisure, just like Ângelo’s song “Fazenda.”

Importantly, the Clube da Esquina was not the last generation to feel this tug between urban and rustic identity. Throughout my research, both native belorizontinos and those that moved to the capital from the interior spoke again and again of how urban-dwellers could maintain connections with the land, whether it was growing an herb garden for medicinal purposes, weekend trips to waterfalls, or spending time on a relative’s fazenda or sitio [literally, “site” or modest country dwelling].

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102 “Morro Velho eu fiz quando eu morava em São Paulo, baseado numa coisa que eu quase vivi, né, que eu fui testemunha de um pessoal de uma fazenda lá no interior de Minas, que a gente ia passar as férias, com o pessoal parente do Wagner Tiso, e tinha esse cara, que é o camarada, que era um cara muito legal, com os filhos dele, assim, e o trem passava ali perto… Então Morro Velho é uma coisa de verdade, não é uma coisa que eu sou o protagonista, mas isso realmente existiu, como quase todas músicas que a gente fez são vindas de fatos da nossa vida.”
The music of the Clube da Esquina expresses mineiridade through a broad lens of rural, rustic, and urban identities, and Chapter Three explored how the albums Minas and Geraes served as two volumes of a commentary on mineiridade. Where Geraes intersperses political songs (such as “Menino [Boy]” about the police killing of unarmed student Edson Luís at a Rio de Janeiro cafeteria in 1968) with songs that index rustic lifeways and the natural world (such as “Calix Bento [Blessed Chalice],” “Cio da Terra [Heat of the Earth],” and “Carro de boi [Ox-Cart]”), Minas explores a complex, fractured urbanity. It is difficult to generalize across lyricists and lyrical themes about a specific urban setting—whether Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, or Brasília—but what is clear is that listeners often map the songs from Minas onto the city of Belo Horizonte as the original meeting space of Nascimento and his collaborators. This is true even despite the fact that many Clube da Esquina members relocated to the eixo Rio-Sampa as early as the late 1960s, including Nascimento, Nelson Ângelo, Wagner Tiso, and Ronaldo Bastos. On the other hand, Borges and Márcio Borges, Fernando Brant, Toninho Horta, and Beto Guedes all returned to BH in the 1980s and 90s. Frequent visits to Belo Horizonte by the others kept their repertoire’s sounds and imagery rooted firmly in Minas.

Most of the Clube da Esquina’s songwriters are themselves products of internal migration, having lived within proximity of traditional rural lifeways, but raised in Belo Horizonte, one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Brazil in the 1950s. It is unsurprising that their music contained allusions to urbanity and rusticity in equal measure. Yet, as recently as last year, sociologist Sheyla Diniz expressed frustration with what she sees as the continuation of regionalist stereotypes in Brazil that prescribe the Clube da Esquina as only regional artists or as expressing conservative viewpoints (See Figure 4.1). Diniz wrote:

To look at history with prejudiced eyes deprives us of the moment of experience, or, at least, of trying to capture it. Today is Beto Guedes’s birthday—one of “my boys” (ha) from the start of the 1970s underground. And “Belo Horror [Beautiful Horror],” a song by Guedes, Vermelho, [Flávio] Venturini, and
Márcio Borges recorded on the anthological album Os quatro no banheiro [Four Guys in the Bathroom], is emblematic of how I always respond when some uninformed [person] tells me, ‘But these mineiros were kind of regionalist and conservative.’ NO, they weren’t. Period. Happy birthday, Guedes!

Diniz rightly points out that the CdEs many songs that index rusticity (as discussed in Chapter Three) tend to overshadow those that index urbanity—at least in the musical memories of the collective’s critics and fans—precisely because Brazilians’ stereotypical view of Minas Gerais is as a land of caipiras [hicks]. Diniz chose Beto Guedes’s recording of “Belo Horror,” with lyrics by Márcio Borges, to attempt to showcase the CdEs progressive, cosmopolitan side.
Though all of the CdEs composers index rustic and urban elements in their music, Guedes’s juxtapositions are often the most stark and unusual. “Belo Horror” opens with a distorted lead guitar, a stately pipe organ, a thumpingly insistent electric bass and heavy-handed drumming—all features gleaned from bands like Genesis and The Who (Museu CdE Bastos; Guedes 2012). The verse and chorus are followed by four instrumental sections, including a Baroque organ and 12-string guitar theme with intricate mandolin and wordless vocal lines, and closing with a bluesy 12-string country jam. Márcio Borges’s lyrics capture a protagonist caught between his rural roots and the urban monstrosity of the capital city: “Belo Horizonte, Monte Claro, meu segredo / marcado pelo som que vem do mato [Belo Horizonte, Monte[s] Claro[s], my secret / marked by the sound that comes from the countryside.” As Guedes sings, he pronounces his hometown of Montes Claros with the regional dialect that leaves the S’s silent, revealing then that his “secret” is the “sound” of his rural accent. Keyboardist Vermelho [José Geraldo de Castro Moreira] has said that Guedes’s 1972 recording suffered pressure from both the record label Odeon and other studio musicians for pursuing prog rock:

We were listening to a lot of Genesis and Pink Floyd and that influenced us, so the Baroque classical sequence is influenced by that and my original creativity, just as Beto’s beautiful melodies are typical of him. Later, we created a heavier section and Flávio [Venturini]—who was dying to participate on the song that we were playing at his house all day long!—wrote the melody that starts this very progressive theme. But when we arrived in Rio to record it, the rest of the guys, that were more used to bossa nova, MPB, etc—nothing against [that]— balked when they saw a song like that, especially because it was enormous… They gave Beto a hard time, that we needed to shorten the length of the song, speed up some passages, and a large portion of these beautiful mandolin melodies with the organ were never recorded (“Vermelho” Moreira 2007).

My thanks to Belo Horizonte scholar Luiz Henrique Assis Garcia and his blog Massa Crítica Música Popular for bringing this story to my attention. “A gente tava ouvindo muito Genesis e Pink Floyd e isto nos influenciou, mas a sequencia classico-barroca e’ influencia disso e criacao original minha, - igual as belas melodias do Beto, tao tipicas dele. Depois fizemos um parte mais pesada e o Flavio - que tava doido pra participar da musica que tocavamos dia inteiro na casa dele! - fez a melodia que comeca este tema bem progressivo. So que qdo chegamos pra gravar no Rio, o resto do pessoal, que era mais chegado em bossa nova, mpb etc - nada contra - chiou qdo viu uma musica daquela, ainda mais que era enorme...... Encheram o saco do Beto que tivemos que diminuir o tempo da musica, acelerar uns trechos - e grande parte das belas melodias de bandolim com orgao nao foram pro disco.” All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.
In the end, “Belo Horror” clocked in at 6 minutes, the longest track on the album, and eventually led to the critical and popular success of Guedes’s debut solo albums.

This chapter gives a brief social history of Belo Horizonte nightlife in the late 1950s and 60s through the CdEs personal accounts of urban and rural life in Minas Gerais. First, I explore how young musicians gained experience through performing at bailes [balls] as a way to understand Belo Horizonte’s growing urban creative scene. Here, I lean on the work of musical and civil historians as well as my own ethnographic experiences around the concept of the esquina [corner], as central to belorizontino social life. Next, I investigate how the burgeoning cinematic scene in Belo Horizonte—and in Minas Gerais generally—intersected with the musical lives of the CdEs main composers and lyricists. Themes from other chapters recur throughout this chapter, including representations of mineiridade, fraternity, and musical experimentalism. Finally, I introduce the model of sonic field analysis to help visualize how cinema influenced Milton Nascimento’s use of texture, orchestration, and audio recording techniques to capture an epic sense of space using the song “Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar)” from the 1975 album Minas.

**Belo Horizonte: Urbanity and the significance of the esquina**

The ethnographer’s estrangement upon arrival into “the field” is perhaps the most pervasive trope of ethnographic writing. When I began 16 months of field research in 2011, the examples that stuck in my mind were those of ethnographers arriving into relatively remote regions—both geographically and culturally—or small-scale, remote societies. Though I had certainly read urban ethnographies, too, it struck me once I was in the field that they often took the nature of urbanity for granted, as if all city living is the same. I was born in a small town of about 26,000 people, have lived in two college towns (approximately 100-130,000 inhabitants), and worked a 4-month internship in Washington DC (a metro area of nearly 6 million
inhabitants). With a metropolitan population of 5.5 million people, Belo Horizonte was the largest city I had ever officially lived in, yet, again and again, I found that once Brazilians knew I was an American researcher, they assumed I was from the “big city”—maybe New York or Chicago.

One unexpected difficulty with adjusting to life as an ethnographer came in the form of my discomfort with social spaces in Belo Horizonte. Though I can be outgoing, my default within large groups is to observe, to sit back, to blend in, to listen. This is invaluable for observing others’ conversations, but does not help answer deeper questions or to socialize. My discomfort gnawed at me—felt, but unspoken—until I met Carol, the wife of a musician friend. Born in Belo Horizonte, Carol had a unique perspective on the city’s social spaces both as a professional architect and as a lover of film and cuisine. She had lived in the USA for several years while her husband completed a PhD, and had also traveled widely in Italy and Argentina, and we discussed our impressions of Brazilian and American culture in urban settings.

Significantly, Carol helped me understand the importance of the esquina as an essential gathering place, perhaps in Brazil generally, but certainly in Belo Horizonte specifically. Indeed, the arrangement of streets and avenues at 45º and 90º angles—based on the design of Washington DC, where I meekly braved the city’s baffling roundabouts to chauffeur famous jazz musicians to and from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in the fall of 2001 (during and after the 9/11 attack across the Potomac)—provides copious views of city monuments, government buildings, and open praças [squares] and increases the chance of spontaneous meetings.
In his analysis of the Clube da Esquina’s ethos of fraternity, Viveiros Martins quoted fellow historian and belorizontino Carlos Brandão in his assertion that Belo Horizonte’s spatial layout is a key part of its sociable atmosphere:

The value of the corner, like those that are multiplied throughout the belo-horizontino fabric and that are absent in Brasília, is in being emblematic of the changes in direction and offerings of other perspectives and locations for our choosing, in pausing the uninterrupted movement and establishing physical and social meeting places, attention and openings to other landscapes and new places. Without these elements, objects related more to design than to urban planning, we needlessly waste the public gift of the place called esquina [the corner] (Viveiros Martins 2009, 97).104

Martins argues that—contrary to Western capitalistic habits and values of planning meetings or lunch and dinner dates—it is “at the corner, that we can abandon all forms of security and certainty and we can discover by chance the unforeseen, the different, the unknown” (Viveiros Martins 2009, 98).105 I did not anticipate my psychological discomfort with the negotiation of spaces in Belo Horizonte. I felt uncomfortable at restaurants that were either fully outdoors or that opened to the outdoors—if I was seated with my back to the outdoors, I felt like a mafiosa constantly looking over my shoulder. In the Northern US, people are generally fully inside or fully outside of a restaurant since architecture must protect from snow and wind. Belorizontino restaurants are often integrated into the outdoors and made me jumpy, whether overhearing an argument or having a conversation interrupted by a passing acquaintance. But this is particularly loved by belorizontinos.

Likewise, I found the hills, twists, and turns of each street made me feel as if I was blindly approaching intersections, whether on foot, in a taxi, or on the bus. Predictable grid

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104 “O valor das esquinas, como as que se multiplicam no tecido belo-horizontino e se ausentam em Brasília, está em emblematizar as mudanças de direção e o oferecimento de outras perspectivas e lugares para nossas escolhas, em pausar o movimento ininterrupto e estabelecer locais de encontro físico e social, atenção e abertura para paisagens outras o novos lugares. Sem esses elementos, objetos mais do design do que do planejamento urbano, desperdiçamos a vocação pública do lugar ‘esquina.’” Original quote from Carlos Brandão’s “Reformas urbanas contemporâneas: qual o espaço público? qual liberdade?” in O urbano e o regional no Brasil contemporâneo, ed. S. Feldman and A. Fernandes: (Salvador: EDUFBA, 2007).

105 “Na esquina, abandonamos qualquer tipo de segurança ou certeza e nos deparamos com o imprevisto, o diferente, o desconhecido.”
patterns of the Midwestern US put me at ease; I could ignore each individual intersection and simply cruise down a long stretch of green-lit street until a particular crossstreet came into view, such as “2 blocks north of Main” or “just east of Division Street.” When I asked directions in Belo Horizonte, the most common response was something like:

Você vai subindo Getúlio Vargas, aí pegar Rua do Brasil descendo.
You ascend Getúlio Vargas [Avenue], then take Brazil Road descending.

The indications to “ascend” and “descend” particular streets follow the topography of those streets in relation to each other, rather than to cardinal or ordinal directions.

My friend Carol sympathized with my unease, but she adores this openness about Belo Horizonte and detests its lack in Brasília. As an architect, she is conceptually fascinated by Brazil’s capital city, but because of its many broad, elevated avenues, she criticized it as uma cidade sem esquina [a city without street corners]. Brasília’s modernist expansiveness comes off—at least for Carol—as cold and uninviting, but I think what she means by sem esquina is a lack of human warmth or vibrancy; the urban planning doesn’t allow for serendipitous encounters. While Brasília lies in the Planalto Central [Central Plateau] and is quite flat, Belo Horizonte was constructed in a valley within the mountains of the Serra do Curral, and the downtown area and surrounding suburbs are filled with hills and ladeiras [literally “ladders,” or steeply inclined streets]. Carol thinks that a cidade plana [flat city] is uninteresting, without character, and American planned cities exasperate her: “É tudo igual! [It’s all the same!]” Without following the idiosyncrasies of the landscape, planned cities are bereft of warmth and character. Belo Horizonte is named precisely for its view across the valley—“beautiful horizon.”

The concept of the esquina as a friendly meeting place surges again and again in the songs of the Clube da Esquina. For example, the final section of this article analyzes Fernando Brant’s lyrics for “Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar),” one of many lyrics.
dedicated to fraternity and common gathering spaces. Just like Carol had tried to explain to me,

Brant celebrates the *esquina* as Belo Horizonte’s central attribute:

> Corners are meeting places and Belo Horizonte is the city of corners. The streets intersect every 100 meters so that friendships are made, are animated, are strengthened. The *mineiro* is this figure of the earth and of the universe, of the interior and of the planet. He can’t live alone. At risk to himself, the urban-dweller can’t go without these innumerable points at which people meet to exchange impressions, information, make small talk. Leaving home and taking the path of one of these junctions is to be certain that at that corner there will be open arms and the voice of a friend (Museu CdE 2005, 14).106

Elegies to the *esquina* pervade the collective’s repertoire, but also their very founding and socialization. The next two sections detail two of the origin stories of the Clube da Esquina in Belo Horizonte through activities surrounding musical nightlife and the burgeoning cinema scene of the early to mid-1960s.

**Origin Stories: Tiso and Nascimento: From the Mineiro Interior to the Belo Horizonte Esquina**

The name Clube da Esquina has generated a mythical origin story around Milton Nascimento and his collaborators: that Nascimento, Beto Guedes, Toninho Horta, and the Borges brothers—Borges and Borges—used to hang out at the corner of Divinópolis and Paraisópolis streets near the Borges residence in the Bohemian neighborhood of Santa Tereza in Belo Horizonte. There is such a corner, and Borges and his young friends used to hang out there, but, like most origin stories, Nascimento’s path to meeting his lifelong collaborators is more complicated than that. I trace here two of many origin stories to show how Nascimento’s trajectory through the *esquinas* of Belo Horizonte nightlife intersected with both live musical performance and the burgeoning film scene in the 1960s.

Besides his mother, Nascimento’s first collaborator was pianist-arranger Wagner Tiso, a partnership that provided the pairs’ first forays into band leading in the small southern Minas

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106 “Esquina é lugar de encontro e Belo Horizonte é a cidade das esquinas. As ruas se cruzam a cada cem metros para que as amizades se façam, se animem, se fortaleçam. O mineiro é essa pessoa da terra e do universo, do interior e do planeta. Não pode viver só. No risco do urbanista não podiam faltar esses pontos inumeráveis em que as pessoas se reúnem para trocar impressões, informações, jogar conversa fora. Sair de casa e tomar um rumo de uma dessas confluências é ter certeza de que naquele canto estarão os braços abertos e a voz de um amigo.”
Gerais town of Três Pontas. As adolescents, the pair formed the vocal group Luar de Prata (Silver Moonlight), inspired by doo-wop group The Platters, who charted four number-one singles between 1955 and 58. Nascimento and Tiso have said that their best source for repertoire was the radio, and that in order to learn new tunes, they had to transcribe them by ear. Records took too long to arrive in Três Pontas and were too expensive to buy in the quantities they needed to mount a vast and varied repertoire. The relatively weak radio signal meant that sometimes certain frequencies did not broadcast very clearly, particularly lower frequencies (Rodrigues 2000, 40). Nascimento explained that he and Tiso filled in the gaps according to their own experience, including alternate harmonic progressions, bass lines, and vocal harmonies:

“There were a lot of things we didn’t have in Três Pontas. So, when, for example, we wanted to hear a song, usually something bossa nova, we memorized the name and kept listening to the radio here, listening there, until that song would play again. We gathered everyone, one writing down the lyrics, another writing the melody (usually me), Tiso, the harmony […] The radio failed to tune in. The melody was correct, but we invented the harmony (Lopes 2010, 119).”

Radio stations were an important public service throughout the 1950s and 60s, even as television began to take hold. In 1954, at age 9, Tiso regularly appeared on the radio to accompany programas de calouro [youth talent shows], and by age 14, Nascimento worked as a DJ at Rádio ZYV36, where his father was a director. His show consisted mostly of Brazilian and North American music and alternating days of French, Italian, and Spanish and Latin American music (Amaral 2013, 34).

After completing colégio [high school], Nascimento and Tiso came to Belo Horizonte to join a band at the invitation of Tiso’s cousin, trumpeter Gileno Tiso. With vocalist Marilto Borges, the Conjunto Holiday [Holiday Ensemble] eventually recorded the EP Barulho de Trem (Dex Discos 1964), emulating the conventional crooner style of the time. In the ensemble,
Nascimento and Tiso cemented their collaborative roles of vocalist-guitarist-composer and pianist-musical director-arranger. Tiso acknowledges that those early compositions predated their exposure to jazz in Belo Horizonte:

So, we ended up arriving in Belo Horizonte, where we started a new phase of our career—we played a lot of bailes with the city’s ensembles. There, we met a group of people, and we started to visit Nivaldo Ornelas’s house, who started to show us a bunch of John Coltrane, Miles Davis, marvelous things, and that enthralled us (Museu CdE Tiso).

Tiso credits the effervescence of Belo Horizonte nightlife as well as intimate listening sessions with friends for their discovery of new ideas about soloing, interpretation, and harmonic language. Indeed, those who grew up in musical families in Belo Horizonte often didn’t even need to leave home to experience intimate musical gatherings. Nivaldo Ornelas’s family lived in a neighborhood just south of the Belo Horizonte city limits, and his parents, both musicians, often hosted saraus [soirées]:

[My parents] had a choro group, a seresta group, and they were a total success. […] It was called sarau. We had it at my house every night. Nascimento participated a lot, Tiso participated together with my parents. Many times, many times (Ornelas 2012; Emphasis original).

In 1964, Nascimento started working with the Berimbau Trio, featuring Nascimento on vocals and double bass, Tiso on piano, and Paulinho Braga on drums—and later saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas made it a quartet. The group emulated the Tamba Trio, a samba-jazz piano trio led by Luiz Eça, who would write several arrangements for Nascimento’s debut album just a few years later. The Tamba Trio rose to great acclaim during the era of the Beco das Garrafas [Bottle Alley], a stretch along Rua Duvivier in Copacabana that helped samba-jazz and samba-canção artists vault to fame in clubs like Bottle’s, Little Club, and Baccara (Amaral 2013, 21; Instituto Cultural Cravo Albin). The Tamba Trio was not only an impeccable samba-jazz trio,

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108 “Então acabamos chegando em Belo Horizonte, onde começou uma nova fase na carreira da gente – nós fazíamos muitos bailes com os conjuntos da cidade. Aí conhecemos um pessoal, começamos a visitar a casa do Nivaldo Ornelas, que começou a mostrar um monte de John Coltrane, Miles Davis, coisas maravilhosas, e aquilo foi encantando a gente.”

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instrumentally speaking, but the three musicians also sang, moving from unison to 3-part
harmony with graceful ease. The Berimbau Trio imitated this style, and though they earned
valuable experience, the gig brought in very little money.

In search of more lucrative gigs, Nascimento and Tiso also frequented what was referred
to as the Ponto dos Músicos [Musicians’ Point]. In his memoir, Márcio Borges lauded this corner
in Belo Horizonte’s centro [downtown] that, to most eyes, was simply a large expanse of
pavement on the main avenue Afonso Pena. Two streets intersect it at 45º angles—the major
artery Rua São Paulo and the small commercial offshoot Rua Tupinambás (See Figure 4.2). In
the late 1950s and early 60s, the Ponto dos Músicos became a space for musicians to be
contracted for performances as well as exchange information about instruments and technique,
venues, the latest recordings, and original compositions and harmonic language.

In September 2011, I attended the talk Encontros Musicais [Musical Encounters]
sponsored by Clube da Esquina guitarist Toninho Horta, featuring the recollections of club
musicians and recording artists from that period, all of whom remain active within Belo
Horizonte’s creative scene today. Marilton Borges—singer, pianist and eldest brother to Borges
and Borges—recalled afternoons flocking with other musicians to the Ponto dos Músicos, just a
few blocks from the Borges family apartment on the 17th floor of the Levy Building on Avenida
Amazonas (Museu Cde 2005, 40). In the same building, Nascimento rented a room and Wagner
Tiso lived with relatives, all on the 4th floor. Toninho Horta has described how his family lived
just a block away in the Cesário Alvim Building:

I lived in the same building as Beto on Tupis Road. It was maybe 40 meters between the two lobbies. I
lived on the second and Beto lived on the ninth floor. Beto always met up with Lô Borges, and I would say,
“Ugh, those rock n’ rollers.” And he saw me with a violão and said, “Ugh, that jazz guy, that bossa nova
guy. He’s got nothing.” But we ended up meeting at the Festival [Belo Horizonte Student Song Festival] in
1969. So everyone became friends (Museu Cde 2005, 42).110

110 “Eu morava no mesmo prédio que o Beto, na rua Tupis. Dava uns 40 metros de uma portaria pra outra. Morava
no segundo e o Beto no nono andar. O Beto sempre encontrava com o Lô Borges, aí eu falava: ‘Ih, aqueles
Like many young musicians, Horta often visited the Ponto dos Músicos in order to meet musicians with a wide variety of stylistic tastes and formative experiences. Horta got his start playing bailes alongside his older brother, bassist Paulinho Horta, and later formed a guitar duo with his sister, Berenice (Museu CdE Horta). Keyboardist and accordionist Célio Balona accompanied bailes [balls/dances] for 28 years—many of those with his band Conjunto Balona—throughout Belo Horizonte and Minas Gerais. Early on, Balona recorded a demo in São Paulo in order to promote his group in BH, and its success incentivized Dirceu Cheib to found Estúdio Bemol [originally Minas Gravações Limitadas] in 1967, the first independent studio in Belo Horizonte and still in operation today (de Araújo 2011, 41). Conjunto Balona achieved a broad profile through exposure at live performances, but also on Belo Horizonte’s first television station TV Itacolomí. Founded in 1955, Balona was hired the following year, and eventually had roqueiros’. E ele olhava pra mim com o violão, falava: ‘Ih, aquele cara do jazz, da bossa nova, não está com nada’. Mas acabou que no Festival nós nos encontramos, em 69. Aí todo mundo virou amigo.”
his own show called *Balona Bem Bolado* [Balona Well-Served], in which viewers sent postcards requesting their favorite songs to be performed by the Conjunto each Saturday at 6 pm (de Araújo 2011, 46). Not only did the visibility create demand for performances throughout the state, but Balona was also called on to accompany appearances of well-known singers in Belo Horizonte, including Cauby Peixoto, Elizeth Cardoso, and Elza Soares.

Milton Nascimento joined Conjunto Balona as a crooner for nearly three years (de Araújo 2011, 44). Balona—as he is known—told me about the type of repertoire required for playing *bailes*:

> We played “Blue Moon,” “Over the Rainbow,” “Laura,” “Stella by Starlight” and also bolero, which at that time was played a lot on the radio […] The *bailes* were for large crowds, and at the *bailes* you had to play things you liked and things you didn’t like, because the people were there to enjoy themselves. Instead of playing a type of song we didn’t like, we would play Glenn Miller [Sings “Pennsylvania 6-5000”]. It was in fashion, music for dancing” (Balona 2011). 111

Balona emphasized that many times, bookings were last minute, and musicians might meet each other for the first time on the gig. When one musician encountered another while setting up to perform, a common joke was to say, “Ah, I see you’re playing here tonight, too.” This joke has carried into the contemporary generation, and I’ve heard it playfully used among musicians who have played a weekly gig together for years. Unlike today, when many clubs, gigs and/or bands are dedicated to a single genre, sub-genre, or even a single band, *bailes* required learning a broad repertoire and developing strong memorization, listening, and improvisation skills. Though some *baile* musicians certainly read musical notation, most read only *cifras* [chord symbols], and still others learned music by rote.

In 1999, Nascimento and Tiso recorded the album *Crooner* to commemorate this formative period, during which they learned how to perform for and win over a live audience.

111 “A gente tocava “Blue Moon,” “Over the Rainbow,” “Laura,” “Stella by Starlight” …e também os boleros que na época eram mais tocadas na rádio […] Os bailes eram pra muita gente, e no baile você tinha que tocar o que você gosta e o que você não gosta. Porque as pessoas estão ali para se divertir. Em vez de tocar um tipo de música que a gente não gostava, a gente tocava Glenn Miller [canta Pennsylvania 6-5000]. Era na moda, música mais dançante.”
The song “Nos Bailes de Vida [On the Gigs of Life]” (*Caçador de Mim*, 1981) also pays tribute to gigging musicians with the opening lines, “It was on the gigs of life or in a bar in exchange for bread that many great people got their start in this profession.” As far as *mineiro* repertoire, musician Paulinho de Carvalho, a frequent touring bassist for Nascimento in the 1980s, explained that burgeoning musicians often conformed their repertoire to national or international hits:

> Here, we didn’t have many options. We didn’t really have, so to speak, something called *música mineira*. [Our] music was an overview of all of this, of bossa nova, of songs, of Ary Barroso, that is, a bit of samba of the era, I believe. And those influences from the interior (de Carvalho 2010).

Though born in Minas Gerais, Ary Barroso moved from his rural hometown to Rio de Janeiro to work as a professional composer (Instituto Cultural Cravo Albin). Belorizontino historian Leonardo José Magalhães Gomes claims that, up until the 1960s, regional artists were conservative regarding musical innovation:

> The formal and thematic model followed was always the national standard in effect dictated by the *carioca* broadcasters, principally by Rio’s Rádio Nacional, the official broadcaster of the federal government. In this way, the local artists of that era, from the 1930s until the end of the 1950s, composed samba, *choro*, fox-trot, *samba-canção*, *marcha*, *marchinha de carnaval*, bossa nova, and other types of popular music forms that came here via recordings and radio waves (Magalhães Gomes 2011, 76).

Only as the city’s population bloomed through the 1950s, did musical conservatism begin to shift in the mid-1960s.

> Many musicians told me that being a professional musician carried great stigma in the 1950s and 60s, and that lingers today. One musician told me that in the 1960s, the pressure to become an engineer was overwhelming, and that by the time he entered university in the mid-

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112 Foi nos bailes de vida ou num bar em troca de pão que muita gente boa pôs o pé na profissão.”
113 “Aqui, nós não tínhamos tanta opção. Não tínhamos, assim por dizer, o que era a música mineira. A música mineira era um apanhado disso tudo, de bossa nova, de canções, de Ary Barroso, né, um pouco de samba na época, acredito. E essas influências do interior.”
114 “O modelo formal e temático seguido era sempre o padrão nacional vigente ditado pela emissoras cariocas, principalmente pela Rádio Nacional do Rio, a emissora oficial do governo federal. Dessa forma, os artistas locais desse período, dos anos trinta até o fim dos cinquenta, compunham os sambas, choros, foxes, sambas-canção, marchas, marchinhas de carnaval, canções de bossa nova, e demais tipos de formas musicais populares que aqui chegavam através das gravações e das ondas do rádio.”
1970s, the dictatorship’s repression of civil and creative life only amplified negative attitudes towards musicians:

That era of the dictatorship, if you were to talk about playing music in Brazil in my generation, it was as if you were talking about Bin Laden back home in Wisconsin [referring to the author’s home state]. [...] At that time, it was very small here [in Belo Horizonte], very parochial. I suffered. I had profound existential crises. Really bad, you know? “What will become of my life?” (Anonymous interview 2012).  

Brazilians (and many Americans, too) have long regarded house cleaning and waiting tables as low-class professions, and artists are not far behind (Margolis 1990, 221, 226). Today, my musician friends are aggravated by society’s inability to view music as a profession, with the frequent response: “Oh, you play music, but what do you do for a living?”

In the minds of many Brazilians, the socially acceptable musician is the romantic amateur, such as the protagonist from the film *Orfeu: a sambista* who plays only after a long shift as a streetcar ticket-taker. When I asked composer-saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas to compare life as a budding musician now to his youth in the 1960s, he described it as:

Terrible at that time. Very difficult. I am talking about here [in Belo Horizonte]. There were some musicians that played at night that made the sounds they needed to play: bolero, Beatles…but we—my group of friends, which was Paulinho Braga, me, Bituca, Tiso—we were accursed in this city. We couldn’t get in…there were these boates [nightclubs] that had music and we couldn’t get in. They had a list! There was a place called Candelabro [Candlestick], he [the bouncer] would say, “No, no, no, no, no.” From there, then, the door would open and we could hear the sound [of the music]” (Ornelas 2012).

Tiso has talked about the racism that Nascimento faced in Três Pontas, but other sources have indicated Tiso may have suffered from prejudice as well regarding his family’s Eastern

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116 “Ah, toca música, mas trabalha com o quê?”

117 “Terrível naquela época. Muito difícil. Tô falando daqui. Existia os músicos que tocavam à noite faziam o som que precisava fazer: bolero, Beatles…mas nós, a nossa turma, que era Paulinho Braga, eu, Bituca, Tiso, a gente era maldito na cidade. Não podia entrar…tinha os boates que tinha música e a gente não podia entrar. Tinha uma lista! Tinha um lugar chamado Candelabro, ele falava não, não, não, não, não. A gente daí, aí, abria a porta assim e ouvia o som.”

118 Nascimento was barred from attending the after-party following his high school graduation because of his race, even though he was valedictorian. Nascimento was also frequently barred entry to clubs and theaters, so Tiso often listened outside with him to discuss the music, ducking in occasionally to ascertain which instrument was making which timbre or theme at any given moment (Tiso 2012).
European heritage. Though it remains unclear, Ornelas and friends may have experienced society’s recoil from the growing countercultural attitude in mid-1960s Brazil. Whatever the reasons for their marginalization, the consequences interest me more: Tiso and Nascimento faced difficulty in hustling gigs in Belo Horizonte, and their connections from the Ponto dos Músicos helped them find opportunities.

By 1965, Balona introduced Nascimento and Tiso to composer, arranger, pianist, and entrepreneur Pacífico Mascarenhas. He got his start in the 1950s playing serenata—the practice of street serenades, especially on moonlit nights and underneath the window of a prospective lover. Pacífico smoothly segued from serenata into the bossa nova craze of the late 1950s and began arranging for vocal and instrumental groups. Pacífico claims to be the first musician to release an independent record in Brazil in 1958 after doggedly writing letters to studios in Rio in order to rent studio time. All 800 LPs were sold in Belo Horizonte through various radio appearances, and by the time Nascimento and Tiso arrived in town, Pacífico invited the pair to record a second LP in Rio with his vocal group Sambacana (Amaral 2013, 255). For Tiso, Rio was too strong of a call and he remained in the city following the recording session, while Nascimento returned to Belo Horizonte to continue to hone his skills.

**Origin Stories: Borges and Nascimento: From the Belo Horizonte Esquina to the Cinema**

Lyricist Márcio Borges’s memoir *Os sonhos não envelhecem* [Dreams Do Not Age] dedicates a chapter to a pivotal event in his friendship with Nascimento. Following Tiso’s departure for Rio de Janeiro, Nascimento continued to perform, but he also worked as a typist. One afternoon, Borges invited Nascimento to attend three back-to-back screenings of French director François Truffaut’s *Jules et Jim* at Belo Horizonte’s Cine Tupí (Borges 2011, 50-68).

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119 Tiso has mentioned his Eastern European, possibly Romani, heritage and the disapproval that his family’s musical activities sometimes aroused, including travelling to neighboring communities to perform in public spaces.

120 *Muito pra frente* was released in 1965 and can be heard here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgd0AAW16ig](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgd0AAW16ig).

The name Sambacana is an elision of the word *samba* with the slang word *bacana* [cool].
The film so moved the young friends that they rushed four blocks home to the Levy Building in order to compose their first three songs—“Gira, Girou,” “Paz do amor que vem [later renamed Novena]” and “Crença”—in 1964 (Borém and Lopes 2014; Museu CdE 2005, 40). Both Nascimento and Borges have described that the sentiment of intense friendship between the protagonists of the New Wave film resonated with their own experience of friendship at the time, and that the film inspired them to try to compose music with this spirit in mind. While gigging in bailes helped to shape Nascimento’s vocal delivery, his love of melody, and his general musicianship, his passion for film music profoundly affected the scope, texture, and grandiosity of his compositional style.

Until recently, the history of the Clube da Esquina has largely been a project of self-documentation. Journalistic articles have long focused on Nascimento to the exclusion of nearly everyone else in the Clube da Esquina, and those depictions are often as a figure of mystery. Mário Borges’ memoir responds to journalistic accounts that depict Nascimento as the great (and singular) protagonist of what he, and many others, felt was a group effort. Borges’s book is also hugely partial, since it is a memoir, and not a strictly chronological history. The Jules et Jim story from Borges’s book has been told over and over again in press interviews, news articles, and in an academic thesis by Nascimento’s current lead guitarist and musical director (Borém and Lopes 2014). It has even been memorialized into a comic book that uses anecdotes from Borges’s book to illustrate the histórias [stories] of the CdEs friendships, collaborations, and musical achievements (see Ferreira and Viñeole 2011). Borges’s account rightly credits cinema as a catalyst for their compositional creativity, but Nascimento was already deeply moved by cinema since early childhood, and part of the reason had to do with easy access to movie theaters.
In Belo Horizonte, offerings of art and entertainment truly blossomed in the 1950s, as Célio Balona's biographer has described:

…Belo Horizonte started to create its own cultural scene, with music as a principle exponent, where there was everything from nightclubs with live music playing the hits of the moment to cineclubes [film clubs] that discussed Michelangelo Antonioni and Jean-Luc Godard (de Araújo 2011, 21). 121

Though cinemas arrived in Belo Horizonte in 1906, it was in the 1930s that cinema construction multiplied downtown—such as the Cinema Odeon on Rua da Bahia and the Cinema Avenida on Afonso Pena—as well as in surrounding neighborhoods (Padron 2012). This glut of movie theaters was called cinemas de rua [street cinemas], and they served particular neighborhoods with room for 800 or more seats. Cinemas were so popular (and lucrative) by the 1940s that the Teatro Municipal—Belo Horizonte’s first live venue for music and theater—was razed to make way for the Cine Metrópole in 1942. Recently, Belo Horizonte has renewed its interest in these historic cinemas, perhaps seeking to draw citizens back to centro from the suburban shopings [shopping malls]. The Cine Teatro Brasil at Praça Sete was fully restored in 2014 in all its art-deco architectural glory and with seating for 1,827 for both concerts and film screenings (Ferreira 2014).

Cinemas de rua were not only in Belo Horizonte, but throughout Minas Gerais.

Nascimento and Tiso were entranced by film music on the big screen:

Três Pontas was the only rural city to have the famous CinemaScope, you know? Stereophonic sound. So we went to the cinema and the film score enchanted us, because it was in stereo. And that was marvelous. We listened, and later we would comment on the music. I left [the cinema] with Bituca, went to a little square, [and] we started to discuss it (Amaral 2013, 252). 122

For Tiso, early exposure to symphonic music oriented him towards the possibilities of texture and scale that would prepare him as an arranger and orchestrator for popular music:

121 “…Belo Horizonte começou a criar um cenário cultural próprio, tendo a música como principal expoente, onde havia desde boates com música ao vivo tocando os sucessos do momento até cineclubes onde se discutia Michelangelo Antonioni e Jean-Luc Godard.”

122 “Três Pontas era a única cidade do interior que tinha o famoso CinemaScope, né? Som estereofônico. Então a gente ia ao cinema e a trilha sonora encantava, porque era estéreo. E aquilo ali era uma maravilha. A gente ouvia, depois ia comentar as músicas. Eu saía com o Bituca, ia pra pracinha, começava a comentar.”
We saw the film serials and they used a lot of classical music, they used a lot of [Richard] Tiso. And that music, that orchestral motion, that really fascinated me. Including the bandits, running after the good guys, shooting at them. [They] always had a very well orchestrated theme that suited the scene, and that really enchanted me. So, this was the first impact on my musical education (Museu CdE Tiso).

While discussing film music came naturally to Tiso and Nascimento, those who grew up in Belo Horizonte had access to cineclubes to develop their analytical awareness. Geovano Moreira Chaves defines cineclubismo as “the act of attending fraternal organizations around cinema” (Chaves 2010, 10). Though the cineclube originated in Rio de Janeiro in the 1920s, the Centro de Estudos Cinematográficos [CEC, or Center for Cinematographic Study] was established in Belo Horizonte in 1951 near the effervescent Rua da Bahia, a corridor that intermingled cultural organizations with commerce; venues for dance, literature, film, music, and visual arts were peppered between drugstores, news agencies, hotels, banks, high-rise apartments and government buildings. The CEC often held screenings at the Cine Guarani on Rua da Bahia or the Cine Paissandu in Lagoinha (Chaves 2010, 70). Lyricist Fernando Brant frequented cinemas de rua and became active in several cineclubes in Belo Horizonte:

Along with literature came cinema, and I went to see Italian, French, American films…and discussed them. At the time of [my attendance at] the Colégio Estadual [state high school], I took part in a cineclube called Cineclube Santo Antônio. I participated there for awhile. This cineclube was expelled by the padre from Santo Antônio [neighborhood], because they were going to show… I think it was Deus Criou a Mulher [...And God Created Woman, 1956], a film with Brigitte Bardot, and he sent everyone away. And so, on that same street, the members found another place, the União Israelita [Israeli Union]. It functioned for awhile longer there. And later I went to CEC… which has an enormous history. So I got to know more people that were involved with cinema here (Museu CdE Brant).

In Brazil, film historian Geovano Moreira Chaves credits film critic Ismael Silva with helping to change the status of film from a vulgar entertainment in the 1920s to a form of art (Chaves 2010, 123-124).”

123 “A gente via os seriados de cinema e eles usavam muita música clássica, usavam muito Tiso. E aquela música, aquele movimento de orquestra, aquilo me encantava muito. Inclusive os bandidos, correndo atrás dos mocinhos, dando tiro, sempre tinha uma música muito bem orquestrada que parecia com a cena, e aquilo me encantava muito. Então foi um primeiro impacto na minha formação musical.”
124 “Junto com a literatura entrou o cinema. E eu fui ver os filmes italianos, franceses, filmes americanos… e discutia. Na época do Colégio Estadual [around 1962], eu fiz parte de um cineclube que chamava Cineclube Santo Antônio. Eu participei lá um tempão. Esse Cineclube foi expulso pelo padre lá do Santo Antônio, porque ia passar acho que Deus criou a mulher, um filme da Brigitte Bardot, e ele mandou todo mundo embora. E aí, na mesma rua, o pessoal conseguiu um outro lugar, a União Israelita. Funcionou mais um tempo lá. E depois eu fui pro CEC, que é o Centro de Estudos Cinematográficos, que tem uma história enorme. Então eu fui conhecendo mais o pessoal que mexia com cinema aqui.”
18). The members of Belo Horizonte’s CEC followed Silva’s lead in consuming foreign film industry publications—the French vanguard’s *Cahiers du Cinema* and Italian futurism’s *Bianco e Nero*—for models on how to think about Brazilian film. CEC published its own magazine *Revista de Cinema* on film criticism from 1954 to 1957 and sporadically throughout the early 1960s, in which debate centered on whether film criticism should privilege formalist or sociopolitical concerns (Chaves 2010, 121-25). The CEC also offered courses in film criticism, since universities had no such offerings at the time. With weekly screenings on Saturdays and Sundays, the *cineclube*’s 2,000 paying members transformed into informed cinephiles, who understood how film could shape attitudes, political worldviews, and local identities (Chaves 2010, 109).

At eight years old, Márcio Borges’s father took him to the Cine Santa Tereza to see *Sinbad the Sailor* [1947 with Douglass Fairbanks] in black and white:

The cinemas were cool, they were true palaces of the seventh art. It wasn’t this multiplex thing, a bunch of cubicles with that little 35 [-foot] screen there and you sit in front of it. They were really large screens. They were temples of magic—the lights went out, the velvet curtains opened… It was a ritual to go to the cinema, and I not only adored going to see this ritual, such was my dream to put something there for people to see. This was how I started to become a cinephile (Museu CdE Borges).

By the 1960s, Borges spent most Saturday nights viewing films—from the silent era, to French *nouvelle-vague* and Italian neorealism, to American Westerns and musicals, to Japanese film—curated by CEC and with discussions afterwards at the Maletta Building (Borges 1993, 93).

Borges held American film of the 1950s and 60s in particular regard:

…the authorship behind the camera, the personal stamp behind the industry, the individual and indelible message of each *auteur* inside of a commercial bureaucracy. This was the magic of American cinema, to

125 “Os cinemas eram legais, eram verdadeiros palácios da sétima arte, não era essa coisa de multissala, um monte de cubículo com aquela telinha 35 ali e vamos em frente. Eram uns telões mesmo. Eram templos da magia – apagava-se a luz, abriam-se as cortinas de veludo… Era um ritual ir ao cinema. E eu não só adorava ir ver esse ritual, como meu sonho era botar alguma coisa ali para as pessoas verem. Foi assim que eu comecei a virar um cinéfilo.”
permit creativity, to permit these grand flights of imagination. It would allow you—to those who knew—to assume the authorship of your own product (Vilara 2006, 108).\textsuperscript{126}

In addition to co-writing songs with various members of the CdE, Borges’s involvement in CEC led to work as a film critic for the \textit{Diário da Tarde} and as a programming director for CECs satellite program CEMICE, Centro Mineiro de Cinema Experimental [Mineiro Center for Experimental Film] (Borges 1993, 166). His greatest desire was to become a filmmaker, and Borges’s first short film \textit{Joãozinho e Maria} won an award in Rio de Janeiro. Unfortunately, his film—and many others produced by CEC members—was destroyed by military police during the dictatorship (Borges 1993, 150, 156).

It is one thing to say that film was influential to Nascimento’s and Borges’s approach to songwriting, but quite another to \textit{show} how this was so. Guitarist Wilson Lopes emphasizes that it is the medium of film—and not particular film \textit{scores}—that is paramount to understanding Nascimento’s compositional style (Lopes 2010, 17). The song “Gira Girou” is an example of how Borges appropriated film techniques for conceptualizing a song. While the songs “Novena” and “Crença” are more conventional AABA song forms, “Gira Girou” consists of a slow, rubato verse and a chorus featuring a 12-bar blues form played as a samba. Borges explained that after viewing \textit{Jules et Jim}, he and Nascimento composed the song “Gira Girou” with an elaborate \textit{encenação} [staging of a scene] in mind. Borges was inspired by the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca’s folkloric work, but reimagined for the Brazilian countryside. Nascimento confirms that the songs’ two sections represented two images: a horseback rider from northern Brazil and a party (Lopes 2010, 118).

Borges borrowed the cinematographic technique of the “sequence shot” to structure how he and Nascimento composed “Gira Girou.” Derived from the French term \textit{plan-séquence}, a

\textsuperscript{126} “…a autoria atrás da máquina, o carimbo pessoal atrás de uma indústria, o recado individual e indelével de cada autor dentro de uma burocracia comercial. Essa era a mágica do cinema Americano, permitir a criatividade, permitir os grandes vôos da imaginação. Permitia, a quem soubesse, assumir a autoria do seu próprio produto.”
sequence shot is a long, continuous shot that uses several complex camera movements that might normally be shot separately. Borges uses as an example the opening scene of Orson Welles’s *Touch of Evil*—a film he and Nascimento watched together—in which the camera shoots from a dolly or crane. Starting with a close-up of hands arming a bomb, the crane pulls out to reveal a figure placing the bomb in the trunk of car. A couple enters the car and drives across the US/Mexico border, crossing paths with another couple on foot, until finally the dolly pulls out further to capture this second couple’s kiss as the first couple’s car explodes just out of frame.

Borges explained that the images of the cowboy and the party unfolded “in our mental camera and we had to *capture the two scenes without cuts*” (Lopes 2010, 128-29; emphasis added). The objective of the sequence shot for “Gira Girou [Spin, Spun],” then, was to maintain a sense of continuity between two contrasting images. The 8-bar verse introduces the somber character of the horseman, while the 12-bar blues chorus incorporates a lively vocal *coro* to indicate a party atmosphere (Hear Milton Nascimento, Track 8). The unusual choice of a blues form is striking for Brazilian popular song, and the somber melody is accompanied by parallel triadic movement that lingers on points of tension, like the 13th (F#) in bar 2 and the 7th (C, G, D and G) in bars 13, 15, 17 and 19. In additional to harmonic tension, Nascimento’s vocal melody provides temporal tension as his long, sustained tones suggest a half-time feel against the medium-tempo samba-jazz feel played by his *violão*, the rhythm section, and the vocal *coro*.

These opposing moods—somber and festive—are also reflected in the lyrics. The verse’s lyrics narrate the image of a female lover—lovely as the earth [*linda como a terra*]—, while those of the chorus beckon to the woman with a flower in her hair [*traz no cabelo a flor*]. As Borges explained for “Gira Girou”:

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127 “[…essas duas coisas acontecendo e] na nossa câmera mental tinha que pegar as duas cenas sem cortes.”
128 “The 13ths and 7ths in these examples are always defined in relationship to the pedal bass fundamental of the particular section; e.g. A in bar 2 and D, A, E and E, respectively, in bars 13, 15, 17 and 19.”
Despite never having staged these scenes in the real world, it existed in our heads and was what motivated us to set the words in that way. We composed music for films that we never made (Lopes 2010, 128).

The *coro* during the chorus portrays a party atmosphere using the metaphor of spinning (indicated in the title) with the image of a woman first surrounded by clapping hands [*roda de palmas*] and later a thousand sunflowers [*mil vivas, or sempre-vivas*]. For Borges, then, songwriting and filmmaking became comparable activities, and the musical techniques that produced filmic qualities included unconventional song forms, expansive orchestrations and arrangements, and lyrics based heavily in imagery.

Even Nascimento’s earliest musical experiences reveal his interest in timbre and texture. Nascimento’s mother Lília gave him a *gaita* [harmonica] as a first instrument, then a *sanfona de quatro baixos* [4-button accordion]. Wagner Tiso overheard Nascimento playing these instruments from his front steps while walking past his house. In fact, Nascimento’s playing method might only have worked while sitting on the stairs, since, according to Tiso, he played them simultaneously: Nascimento secured the *gaita* between his knees, then held the *sanfona* under one arm in order to squeeze it and pressed the buttons with his other hand. Despite playing the two instruments together, Nascimento often solved the problems of their limitations by using his voice:

> Here is something interesting: the *gaita* had everything, but the *sanfona* didn’t have sharps or flats or anything. I did a lot of stuff with the *sanfona*. For example, I accompanied my mother at street parties promoted by the church. She sang, and I went along with a little *sanfona*, the four-button [kind]. When I saw that there was a note that couldn’t be played, and I would need it, I imitated the *sanfona*. I made the sound of the *sanfona* (Nagle 2010, 331).

In other words, Nascimento filled in the missing notes with his voice resulting in a kind of hocket between *sanfona* and voice.

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129 “Apesar de não ter rolado essa encenação no mundo real, existia na nossa mente e era o que nos motivava a levar as palavras daquele jeito. A gente fazia música para os filmes que não fizemos.”

130 “Há uma coisa interessante: a gaita tinha tudo, mas a sanfona não tem sustenidos, nem bemóis, nem nada. Fiz muita coisa com a sanfona. Por exemplo: acompanhava a minha mãe nas festas de rua que a igreja promovia. Ela cantava, e o toco aqui ia com a sanfoninha, de quatro baixos. Quando eu via que uma nota não ia sair, e eu ia precisar dela, eu imitava a sanfona. Fazia o som da sanfona.”
Throughout his career, Nascimento stretched his voice to the upper limits of the male register in order to create countermelodies and dense textures in his musical arrangements. His early songs—such as “Vera Cruz,” “Rio Vermelho,” and “Catavento” (Courage 1968)—utilized wordless melodies, and the absence of lyrics along with the use of a large orchestra lent a filmic quality to his songs, even despite the necessary brevity of popular recordings in the 1960s.

Nascimento’s foray into film began with director and lyricist Ruy Guerra with Os Deuses e os Mortos (See Chapter Five). He befriended the director while living in São Paulo, and composed and performed several songs for the film in 1969 as well as acting in a small role. Nascimento has said of his experience, “For me, film music is the thing I like most [Para mim, música de cinema é a coisa que mais gosto],” and that his songs are generally written with a particular person in mind. This held true for the film. For example, Nascimento has revealed that the song “Cravo e Canela [Clove and Cinnamon]”—a folkloric samba in ¾ meter—was written for his co-star, the actress Dina Sfat, though the song did not make it into the film:

I wrote it for her character in a Ruy Guerra film. It was a person that said a lot of things that no one understood, but who wasn’t crazy, you know? And I wrote it thinking of Dina Sfat. […] In the moment that I am composing, I don’t even think about the meter, if it is in 5/4, if it is this or that, and the music comes naturally, as if it were 4/4 or 2/4, right? So ‘Cravo e Canela’ messed with the heads of a lot of musicians around the world (Museu CdE Nascimento).

The melody and feel of the song are ebullient to suit her character and is in stark contrast to Nascimento’s habitual introspection. Ronaldo Bastos’s lyrics exploit the character’s unrestrained enthusiasm; rather than tell a linear story, they are snapshots of a gypsy and the natural world around her:

The rain, gypsy woman, the dance of the rivers / the cocoa’s honey and the morning sun
A chuva, cigana, a dança dos rios / o mel do cacau e sol da manhã

131 “Eu fiz pra um personagem dela num filme do Ruy Guerra. Era uma pessoa que falava umas coisas que ninguém entendia, mas não era uma louca, né. E eu fiz pensando na Dina Sfat. […] Na hora que eu estou fazendo, eu não estou nem aí pra compasso, se é 5 por 4, se é isso ou aquilo ou coisa, e a música sai natural como se fosse 4 por 4 ou 2 por 4, né. Então Cravo e Canela mexeu com a cabeça de muito músico aí no mundo.”
Similarly, playwright José Vicente and actress Norma Benguell invited Nascimento to compose music for a play about a fictional Latin American city. Recorded as “San Vicente” in 1972, it served as a commentary on Brazilian sociopolitical concerns:

…To talk about Brazil at that time was impossible and we could even be imprisoned, you know? So, “San Vicente” is a Latin thing, and this song was a really interesting thing, because Brant [Brant] wrote lyrics later and, when I looked around, all of a sudden recordings of “San Vicente” started to appear from Latin American people that I didn’t know even knew who I was. It was the first great link with people from Chile, from Mexico, from Venezuela, from Argentina, from Uruguay, everywhere. So, I have many relationships that started from that. Brazil didn’t consider itself a Latin American country. Everything that came from these other countries, our brothers, was considered tacky, that kind of thing, or there were other things like books [that were] all censored. So, Brazil was really separate from the rest of Latin America, you know? (Museu CdeE Nascimento).132

Nascimento’s musical vision privileged the portrayal of grounded people and complex situations through music, rather than any pretension to compose music for its own sake or to manipulate formalist precepts: Nascimento is first and foremost a storyteller.

**Sonic Field Analysis and Cinematic Music: An Introduction**

Long, atypical song forms and textures using choirs, orchestras, extensive percussion, and multiple guitars and keyboards have helped to create perceptions of vastness, density, isolation, and fragility in the music of Milton Nascimento that are comparable to the affective qualities of film music. Though musical notation can help those that can read it (more or less) to follow how melodies and outlines of harmonic movements develop over time, they are not particularly useful for imagining space. In defending the use of music theory and analysis for the study of world music, Michael Tenzer has argued persuasively for a humble, cautionary return to structural listening:

Music has many dimensions other than structure, but the sharing of its cultural and personal significance has limits without the basis structure provides. We need to hear structure to give our diverse personal

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132 “…mas a gente estava falando do Brasil. Só que se falasse do Brasil, naquela época não dava e a gente ainda ia preso, né. Então, San Vicente é uma coisa latina. E essa música foi uma coisa muito interessante, porque o Brant botou letra mais tarde e, quando eu soube, de repente começaram a aparecer gravações de San Vicente de pessoas da América Latina que eu nem sabia que me conheciam. Foi o primeiro grande elo com o pessoal do Chile, do México, da Venezuela, da Argentina, do Uruguai, tudo. Então, tenho várias relações que começaram daí. O Brasil não se considerava um país da América Latina. Tudo que vinha desses outros países, desses nossos irmãos, era considerado brega, era iirc!, aquele negócio, ou tinha outras coisas assim como livros, todos censurados. Então, o Brasil era muito separado do restante da América Latina, né.”
interpretations a common orientation. Structural listening deepens specifically musical experience (Tenzer 2006, 9).

Indeed, without exploring the textural and spatial dimensions of Nascimento’s music, it is certainly possible to talk about what it might mean, but it is very difficult to talk about how it means. Tenzer’s book is satisfying in both its breadth and depth of geographical locations, time periods, and musical styles covered, yet for those that study world popular musics, it is disappointing in its lack of acknowledgement of how audio recordings structure our experience of music. Nick Braae, for example, has studied the recording techniques of the British rock band Queen in order to trace the development of their “epic” sound (2015). Though I follow his lead here, I don’t have the benefit of documentaries or detailed interviews with audio engineers and producers about studio techniques or ethos, and perhaps for that very reason, sonic field analysis can prove enlightening.

Milton Nascimento’s music incorporates aspects of Western pop/rock genres as well as influences from jazz, film, and a plethora of Brazilian genres, which result in particular mix preferences. These preferences, of course, developed in tandem with the trajectory of recording studio technology, and like many other developing countries, certainly lagged behind in adopting modern techniques or even accessing equipment. Foreign recordings were hugely inspiring for Brazilian musicians, but required creativity and resourcefulness to emulate them due to the dearth of contemporary audio gear. Interviews with the members of the Clube da Esquina rarely address the use of specific recording techniques during the 1960s and 70s, other than to emphasize that multi-track recording was unavailable until the late 1970s, and that the collective viewed the recording studio as a “laboratory” or “a workshop for the creation of works of art” (Museu CdE Tiso; Lô Borges in Mendes 2012). Z.J. Merky—a hungarian named Zoltan that Ruy

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133 Jason Stanyek’s chapter is a notable exception; See Michael Tenzer and John Roeder, Analytical and Cross-Cultural Studies in World Music (Oxford University Press, 2011).
Castro has described as “the authoritarian recording engineer”—was the head engineer at Odeon for many years, including five of Nascimento’s albums between 1969 and 1974 (Castro 2012, 132).

Nivaldo Duarte joined the recording team in 1972 and described the typical recording process for pop music in that era. Typically, the orchestral conductor wrote an arrangement based on the lead sheet supplied by the songwriter, guided by the lyrics and, perhaps, a demo recording. Then, the orchestra was recorded to a single track, called the backing ground or playback (adapted from English terms). Finally, the track was passed through the console, into the singer’s headphones while s/he recorded—either alone or along with a backing band or violão—onto a second track on another machine. Obviously, if mistakes were made, this track had to be re-recorded, or as a last resort, part of a take could be spliced to another by using a razor to physically cut the tape:

You took a gilete [term for a razor derived from the Gillette brand], took a piece [of acetate] and put it there. It was really based on [using] the gilete and it was like that for many years, including with the Clube da Esquina, when you have a song that Bituca sings, [you] have a coro of boys that comes in, [you] have an overlap. It was made with a gilete (Museu CdE Duarte).134

“Cais” and “Um gosto de sol” from Clube da Esquina in 1972 owe much to audio engineering techniques for bringing an epic, cinematic atmosphere to what came to be known as Nascimento’s characteristic “sound.” In breaking with some conventions of bossa nova and early MPB—lengthy song forms, lyrics that rarely address romantic relationships, the voice as an instrument, Latin American influences, preference for percussion over drums—, this stylistic friction eventually developed into new normative techniques.

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134 “Pegava a gilete, pegava um pedacinho e botava lá. Era na base da gilete mesmo e foi assim durante muitos anos, inclusive com o Clube da Esquina, quando tinha, tem uma música que o Bituca canta, tem um coro de garotos, e entra, tem uma superposição, era feito na gilete, tudo feito na gilete, não tinha esse negócio de copiar depois ou: “Eu canto até aqui e você passa gravando.”
By 1975, Nascimento’s album *Minas* used only slightly longer tracks—averaging about 3:45—than those on *Clube da Esquina*. Though Nascimento’s music is jazz-influenced, he almost never records long improvisational sections, saving these for live performances and the competent hands of his current band members. Rather than lengthy recordings, it is the “staging”—as lyricist Márcio Borges described it, including the arrangement, instrumentation, and audio mix—of his cinematic aesthetic that allows audiences to feel a sense of magnitude, grandiosity, and even religiosity. For *Minas*, Nascimento increasingly turned to choirs, rather than the orchestra, to thicken the texture of his songs, and particularly to add human warmth. Journalist Ana Maria Bahiana has compared Nascimento’s album *Minas* to the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, first, because both albums feature visionary audio production, but also because each confronts tropes of national identity by highlighting regional musical and social concerns. Bahiana concluded that on the album *Minas*:

> Nascimento takes and proposes a fantastic voyage: a voyage to Minas, to no Minas, to Minas that no longer exists, that no longer could possibly exist, that is only a strange country inhabited by memories and references (Bahiana 1980, 53).  

Some songs are youth anthems—such as the regionalist rock ode to the band Blind Faith (“Fé Cega, Faca Amolada”), the struggles of modern relationships (“Paula e Bebeto”), and the contemplative anti-anthem cover (“Norwegian Wood”). Somber topics include the sophisticated jazz ballad about lost love (“Beijo Partido”) and a mournful song of industrial betrayal (“Simples”).

The remaining five tracks are grandiose both in lyrical vision and musical scope. Nascimento and Borges’s “Gran Circo” compares the multitudes of human experience to a circus, whose music pulsates with polytonal vibrancy and a lumbering grotesqueness in equal measure. Nascimento and Brant’s “Ponta de areia” uses a bouncing jazz-rock band with an

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135 “Nascimento faz e propõe uma viagem fantástica: uma viagem a Minas, a Minas nenhuma, a Minas que já não existe, que já não é possível existir, que é apenas um país estranho habitado por memórias e referências.”
unpolished children’s choir for their ode to rail travel across the mineiro countryside and an homage to the closing of the Minas-Bahia line to passenger travel. Nascimento and Brant’s “Idolatrada” celebrates femininity, and in contrast to a gentle, tender rendering, its performance is one of Nascimento’s heaviest and most experimental rock ventures. Like the hit “Cais” before it, “Idolatrada” appends an orchestral theme to the second half of the song, featuring low strings in the melody, but it also weaves in references from the distorted wah-wah guitar from the song’s opening and a boys’ choir from earlier in the album (“Minas”). Nascimento and Bastos’s “Trastevere,” named for a Bohemian neighborhood in Rome, exploits the latter’s background as a poet and performance artist with Nuvem Cigana. Tiso has said “Trastevere,” and Minas generally, was his proving ground as an orchestrator, and the song is a startling combination of improvisational transformation between Nascimento’s piano, Horta’s and Guedes’s electric guitars and drum set, and Novelli’s bass. Tiso’s orchestration features Phrygian modal themes, while a large male choir draws upon Gregorian chant to create a voluminous atmosphere.

“Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no bar),” like the other songs just mentioned, also makes use of dense textures, expansive musical form, and audio mixing techniques to achieve a cinematic grandiosity. As the title suggests, the song addresses two themes in parallel. One theme pays homage to lyricist Fernando Brant’s childhood memories of Belo Horizonte. He reminisces about riding the city’s defunct trams, the tram driver that told him stories about Brazil’s WWII campaign in Italy, and his first taste of Coca-Cola on a Panair flight—all events experienced prior to the dictatorship. The title means “Longing for Panair’s Planes” and alludes to the military regime’s role in shutting down the airline—the largest in Latin America at the time and owned by the Brazilian government—and in 1965 co-opting those flights for the competing airline Varig, owned by a regime loyalist. The subtitle “Conversando
no bar [Chatting at the bar]” celebrates fraternal chumminess as a second theme, and the lyrics make clear that these nocturnal conversations are decidedly critical of the regime. Musician and critic Pablo Castro also notes that the lyrics exude a typically mineiro sardonic view of the stifling social conservatism of Minas Gerais:

Like many of the best Clube [da Esquina] lyrics, cryptic voices and damning phrases appear like ghosts from Minas’s straight-jacketed past, the somber side of mountain culture: “in the backyard I died, I died more every day in those days I lived.” The nearly in-tune chorus of common drunks around the table of a bar directs the music until Nascimento assumes [the melody] with his godlike voice, “Nothing new exists on this planet that isn’t discussed here around a bar table” (Castro 2013).

In April 2011, the Museu Abílio Barreto hosted an exhibit on Belo Horizonte’s famous botecos, bars that serves snacks and side dishes ranging from batatas fritas [fried potatoes] and mandioquinha [fried manioc balls] to bite-size cutlets of beef or pork. Often, but not always, botecos are located on the corner so that the ubiquitous plastic chairs and tables can spill out onto the concrete, attracting passers-by. Fernando Brant’s lyrics, then, bring us back to the importance of the esquina in mineiro social life. The Santa Tereza neighborhood, in particular, is filled with botecos, and its status as a classic Bohemian neighborhood is due in part to the atmosphere they provide.

“Saudade dos aviões da Panair,” like many CdE songs, portrays the realities of everyday Brazilians on an epic scale, yet without succumbing to elitism or extravagance. The compositional form is verse-chorus with each verse consisting of an 8-bar verse and 4-bar bridge and a 12-bar chorus (a 4-bar phrase repeated three times) (See Figure 4.3). The harmonic language for both verse and chorus shifts between minor keys and their relative majors, but stays largely within a 3-chord pop territory. This uncomplicated harmony is contrasted by a slow,

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136 “Como é comum nas melhores letras do Clube, vozes ocultas e frases malditas aparecem como assombrações do passado na camisa de força de Minas, o lado sombrio da cultura montanhesa- "no fundo do quintal morreu, morri a cada dia dos dias que eu vivi". O coro semi-afinado de bebuns homens comuns na mesa do bar conduz a música até que Nascimento assuma, com sua voz de Deus: nada de novo existe neste planeta que não se fale aqui na mesa de bar.”
plodding 5/4 meter in which the melody stretches across barlines to create feelings of suspense, such as at the last bar of Verse One and the last bar of the Bridge (Hear Minas, Track 4, 0:45-1:00).

![Sound wave representation of the musical form of “Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar)” from Minas (EMI-Odeon 1975).](image)

“Saudade dos aviões da Panair” carries this yin and yang of complexity and simplicity within its orchestration and audio production as well. The song’s sonic field is wide and dense, even before any voices enter (See Figure 4.4, representing 0:00-1:00, or the Intro, Verse 1, Bridge, and Chorus). Percussion instruments—including triangle, pandeiro (Brazilian tambourine), wood block, toms, and kick drum—are mixed at the left-right extremes of the sonic field, but are constantly panned from one side to the other to establish the grand scale of the sonic field. In other words, the song contains only one triangle, but it appears twice in the sonic field analysis because the triangle’s signal is alternatively panned right, then left, and back again throughout the track. Wagner Tiso’s Rhodes sounds from the upper left, while Toninho Horta plays long, held chords on electric guitar to complement Nascimento’s fingerpicked and strummed violão, panned left and right, respectively. Novelli’s bass is dead center at the foundation of the sonic field. With flute adding to this already dense texture, the central area of the sonic field remains open, heightening the listeners’ expectation. Twenty seconds in, the main melody—almost dirge-like—is intoned by a mixed coro. Some voices are professional musicians
(including musician-composer Joyce, songwriter Tavinho Moura, and Toninho Horta), while others are non-musician friends of the CdE. Just as in “Cio da Terra” (See Chapter Three), the coro purposefully mixed finely tuned voices with less experienced ones in order to not only capture the diversity of voices that might discuss current events “na mesa de bar [at the bar table],” but to represent the voice of the common citizen.

![Diagram showing sonic field analysis of 0:00-1:00 from “Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar)” by Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brant from Minas (EMI-Odeon 1975). Darkly shaded instruments appear earlier in the song than lighter shaded items.](image)

**Figure 4.4** Sonic field analysis of 0:00-1:00 from “Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar)” by Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brant from *Minas* (EMI-Odeon 1975). Darkly shaded instruments appear earlier in the song than lighter shaded items.

As the song continues, other voices add to that of the citizen coro to enrich this nostalgic conversation around the bar. Along with the coro’s second verse comes a flute section, Tiso’s organ at left to balance out his Rhodes, and, most dramatically, a second male coro—this one made up of the musicians in the band, singing roughly in tune—wordlessly harmonizes with the mixed coro. Figure 4.5 shows just how dense the sonic field has become, so much so that when Paulinho Braga’s drum set enters at 1:18, there is no space left to represent it—the cymbals pierce through the few leftover spaces. The reedy organ and wordless coro connote a church atmosphere, as if the second verse serves as testimony:
I discovered that my weapon is what my memory guards from the era of Panair

Figure 4.5 Sonic field analysis of 1:00-1:37 from “Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar)” by Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brant from Minas (EMI-Odeon 1975).

For the remainder of the song, the drums take over from the percussion as the primary rhythmic force. Finally, Nascimento’s voice, mixed prominently at dead center, joins in on the last phrase of the chorus at 2:03 (See Figure 4.6). Oddly, the cymbals are mixed entirely to the left and opposite the flute section, perhaps to avoid overpowering their intricate melodic ornamentation, or perhaps out of technical necessity.
“Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar)” illustrates the influence of cinema on Nascimento’s music for several reasons. Just as a film can reveal things about the protagonist without the character being present on screen, Nascimento’s songs can further the narrative using voices other than his own—and often multiple voices. Rather than turning to the sound of a film orchestra to construct dense, interweaving textures, Nascimento often preferred the flexibility of the human voice (particularly, his own). Nascimento has said he used to walk into the hills and ridges surrounding Três Pontas in order to find space to think: “My first partners in music, principally in voice, were the mountains of Minas” (Nagle 330). He discovered he could sing into the echoing space, and upon hearing his own voice return, he created countermelodies with the echo. To some, this anecdote seems so unlikely as to seem mythical or even superhuman, but it also reveals Nascimento’s peculiar musical imagination. His arrangements are marked by multiple and interweaving melodies and he looks beyond conventional approaches to solve

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137 “As minhas primeiras parceiras na música, principalmente no vocal, foram as montanhas de Minas.”
musical problems. His selection of particular collaborators (See Chapter Two) has much to do with this preference for timbral experimentation and layered textures.

For the final verse, Nascimento weaves in more and more voices (See Figure 4.7). While Nascimento sings the main melody at dead center, he also recorded a wordless Milton 2 mixed at the extreme upper right (Hear Minas, Track 4, 2:15-2:27). A third Nascimento joins the male coro to harmonize the bridge (2:33-2:50), and, when the bridge repeats, yet another coro—this time, a boys’ chorus—cuts through these layers with a contrasting theme (2:50-3:15). This theme is drawn from the song “Paula e Bebeto”—Track 10 on Minas (also used on Track 1). Using it for “Saudades dos aviões da Panair” seems to contrast boyish innocence and playfulness with the lyrics, which turn increasingly nostalgic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cerveja que tomo hoje</th>
<th>The beer I drink today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>é apenas em memória</td>
<td>is just in memory of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dos tempos da Panair</td>
<td>the era of Panair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A primeira coca-cola</td>
<td>My first Coca-Cola was,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foi me lembro bem agora</td>
<td>I just remembered,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nas asas da Panair</td>
<td>on the wings of Panair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A maior das maravilhas</td>
<td>My greatest wonders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foi voando sobre o mundo</td>
<td>were flying over the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nas asas da Panair</td>
<td>on the wings of Panair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fernando Brant’s lyrics then reflect on two childhoods: his own personal memories of Belo Horizonte and Panair, but also Brazil’s innocence before a pioneering airline succumbed to regime corruption. Appropriately, the boys’ coro theme is jarring—it is used in its original key of G major, rubbing against the song’s F major melodies—further suggesting conflict between boyish memories and adult experiences under dictatorship.
As the boys’ *coro* fades away, the lyrics turn from nostalgia into a more optimistic message. The band segues from the plodding 5/4 into a fast waltz over a decidedly jazz-influenced harmonic progression. A repeated 5-bar phrase serves as a jumping off point for improvisation as each bar progresses through the circle of fifths, creating linked II7-V7 harmonic movements. The bass complicates these II-V movements by playing chord tones other than the roots, alternating between minor 7<sup>th</sup> and major 3<sup>rd</sup> tones along its chromatic descent. Over this, Nascimento sings about the conversations around the table of a bar keeping collective memory alive:

*Em volta dessa mesa velhos e moços*  
*lembrando o que já foi*  
*em volta dessa mesa existem outras*  
*falando tão igual*  
*em volta dessas mesas existe a rua*  
*vivendo seu normal*  
*em volta dessa rua uma cidade*  
*sonhando seus metais*  
*em volta da cidade...lá lá lá lá lá*  

*Around this table, old men and boys*  
*Remembering what has already passed by*  
*Around this table there are others*  
*saying the same things*  
*Around these tables, exist streets*  
*Living as normal*  
*Around this street, a city*  
*Dreaming of metal*  
*Around this city...la la la la la*
In encouraging the listener to think past the bar, out into the streets, into the city, and beyond, Brant’s lyrics encourage listeners to look beyond borders, to think regionally and internationally, and, specifically, to reject *mineiro* provincialism. They also suggest that talking about collective memory from before the dictatorship might help bring the regime to an end.

**Conclusion**

While some members of the Clube da Esquina—including brothers Lô and Márcio Borges and guitarist Toninho Horta—were born and raised in Belo Horizonte, many others were the first generation of their families to move to and spend their formative years in the capital city. Whether homegrown or transplanted, the urban *esquina* allowed Belo Horizonte’s inhabitants to find each other, exchange ideas, and to collaborate. This chapter opened with a brief social history of the Belo Horizonte live music scene in the 1950s and 60s in order to unravel the myth of the Clube da Esquina origin story into multiple stories of interweaving friendships. Whether meeting in the corner bar or the *cinema de rua*, the urban *esquina* surged as a central space for the fostering of fraternity and for the construction of an urban *mineiro* identity.

Though Nascimento’s and Borges’s first compositions were inspired by film, it was not the film *score* that can be traced through Nascimento’s compositions, but the sheer scale, texture, and variety of timbre that marks Nascimento’s “sound.” For example, the scale of “Saudade dos aviões da Panair (Conversando no Bar)” is grandiose—as the sonic field analyses showed—, but Nascimento’s inclusion of untrained voices and his representations of multiple generations index the everyday person, much like the films of the Old West pinpointed a hero drawn from the people. Many of the voices from the adult and boys’ choirs were friends or relatives of the CdE. Nascimento’s distinct hybrid of regional, Latin American, and international cosmopolitan styles catapulted his music into the emotional fabric of *mineiros* experiencing dictatorship in such a profound way, that they have come to equate the Clube da Esquina with *música mineira* itself.
CHAPTER 5

“WITH A VOICE LIKE A GUN”: POPULAR MUSIC, CENSORSHIP, AND STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE DURING THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY DICTATORSHIP’S ANOS DE CHUMBO (1968-74)

Introduction

Scholars writing about the censorship of popular music during Brazil’s military dictatorship (1964-85) have focused on the analysis of lyrics to demonstrate attitudes of resistance. This is entirely necessary since popular song has long been one of Brazil’s most revered art forms and an outlet for social and political critique. Chico Buarque’s “A pesar de você [In spite of you]” (Perrone 2002, 72) and Caetano Veloso’s “É proibido proibir [It’s prohibited to prohibit]” (Stroud 2000, 89) have been theorized as archetypes of two lyrical strategies of resistance: double entendre and countercultural provocation, respectively (Ulhôa 1990, 336; Dunn 2001, 74). Research exploring these lyrics and the circumstances in which they were heard and interpreted has been crucial to understanding the degree of the military regime’s restrictions on civil liberties as well as strategies of artistic survival by some of Brazil’s best-loved musicians.

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138 This chapter is adapted from papers presented at the BRASA conference in Champaign, IL in September 2012 and the Researching Music Censorship conference in Copenhagen in June 2013. It is based on field research funded by a 2010 Tinker Summer Field Research Grant and a 2011 U.S. Student Fulbright Grant. This chapter has in turn been adapted as a chapter in Researching Music Censorship, edited by Annemette Kierkegaard and Johannes Skjelbo and forthcoming in 2017 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

139 The song “Se o cantor calar a boca [If the singer shuts his mouth]” was composed by José Rodrigues Trindade, known by his artistic name as Zé Rodrix, a member of Som Imaginário in 1970. His song was censored on December 10, 1975 with the following explanation: “Trata-se de uma mensagem tendenciosamente política. Todo o texto expressa um pensamento de revolta, de insatisfação ou inconformismo politico-social, podendo incitar o povo contra as autoridades constituidas. [It deals with a tendentiously political message. The entire text expresses a thought of revolt, of dissatisfaction or of socio-political nonconformity, capable of inciting the people against the constituted authorities].”
But to focus primarily on lyrical analysis underestimates the importance that sonic elements play in shaping meaning.

Moreover, it is normative to focus on an artist’s successful resistance to censorship. Triumph makes for compelling storytelling, while artists’ failed resistance is more difficult to uncover. Even so, studying failure helps us to understand why some instances of censorship were effective where others were not. Furthermore, these stories reveal the real costs of censorship. Historian Marcos Napolitano notes that centralized security forces during the dictatorship participated in the “production of suspicion” surrounding MPB [música popular brasileira] musicians through surveillance and intelligence gathering. For composer-performer Geraldo Vandré, persecution became an “unbearable burden” and the direct cause of his auto-exile and abandonment of music (2004, 118). Celebrity-status musicians were not the only class of musicians subject to censorship; musicians at every level of performance—whether recording for niche audiences or performing on local radio and television—were subject to censorship. Such experiences of niche-market musicians have yet to be told.

This chapter presents two case studies in music censorship during the anos de chumbo [leaden years, 1968-74]. Milton Nascimento was entering the second phase of his national and international career, while Sirlan, a collaborator of Nascimento’s with a modest career in Minas Gerais, was vying for domestic recognition. The artists demonstrate two sides of the censorship coin: an established artist who adapted and persevered, and an up-and-coming artist who struggled and floundered. Performer-composer Milton Nascimento rose to domestic stardom at the 1967 Festival Internacional da Canção [International Song Festival], then forged international ties through collaborations with American jazz musician Herbie Hancock and Argentinean folk singer Mercedes Sosa. His sixth album Milagre dos Peixes [Miracle of the Fishes] (EMI-Odeon
1973) suffered heavy censorship—only 3 sets of song lyrics were approved. When Nascimento and the band Som Imaginário resolved to release the album without lyrics, the censors even questioned the “aggressive” sound of his voice. With support from the record company Odeon, the release went ahead and Nascimento described the impact of his voice “como uma arma [like a gun]” (Borges 1998). By contrast, performer-composer Sirlan’s professional career succumbed to the dictatorship’s total censorship of his 1972 album Profissão de Fé [Profession of Faith]. By the time of its release seven years later, what was to be his politically-conscious breakthrough album was no longer in fashion, and Sirlan subsequently left professional music for a career in radio production.

Brazilianist scholars have long pointed to Milagre dos Peixes\textsuperscript{140} as a triumph in music of resistance, but often as a footnote to other artists seen as the quintessential producers of musical protest, such as Chico Buarque, Geraldo Vandré, and the Tropicalistas (including Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Tom Zé, and Os Mutantes) (Stroud 2000; Dunn 2001; Napolitano 2002; Naves 2010). \textit{MdP} is a unique case study within protest song literature because the album is largely instrumental. What happens when political lyrics are censored altogether? When confronted with the censorship of his musical \textit{Calabar} in 1973, Chico Buarque famously adopted the pseudonym Julinho de Adelaide to try to release it as an album, while Vandré and Sirlan eventually quit music. Nascimento adapted to the regime-imposed wordlessness by focusing on the sound and attitude portrayed through the music itself. But what conditions existed for \textit{MdP} to be understood as protest? The album was among Nascimento’s most avant-garde creations, and yet \textit{MdP} sold 15,000 copies in the first few months of its release. The subsequent live version

\textsuperscript{140} Hereafter, the album \textit{Milagre dos Peixes} will also be referred to as \textit{MdP}. 
with orchestra *Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo* (EMI-Odeon 1974) sold even better, resulting in a tour played to packed audiences (de Souza 1974).

Musicologist Martha Tupinambá de Ulhôa analyzed Milton Nascimento’s “Canção da América [America’s Song]” as a particularly moving performance due to what she would later call “malleable meter” (Ulhôa 1995 and 2006). She compared Nascimento’s singing to that of Chico Buarque, which follows more predictable accent patterns, arguing that Nascimento’s emotional performances were due to his ability to depart dramatically from the instrumental accompaniment, including his own guitar. Despite this, Ulhôa judged Buarque’s songs as the most successful of the protest era, suggesting that Nascimento’s understated personality (Minas Gerais state) was too subtle for a protest singer. She defines *mineirice* as “a way of being very diplomatic when dealing with politics and full of subtlety when speaking about one’s innermost feelings and thoughts” (Ulhôa 1995, 324). Indeed, many *mineiros* [Minas Gerais natives] today continue to identify with their state’s stereotypical characteristic of being *calado* [reticent] or *fechado* [private], and journalists complained throughout Nascimento’s career of his distaste for giving interviews.

I argue that it was the very use of lyrical subtlety that allowed Nascimento’s music to be censored less often than Chico Buarque’s. Moreover, Nascimento’s inclusion of regional *mineira* folk traditions helped to make socio-political themes attractive to audiences besides intellectuals and university students. Literary and cultural theorist Idelber Avelar has argued that Milton Nascimento’s name “had always been political in a more direct and less mediated sense than those of Caetano and Gil, and he had been popular in his roots in a more recognizable way than

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had Chico Buarque” (Avelar 2001, 126). One interpretation of Avelar’s assertion is that Nascimento was more political because he let his music speak for itself, rather than attempting to define or explain it to the press, and he was more popular because his song lyrics didn’t rely on highly sophisticated, literate wordplay like Chico Buarque’s.

Nascimento’s popularity among audiences was due to a combination of circumstances. First, musician-lyricist Chico Amaral—friend and collaborator of Milton Nascimento—has observed that the epic nature of Nascimento’s style makes it particularly captivating (Amaral 2013, 37; Amaral 2010). While lyricist Márcio Borges had used film technique as an inspiration for songwriting, Nascimento drew upon the classic Western to depict the struggle of good versus evil. The epic dimensions, grand orchestration, and dense textures of film scores helped to convey the Clube da Esquina’s powerful lived experiences of authoritarian oppression, and with estimates in the tens of thousands of victims of torture, audiences could identify with those experiences. Second, percussionist Naná Vasconcelos’s avant-garde experimentations in timbre and texture—ranging from the mournful to the grotesque—did not repel audiences, but drew them in. His fusions of vocal utterance and percussion gave the music visceral impact. Simon Frith argues that the voice as an instrument is unlike other instruments in that it stands more directly for the person:

…The voice is the sound of the body in a direct sense. Certain physical experiences, particularly extreme feelings, are given vocal sounds beyond our conscious control—the sounds of pain, lust, ecstasy, fear, what one might call inarticulate articulacy: the sounds, for example, of tears and laughter; the sounds made by soul singers around and between their notes, vocal noises that seem expressive of their deepest feelings because we hear them as if they’ve escaped from a body that the mind—language—can no longer control (Frith 1996, 192).

Frith’s words are strikingly relevant for political song. The moment we hear a voice, we immediately associate it with a particular body—often gendered, classed, and linguistically geo-positioned—but also with that body’s disposition, including its pain, suffering, and disgust.
Violence and grief incite vocal utterances beyond conscious control, and with the backdrop of the "anos de chumbo," Vasconcelos’s vocal-percussive fusion dripped with emotion.

As I began to show in Chapter 4, sonic field analysis can be very helpful for analyzing how space, depth, and scale can shape musical meaning. Nascimento’s compositions use long, atypical song forms, interweaving voices and coros, dense orchestration, extensive percussion, and multiple harmonic instruments to create perceptions of vastness, distance, isolation, and fragility that feel cinematic in scale in comparison to much popular music. In theorizing sonic field analysis, I borrowed Allan F. Moore’s concept of the “sound-box” (2001, 121)—a diagram of an audio recording’s stereo mix—as a useful tool in representing perceptions of space and scale in recorded music, as well as Braae’s use of a similar model to study Queen’s “epic” sound (2015).

I further adapted sonic field analysis from my own studies in audio engineering at Western Michigan University. Professor and audio engineer John Campos advocated the use of diagrams to pinpoint where engineers perceived each sound source within three dimensions of the stereo mix: “panning,” or the horizontal distribution of a source across the sonic field (i.e. left, center, right); frequency, our perception of higher timbres (flutes, cymbals) as originating from higher positions in the sonic field and vice versa; and distance, our perception of “dry” sources (those with minimal reverb) seeming closer, and reverberant sources, more distant. Sonic field analysis can be adopted alongside other musical analysis—such as

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142 I have reviewed several papers available at the AES website (Audio Engineering Society), and though many engineers utilize stereo mix analyses bounded by a three-dimensional box, I am not aware of an industry-wide term for this practice. I prefer the connotation of an open landscape inherent in “sonic field” rather than that of confinement implied in Moore’s term “sound-box.”

143 My profound gratitude to John Campos of Western Sound Studios in Kalamazoo, Michigan for opening my ears to the art of audio engineering.

144 Audio engineer William Moylan has taken great pains to explain that humans generally judge distance visually, and are poor judges of distance aurally (Moylan 2014). He contends that humans mostly use timbral detail to determine distance in combination with our perceptions of volume and reverberation.
diction, timbre, orchestration, harmony, and lyrics—, to discover in what ways a musical
performance, including its audio production, helps to formulate musical meaning.

Case One: Milton Nascimento and the Wordless Voice
Milagre dos Peixes: Anos de Chumbo and “Cultural Emptiness”

Milton Nascimento recorded his sixth album Milagre dos Peixes in Rio de Janeiro
alongside progressive rock band Som Imaginário in 1973, a difficult time for artistic production
in Brazil. With the establishment of federal censorship in 1966, the pinching of civic life
increased tensions during the televised song festivals that year. As the decade wore on, song
festivals earned such nicknames as the “festivaia [festival of booing]” and the “festivalesca
[carnivalesque festival]” (Stroud 2000, 89-90). In 1968, the military regime decreed the
infamous AI-5, which suspended habeas corpus, dissolved political parties, suspended congress
indefinitely, and authorized censorship of the press. With rampant imprisonment, torture, forced
and voluntary exile, and disappearances under regime leader Médici, this dark period was
dubbed the anos de chumbo. In 1969, Decree No. 447 prohibited student protests, the formation
of extra-curricular student organizations, and the distribution of “subversive” materials in
universities. Students, workers, and clandestine operatives stepped up the intensity of leftist
movements, adopting resistance strategies ranging from civil disobedience to armed guerrilla
warfare.

Journalist Zuenir Ventura dubbed the years between 1969 and 1972 as the vazio cultural,
or “cultural emptiness.” Besides the cassation of hundreds of university professors and
military officers, MPB stars Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Chico Buarque, and Geraldo Vandré
were in exile in London, Rome, and Paris, while Edú Lobo, Tom Jobim, and João Gilberto opted

145 See Ventura’s article of the same name in Cultura em Trânsito: da repressão à abertura, edited by Elio Gaspari,
Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda and Zuenir Ventura, (Editora Aeroplano, 2000). Buarque de Hollanda has suggested
he was also referring to the cassation of hundreds of university professors as well as artistic stagnation in theater,
music, visual art, and cinema due to forced and self-imposed exile. See her website:
for recording projects in the US and Mexico (Dunn 2001, 164). Milton Nascimento found himself among relatively few high-profile popular musicians to remain in Brazil, claiming that the pressure to take on the mantle of musician-activist was overwhelming (Bahiana 1980, 47). Nevertheless, this period of so-called cultural emptiness proved to be immensely creative and productive for many artists. Napolitano noted that MPB performers toured throughout Brazil on the Circuito Universitário [University Circuit] between 1971 and 1975, drawing the scrutiny of state organs of repression (2004, 108). Intelligence reports labeled Chico Buarque the “enemy number one of the regime,” while Milton Nascimento, Gonzaguinha, and Ivan Lins were also closely monitored. Though they aroused suspicion, the university shows allowed artists to earn an income while building a loyal audience.

In 1970, Milton Nascimento and Som Imaginário staged a long-running show in Rio de Janeiro mixing progressive rock and jazz elements (free improvisation and extended forms) and experiments with timbre and texture (noise and distortion, wordless song, and dense orchestration) (See Figure 5.1). The show premiered in Rio de Janeiro at the Teatro da Praia in Copacabana, and eventually played in São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais. Nascimento’s childhood friend Wagner Tiso founded Som Imaginário and described to me in an interview his intentions for the band:

We played in an aggressive manner, inciting the public to a certain revolt, you know? Our interest with sound was the families, the people, to rebel against how much the State was present in Brazilian society. This was our intention. We wanted to break exactly that structure (Tiso 2012).

Tiso said that Som Imaginário did this by breaking with musical structures, particularly the sound of bossa nova, which did not have the sonic impact to dialogue with the tumultuous anos de chumbo. David Treece has described the most salient aesthetic feature of bossa nova as a

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146 Dunn gives an exhaustive list of artists in forced or self-exile from 1968-74.
147 “A gente tocava de uma maneira agressiva, incitando o público a uma certa revolta, né? A nossa interesse com som era as famílias, as pessoas, se insurgir ao quanto o estado estava presente na sociedade brasileira. Isso era nossa intenção. A gente queria quebrar essa estrutura mesma.”
feeling of “suspended animation” (Treece 2013, 67), in which a subtle chain of tension and release is enacted over time, but never resolved entirely. Conversely, Tiso believed that an aggressive musical stance could disrupt the escapist and idealistic values often associated with bossa nova, and he described frightening police interrogations following raucous performances.

The 1970 album Nascimento sold only moderately, but Nascimento and Som Imaginário had discovered a new conceptual direction. In 1993, Gilberto Gil remembered the album Nascimento as a milestone in Nascimento’s career during an emotional interview with the composer:

Gilberto Gil: In ’69, Nascimento, we—myself, Caetano [Veloso], Chico [Buarque], Edú [Lobo], [Geraldo] Vandré, many others at many levels—all went to live in exile. You stayed here. What was it like?

Milton Nascimento: It was really something…extremely terrible. At the same time, not so terrible. I don’t know. A confusion that, even today, messes with my head. I worked with the students, and had several songs censored, was taken many times to DOPS [Department of Political and Social Order], was stopped at all of those places, and, they even prohibited me from seeing my son. They said that if I went to São Paulo, and saw my son, that they would kidnap him forever. In this, I succeeded. I thought that I was tricking those people, and then, I received another telephone call saying: Try it one more time and see what happens.

GG: But at the same time, you said, you know, it was terrible and not so terrible. Because it was at that time that you consolidated your leadership along with the mineiro group, the basic formation of Clube da Esquina and that whole project. I remember in London, we got that record of yours
that has the psychedelic cover, remember?


GG: It has “Para Lennon e McCartney,” et cetera. And we listened to it a lot, and there you can feel the consolidation of a style, of a project, of a leadership…

MN: Also killing it, right? (Nascimento 1993)

Watching this video, Nascimento becomes visibly nervous—he looks down at the floor as his shoulders tense and his hands begin to clutch at the chair in discomfort. Nascimento admits that the experience had been very difficult, but quickly changes gears to address how he and other artists had endured that period through musical creation and involvement with student movements. Notably, he also deftly avoids labeling himself as a “leader,” as Gil suggests.

As the 1970s wore on, however, restrictions on civil life and arrests increased. The release of Clube da Esquina in 1972 was a rousing success for Milton Nascimento and the newly baptized Clube da Esquina collective. The success of this album was due in part to its musical innovations in timbre, form, composition, and production, but was also for the critical stance in several of its lyrics. In particular, “Nada será como antes [Nothing Will Be As It Was],” with lyrics by Ronaldo Bastos, is hailed today among fans as an anthem of resistance. Moreover, this contestatory stance was not merely an artistic choice or an attempt to stay in vogue with other socially-conscious artists of the era, but a reaction to the artists’ own experiences of the anos de chumbo. Several Clube da Esquina members hid activists and dissidents in their apartments or

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148 Gilberto Gil: Em 69, Nascimento, nós—we, Caetano, Chico, Edu, Vandré, vários outros em vários níveis—we were all exiled. Você ficou aqui. Como foi?; Milton Nascimento: Foi uma coisa assim...extremamente terrível. Ao mesmo tempo, não tão terrível. Sei lá. Uma confusão que, até hoje, me dá na cabeça. Eu trabalhei com os estudantes, e tive várias músicas censuradas, fui várias vezes parar no DOPS, parar naqueles lugares todos, e, inclusive me proibiu de ver meu filho. Falou que se eu fosse a São Paulo, e visse meu filho, que eles iriam seqüestrá-lo sem volta. Em essa, eu consegui. Pensava que estava “driblando” o pessoal, e quando ver, recebi outra telefonema dizendo: Tente mais uma vez para você ver que vai acontecer.; GG: Mas ao mesmo tempo, você disse, né, era terrível e não era terrível. Porque foi aí nesse período que você consolidou sua liderança junto ao grupo mineiro, a formação básico do Clube da Esquina e todo esse projeto. Lembro que, em Londres, nós recebemos aquele disco seu, que tem aquela capa psicodélica, lembra?; MN: Ah! Do “Som Imaginário” (Nascimento 1970); GG: Tem “Para Lennon e McCartney”, et cetera. E a gente ouvia muito, e ali você sente a consolidação de um estilo, de um projeto, de uma liderança…e et cetera, et cetera. MN: Também apanhando, não é?
homes in Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte. Wagner Tiso remembered this time as sobering, but also as a fond memory of a “hippie” countercultural lifestyle:

Look, we had an apartment in Rio that we used to hide some people. There was a group of people from Pará state, that had… that were on the run from there, because they would be imprisoned. They came, and we received them in my apartment there. They stayed…man…ten in a room. But it was excellent, it was marvelous. Besides this, today Liliana Caruso, who is the wife of Chico Caruso, the cartoonist for *O Globo*, she lived hidden in my apartment with the name of ‘Lúcia.’ And her name is Liliana, you know? It was a codename (Tiso 2012).

Som Imaginário bassist Novelli described his observations a bit more vividly:

I frequented meetings, I knew where there were activist cells, I hid books, hid people. I wasn’t so alienated like others, but I can’t say patently that I had participated. Music for me was a more interesting practice for protest, as a way of getting along. We lived in a building, in ’68, on Xavier da Silveira Street, me, Bituca, Hélvius Vilela, Nivaldo Ornelas, Celinho… And the building was the living quarters of retired army officials. It was called Monte Pio, and we lived there a year and a half without any question. And it was a mess, parties, drinking, loud music. We never had a complaint, no one ever came. That was a mystery. And it was even in that place that I hid people, books, and stuff. You couldn’t possibly find a safer place […] But I was at demonstrations, I went. I lived with dramas of friends imprisoned, tortured, but personally I can’t say that I suffered consequences that severe like many people suffered. And I cried, of course. I became very emotional (Museu CdeE Novelli).

There is a tension here in Novelli’s words between recognizing that music could be transformative as a form of protest, yet also feeling that his role as an anonymous musician and as an ordinary citizen—despite having hidden fugitives—had less significance than those doing clandestine work. In the face of the imprisonment and torture of others, many interviewees avoid addressing their own psychological distress from the era, and unfortunately, it has the effect of masking the really real consequences of both everyday and artistic forms of activism.

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149 Lyricist Márcio Borges, singer-guitarist Sirlan de Jesus, lyricist Murilo Antunes, and guitarist Nelson Ângelo all admitted to me in interviews to having hidden activists.

150 “Olha, nós tínhamos um apartamento no Rio, que a gente escondia umas pessoas. Tinha um pessoal do Pará, que tava, foi fujido de lá, porque seriam presos. Eles vieram, e a gente recebeu eles em meu apartamento lá. Eles ficavam … gente … dez na sala. Mas foi ótimo, foi maravilhoso. Inclusive, hoje em dia Liliana Caruso, que é mulher do Chico Caruso, o cartunista do Globo, ela vivia escondida no meu apartamento com nome de ‘Lúcia.’ E ela se chama Liliana, né? É codinome.”

151 “Eu frequentei reuniões, eu sabia onde tinham aparelhos, eu escondi livros, escondi pessoas. Eu não era tão alienado assim, mas não posso falar de cadeira que eu tenha participado. A música pra mim era uma prática mais interessante como protesto, como forma de conviver. Nós morávamos num prédio, em 68, na rua Xavier da Silveira, eu, o Bituca, o Hélvius Vilela, o Ornelas Ornellas, o Celinho (…) E o prédio era moradia de oficiais do exército aposentados, eles chamavam Monte Pio, e nós moramos um ano e nunca houve uma questão. E era uma bagunça, era festa, birita, som alto. Nunca houve reclamação, nunca apareceu, isso era um mistério. E foi nesse lugar inclusive que eu escondi pessoas, livros e coisa e tal. Lugar mais seguro impossível … Mas estive nas passeatas, fui. Convivi com dramas de amigos presos, torturados, mas pessoalmente eu não posso dizer que sofrí conseqüências tão severas como muita gente sofreu. E eu chorei, claro. Me emocionou muito.”
In his 1998 memoir, lyricist Márcio Borges vividly documented the disappearance of several friends and acquaintances, including college friend Dilma Rousseff, her first husband Cláudio Galeno Linhares, Inês Etienne Romeu, and Beto Freitas [Carlos Alberto Soares de Freitas], all of whom were subjected to weeks of torture. Though Dilma, Galeno, and Inês survived, in 1971 Beto Freitas was the first person to be assassinated at the infamous Casa da Morte [Death House], a site of systematic torture run by the dictatorship in Petrópolis, 40 miles north of Rio de Janeiro (Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais 2008). His body has never been located.

To understand the impact of civic policy changes during the dictatorship from an intimate, quotidian point of view, I asked interviewees who were in their mid- to late twenties in 1970 what kinds of things changed during the dictatorship? How did day-to-day life change? Many claimed that everything had changed and had trouble pinpointing concrete examples. Gently circling back to the topic, however, revealed highly emotional and visceral experiences of the anos de chumbo in Belo Horizonte:

Brazilians are very group-oriented, affectionate; they kiss or hug each other. They like to meet in groups. After ‘64, especially after ‘68 when AI-5 came out and things worsened, two or three people stopped on the corner looked suspicious. And these two or three people avoided doing this because they were afraid to meet on the corner. So this changes not just your behavior, but your spirit, you know? If you were happy leaving home to meet people on the corner, in the street, now you thought, ‘No, it’s better not to go.’ If you had books, for example, certain types of books about the Russian revolution, or about Marxism, books about Lenin or Marx, books considered subversive, you ran a risk. If some guy entered your home and found one or two books, you could be imprisoned, or disappear. So this totally changes social behavior (Vilara 2012).

The era of the dictatorship in Brazil, it asphyxiated the people so much. Our generation was really struck by it. It was impossible for you to…what the dictatorship did in Brazil…It was like this, I’ll explain it to you. It took from us the possibility of belief in the future. There was no future. [The

152 “Os brasileiros são muito grupais, afetivos, se abraçam ou se beijam. Gostam de se unir em grupos. À partir de 64, especialmente à partir de 68 quando saiu o AI-5 e aí as coisas pioraram, duas ou três pessoas paradas na esquina eram suspeitas. E essas duas ou três pessoas evitavam de fazer isso porque tinham medo de se encontrar na esquina. Então isso muda não apenas o comportamento mas o espírito, né? Se você tinha alegria saindo de casa para encontrar com as pessoas na esquina, na rua, agora você pensava antes, ‘não, é melhor não ir.’ Se você tinha livros, por exemplo, determinados tipos de livro sobre revolução russo, ou sobre marxismo, livros de Lenin ou Marx, livros considerados subversivo, você corria risco. A cara entrase na sua casa e encontrar um ou dois livros, podia ser preso, ou desaparecer. Então isso muda todo um comportamento social.”
dictatorship] had no end! (Anonymous 2012; Emphasis original). Other interviewees brought up words like paranoia, anxiety, darkness, and numbness to describe their experiences of the anos de chumbo.

The political elements in the Clube da Esquina’s music, then, are not a result of a distant or sanitized experience of dictatorial Brazil, but allusions to lived pain, frustration, and deep personal loss. The Clube da Esquina manifested its musical politics quite differently than their peers—including Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, and Chico Buarque—including more subtle, enigmatic lyrics, experimental timbre and texture, and an unwillingness to speak publicly about political views. Napolitano has written that recordings—and the act of listening to them—played equally significant roles in inspiring critical thought during the anos de chumbo:

In those years, even within the limits of private spaces, to listen to a song could be an act of civic and critical consciousness, through which a kind of ritual of belonging to the critical part of civil society was realized and a negation of the values inculcated by the regime (Napolitano 2010, 392).

Because of Nascimento’s frequent performances for university student organizations, he and his collaborators were well aware of the socio-political consciousness of their fans. They also understood that recordings, just as much as live performances, reconstructed for listeners this “ritual of belonging” to an anti-dictatorial counterculture.

In 1973, Milton Nascimento received notice that censors had approved only 3 of 11 songs for the upcoming release of Milagre dos Peixes, and that the censored songs—“Os Escravos de Jó [The Slaves of Job],” “Hoje É Dia d’El Rey [Today is the Day of the King],” and “Cadê [Where is?]”—would have to be modified or abandoned. With this ultimatum, lyricist Fernando Brant said their aesthetic goals mixed with political ones:


154 “Naqueles anos, ouvir uma canção, ainda que nos limites de um espaço privado, poderia ser um ato de consciência cívica e crítica, por meio do qual se realizava uma espécie de ritual do pertencimento à parte crítica da sociedade civil e negação dos valores inculcados pelo regime.”
Milagre dos Peixes was an album that evolved a lot in counterpoint with the censorship. All of a sudden, we thought, since there really won’t be lyrics anymore, the idea is to carry them in the singing, to protest, to send a message with the voice. I remember that the recordings were very emotional, very strong. Bituca wanted to let out everything that they were impeding him from saying in words (Vilara 2006, 70).

From the beginning, several songs were intended to be wordless (Vilara 2006, 69). Nascimento had adapted several wordless songs from the score of director Ruy Guerra’s 1970 film Os Deuses e os Mortos [The Gods and the Dead], and they became a jumping off point for experimentation with timbre and texture (Ângelo 2012).\footnote{Five of the eleven songs on MdP had always been wordless—“A Chamada,” “Tema dos Deuses,” “A Última Sessão de Música,” “Carlos, Lúcia, Chico e Tiago,” and “Pablo No. 2.” Adding to the confusion, Milton Nascimento himself has generalized the album as being “totally censored.” See his interview with Pedro Alexandre Sanches, 2002, “Crítica: Indignação que já não há” (Folha de São Paulo, August 14, p. E6).} However, with news of the censored lyrics, Nascimento and Som Imaginário chose an even more aggressive sonic approach, and in the process, transformed MdP into a protest album. In the following sections, the reader will be encouraged to stream selected tracks via Nascimento’s digital archive at the Instituto Antônio Carlos Jobim.\footnote{Audio, video, images, and documents are all freely accessible at http://www.jobim.org/Nascimento/. Click Audio & Video, then View List, then select the album Milagre dos Peixes, and choose the desired track.}

**Milagre dos Peixes: Three Censored Songs**

Shortly after the coup of 1964, censorship was centralized in Brasília under the Serviço de Censura de Diversões Públicas [Public Diversions Censorship Service] (Carocha 2006, 105). The sheer volume of material submitted for review required the establishment of an auxiliary office in Rio de Janeiro; technicians there constituted the first stage in the censorship process, whose decisions were then reviewed in Brasília and could be overturned (Nunes Leal 2005). Former censor Odette Martins Lanziotti was recruited from another civil service position to join the Polícia Federal in Rio de Janeiro in 1966 (Rocha et al 2007). As a censor throughout the late 1960s and 70s, Lanziotti read hundreds of lyrics, including those of Milton Nascimento and
Gilberto Gil, approving many of them.\textsuperscript{157} When asked to assess her own involvement in music censorship, Lanziotti described a tense and restrictive atmosphere:

\begin{quote}
Many times, we disapproved a song, but felt as if we were prostituting ourselves, because we didn’t agree with it. But the censors had to have the maximum of caution. We received many guidelines that had to be followed. \textit{[S/he]} who approved a song that later was disapproved in Brasilia had to respond to an internal proceeding […] I had colleagues that were transferred out of the city because they approved lyrics that should not have been liberated (Nunes Leal 2005).\textsuperscript{158}
\end{quote}

Of the three songs censored on \textit{Milagre dos Peixes}, two were censored for political content, while the third was vetoed on moral grounds. “Os Escravos de Jó [The Slaves of Job]” opens the album. Vetoed on April 4, 1973, the original lyric contained six verses, four of which were censored with the following remarks:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Contestação política, Pátria e protesto, canção pornográfica.}
\item Political contestation, Fatherland and protest, pornographic song (See Figure 5.2).
\end{itemize}

In particular, the line “\textit{a vaca vitória lambeu, lambeu, mexeu, mexeu [the victory cow licked, licked, moved, moved]}” was underscored as pornographic. Though these words can indeed carry a sexual connotation (if “cow” is taken as a pejorative term for a woman), the song was intended as a modern-day work song, including pastoral and festive scenes. Curiously, the song had already been approved and recorded—under the title “O Homem da Sucursal [The Branch Office Man]”—on the album \textit{Nascimento} in 1970, but that version contained only two verses and a chorus. This shortened version had also been approved on August 18, 1972 for the Som Imaginário release \textit{Matança do Porco} [Slaughtering of the Pig], but, for whatever reason, it was left off (See Figure 5.3). On May 5, 1973, the SCDP accepted a modified version of “Os Escravos de Jó” using only one of the six verses with the caveat:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Aprovamos a quadra (verso) em pauta, não devendo ser gravada nem cantada o restante da letra.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{157} Lanziotti was not personally responsible for censoring the songs presented here.

\textsuperscript{158} “Muitas vezes, a gente reprovava a música, mas se sentia como se estivesse se prostituindo, porque não concordava com aquilo. Mas os censores tinham de ter o máximo de cuidado. Recebíamos muitas orientações que deviam ser seguidas. Quem aprovasse uma música que depois fosse reprovada em Brasília tinha de responder a processo interno […] Tive colegas que foram transferidos de cidade porque aprovaram letras que não deveriam ser liberadas.”
We approve the quatrain (verse) at issue, being that the rest of the lyrics should not be recorded or sung (See Figure 5.4).

The only verse approved for *MdP*, then, at least retained a work song aesthetic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Saio do trabalho – ei</em></td>
<td>Leave work - yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>volto para casa – ei</em></td>
<td>Return home - yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>não lembro de canseira maior</em></td>
<td>I can’t remember a greater weariness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>em tudo é o mesmo suor</em></td>
<td>in everything is the same sweat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nascimento’s guitar is the driving force behind the groove and harmonic movement, while a jangly *viola caipira*, a vocal *coro*, and a strident *berimbau* cluster around the focal voices: Clementina de Jesus and Nascimento. Born in Rio de Janeiro’s *zona sul* in 1901, Clementina worked as a maid and sang in the Portela and Mangueira samba schools throughout her life. Record producer Hermínio Bello de Carvalho brought her to national attention in 1963, when she became known as the queen of the *partido-alto* samba style, and was likely chosen by Nascimento for her status as a symbol of “mother Africa” among fans and the media (Severiano 2008, 415). Pairing her voice with the *berimbau* (Hear *MdP*, Track 1, 0:54-1:12)—a sonic trope of afro-Brazilian resistance through its associations with *capoeira*—and the song’s title, “Os Escravos de Jó” is a powerful index of *afro-brasilidade*.

If the lyrics to “Os Escravos de Jó” were difficult for censors to interpret, then “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey [Today is the Day of the King]” was more straightforward, and, as a result, was censored in its entirety. Lyricist Márcio Borges described the text this way:

> Our suite spoke of the conflicts between two mentalities, two generations, father and son conversing in a climate of heavy allegories and a dense and expressionist musical atmosphere” (Borges 2012, 304).

Figure 5.5 from the National Archive in Rio de Janeiro shows the censor’s terse explanation for the prohibition of the lyrics: “*Conteúdo nitidamente político* [Distinctly political content].” The censors likely rejected the song as mocking Catholicism and the relationship between God and

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159 “Nossa suite falava dos conflitos entre duas mentalidades, duas gerações, pai e filho dialogando num clima de alegorias pesadas e atmosfera musical densa e expressionista.”
his Son, while also serving as a transparent metaphor for Dictator and the People. The music for “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” follows an uncommonly lengthy six-part formal structure that is tailored to fit the dialogic nature of the lyrics, though they have never been performed or recorded. When Milton Nascimento portrays the Son, he is accompanied by a galloping tempo, an agitated acoustic guitar, and strident brass with clusters in the melody. He employs a rich, brassy vocal timbre with acerbic diction recorded with generous reverb (Hear MdP, Track 7, 0:10-0:55 and 2:22-3:07). When songwriter Sirlan (the subject of the second case study) portrays the Father, he employs a warm humming vocal tone, sings an entreaty melody, and is accompanied by slow, gentle guitar arpeggios (Hear Track 7, 0:57-1:30 and 3:07-3:27). A religious context is implied through the use of a stately organ and round open singing styles. In the recording, Sirlan as the Father smuggled two words past the censors: “filho meu [son of mine]” (Hear Track 7, 0:57, 2:04, & 3:09) (Assis Garcia 2000, 139). The listener becomes so accustomed to wordlessness that the abrupt use of these lyrics exaggerates the absurdity of the censorship.
Figure 5.2 “Os Escravos de Jô” by Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brant. Source: Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Document Number BR AN, RIO TN.CPR.LMU.19638.
Figure 5.3 “O Homem da Sucursal” by Milton Nascimento and Brant. The lyrics read: “Leave work / Return home / I wanted to see a film about love / I wanted to see a film about love / And if I die, a veil / And if I live, a culprit / I remember a better time / I remember a better time.” Source: Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Document Number BR AN, RIO TN.CPR.LMU.15157.
Figure 5.4 “Os Escravos de Jó” by Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brant. The lyrics read: “Leave work, ay / Return home, ay / I can’t remember a greater weariness / In everything is the same sweat.” Source: Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Document Number BR AN, RIO TN.CPR.LMU.20118.
Figure 5.5 “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges. The first verses of Son and Father read: Filho: “No longer can the groom be happy / [He] cannot live in peace with your love / The just cannot survive / If today [it] is forgotten what is good will // Play the drums, saluting the King / Our love and lord and master of the law / Sound the trumpets because the day of hate and the day of saying no / Comes with the King”; Pai: “Son of mine, hate you have / But someone wants to taste of your love / Without trumpets, and without any more drums / No King will change the old grief.” Source: Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Document Number BN AN, RIO TN.CPR.LMU.19932.
With lyrics by Ruy Guerra, “Cadê [Where Is]” was also censored in its entirety. A more indirect metaphor for authoritarian repression than “Hoje É Dia d’El Rey,” the lyrics mourn the disappearance of childhood spaces of fantasy, listing such characters as Peter Pan, Snow White, and Alice in Wonderland. Sociologist Sheyla Diniz aptly interprets the lyrics as capturing “the disappearance of social utopia, proposing, to the contrary, resistance and struggle…” (Diniz 2012, 122). Figure 5.6 shows numerous underlined lyrics and the censors’ prohibition in barely legible script, including the words política [political] and contestação [contestation]. Censors seemed particularly alarmed by the third verse, where an “enchanted prince” transforms into “the frightened prince, the burned prince,” finally pointing the finger at the “dragon’s fire” of the regime. Curiously, alongside the final lines of the song—which say, “So that I can play, look, dance, speak,” et cetera—the censors wrote in parentheses: “o que diz ele não ser permitido [what he said not to be permitted]” (See Figure 5.6). One wonders who isn’t permitted to speak?

The song’s protagonist, or perhaps something Nascimento sang on a reference recording submitted to the censors? “Cadê” is the only song on the album to utilize a strident, strummed electric guitar, which contrasts sharply with the innocence portrayed by Márcio Borges’s youngest siblings—singers Nico and Telo were not yet teens at the time.

Besides the experimental sound of the music, the album’s packaging added to the protest element. The black and white design unfolds from around the LP to become a large poster. Upon the album’s release in June 1973, Nascimento told the Folha de São Paulo that the album cover features his hand holding his infant son Pablo (See Figures 5.7a, b, and c). Though it was common for Brazilian record companies to publish song lyrics in the artwork, Milagre dos
Figure 5.6 “Cadê” by Milton Nascimento and Ruy Guerra. Source: Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Document Number BN AN, RIO TN.CPR.LMU.19423.
Peixes went so far as to include a different colored sheet for each song, contrasting the black and white exterior. Each sheet contained a song title, the names of the performers, composers and lyricists, and the lyrics themselves. For censored songs, the names of the lyricists still appeared—Fernando Brant, Mário Borges, and Ruy Guerra—while the space where the lyrics would have been was left blank (Assis Garcia 2000, 139). Brant said that leaving the lyricists’ names in the liner notes was a way of denouncing censorship and of making sure buyers knew it (Vilara 2006, 70). Consumers could hold in their hands stark evidence of censorship and, as Napolitano said, be complicit in defying censorship by committing “an act of civic and critical consciousness” simply by owning and listening to Milagre dos Peixes (Napolitano 2010, 392).

Figure 5.7 a, b, and c Cover of Milagre dos Peixes (EMI-Odeon 1973; at left); Full packaging (at center); Colored inserts (at right). Graphic design by Noguchi. Photography by Noguchi and Bastos Cientista.

Wordlessness and Sonic Experimentation

Lyricist-musician Chico Amaral has described Milton Nascimento’s compositional style as “epic” not only in its cinematic scale, but its thematic content (Amaral 2010). He attributes this epic aesthetic to Nascimento’s passion for film in combination with his mineiro heritage. In our interview, Amaral spoke broadly of Nascimento’s collaborations with the Clube da Esquina songwriting collective and a tendency toward the epic:

[The song] “Outubro [October]” has an epic side that can be seen or heard. I’m not saying that it is in a particularly logical, or Cartesian, way, though, but it can also be felt like a [film] score. It seems like cinema, and it seems like a Western […] Because the Western is an epic form. The Western has
this thing of the struggle of good against evil in a clear way. The Western addresses heroism and deals with the vastness of the universe, of the landscape, you know? This relates to Minas Gerais. It relates to the work, for example, of [João] Guimarães Rosa. This author reclaims the fable of the struggle between good and evil, the Western, the hero on horseback… (Amaral 2010).\textsuperscript{160}

Guimarães Rosa’s great ode to these themes *Grande Sertão: Veredas* is (in)famously dense and difficult to read, even for Portuguese speakers, because of the author’s daring invention of words, expressions, and regionalisms. My humble reading of the book was enough to perceive that one of the main themes is the inner turmoil of the protagonist Riobaldo as he narrates his precarious and violent life in the *sertão* [Northern arid hinterland of Minas Gerais state] of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century as part of a gang of *jagunços* [mercenaries or bandits]. Just as Hollywood has portrayed the Old West at the turn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century as rife with “frontier justice,” Guimarães Rosa portrayed the shifting allegiances of rival bandits in the lawless *sertão*.

Amaral points to the song “Outubro [October]” as a prime example of this type of epic struggle between good and evil. First appearing on Nascimento’s debut album *Milton Nascimento* (Codil 1967), the song opens with guitar and voice introducing the hero protagonist:

*ta*nta gente *no meu rumo* / *mas eu* sempre vou só / *nessa terra*, *desse jeito*, já não sei viver [so many people along my path / but I am always alone / in this land, being alone, I no longer know how to survive] (Hear *Milton Nascimento*, Track 10, 0:00-0:30). Amaral argues that the large orchestra that fades in to accompany him throughout the slow bossa nova groove alludes to the Western film score aesthetic, placing the protagonist alone in a vast landscape. Figure 5.8 shows the sonic field analysis of “Outubro,” which charts each instrument’s location in the listener’s sonic field, including left-right panning, height according to perceived timbre and frequencies,

\textsuperscript{160} “*Outubro,* ela tem um lado épico que ela pode ser vista ou ouvida. Não tô dizendo que é isto, assim, de uma forma muito lógica, muito cartesiana. Mas ela pode ser sentida também como uma trilha. Ela parece cinema. E parece o Western […] Porque o Western é uma forma épica. O Western tem uma coisa assim da luta do bem contra o mal de forma clara. O Western trata-se do heroísmo e trata também da grandeza do universo, assim, da paisagem, entendeu? Isso tem a ver com Minas Gerais. Tem a ver com a obra, por exemplo, do Guimarães Rosa. O escritor resgata essa fábula, assim, da luta do bem contra o mal, do Western, do herói no seu cavalo…”  

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and size, representing perceived distance based on loudness and reverb effects. In “Outubro,”
this mix remains constant from start to finish, though instruments may come and go. Many songs
throughout Nascimento’s early career follow a similar hero struggle format—including “Crença”
and “Gira Girou” (Milton Nascimento 1967), “Sentinela” and “Pai Grande” (Milton Nascimento
1969), and perhaps the best-known “Cais” (Clube da Esquina 1972)—with varying degrees of
complexity in the mix based on industry developments in recording technology.

![Sonic field analysis of “Outubro” by Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brant.](image)

Nick Braae found that Queen pursued an epic sound through “an extravagant and grand
sense of size in the group’s songs” (2015), in which numerous vocal and guitar overdubs
achieved an orchestral scale. By 1973, Nascimento turned increasingly to multiple and layered
voices, in combination with reverb effects and sometimes orchestra, to portray an epic
atmosphere. Without the benefit of narrative lyrics and considering the context of the military
regime, these voices can be interpreted as a force of good—such as a hero and his posse—, while
in other songs, the coro estranges the protagonist from his surroundings, and good and evil
become ambiguous. I use sonic field analysis to explore the *impression* of size and scale as well as spatial relationships between recorded musical components, and how this can impact meaning.

It is worth turning back to “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” in order to use sonic field analysis to determine how form, orchestration, and audio engineering might have shaped meaning. An epic quality is achieved through a series of vignettes that follow the Father/Son dialogue; each vignette features a distinct instrumentation as well as changes in tempo and style. The song begins with the Son’s first lamentation—a forceful one—flanked by brass-like electric pianos at extreme left and right, a regal organ at top center, the electric bass at bottom center, and the drum set and Nascimento’s guitar paired off at left and right, respectively, with congas at far right (See Figure 5.9; Hear Track 7, 0:00-0:56). Nascimento’s voice carries a heavy reverb, and combined with the stately organ, sounds as if the Son’s voice is emanating from the depths of a church. The fast tempo, A dorian theme, and dueling electronic pianos (surprisingly convincing as brass sections) contribute to a tense, urgent atmosphere. The last phrase of this opening vignette slows to a somber final cadence on bVII (G) to i (A minor). Here, there is an audible break between the first and second vignette, which were recorded as separate takes and spliced together later. This was necessary in order to use a wide variety of instruments and voices on a limited number of tracks.
The second vignette shifts immediately to C major, starting on the IV chord (F), and moving serenely between IV, V, and I. During the Father’s entreaty, the texture is sparse—voice and guitar—and the utterance of the words *filho meu*, sung by Sirlan, shocks the senses (See Figure 5.10; Hear Track 7, 0:57-1:31). The elegant fingerpicked guitar closes on the V chord (G) in order to segue back into A minor for the third vignette.

Figure 5.9 Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 0:00-0:56.

Figure 5.10 Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 0:57-1:31.
As the Son continues to protest, the texture becomes more and more dense (See Figure 5.11; Hear Track 7, 1:32-2:03). The guitar turns abruptly from elegant fingerpicking to strident rasgueado strumming over a plodding bass line in A dorian accompanied by a militaristic snare drum and congas in ¾ time. Nascimento as the Son uses percussive diction—“Hai, Haaaaa, Ha-Yaaa”—with heavy accents on each entrance to create a series of descending moaning melodies broken up by a long wail.

This time when the Father reappears in the fourth vignette, the words *filho meu* are accented with organ, bass, and a strummed guitar (See Figure 5.12; Hear Track 7, 2:14-2:22). The elegant fingerpicking is replaced by strident, accented strumming with guitar, drums, and congas in call-and-response with the Father’s sung phrases. The fifth vignette opens with more percussive vocal entrances from the Son leading into a howl. This frustrated cry is joined by several other howling voices as well as the first appearance from Nivaldo Ornelas’s tenor saxophone (See Figure 5.13; Hear Track 7, 2:23-3:07). His avant-garde jazz solo interweaves with the layered voices over the plodding triple meter as both piano and organ thicken the

![Figure 5.11 Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 1:32-2:03.](image)
texture. His performance culminates with high squeals, alternate fingerings, and multiphonics as the Son gives one final moan on the last chord’s fermata.

![Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 2:04-2:22.](image1)

*Figure 5.12* Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 2:04-2:22.

![Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 2:23-3:07.](image2)

*Figure 5.13* Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 2:23-3:07.

The sixth vignette, once again, features the father intoning, “meu filho [my son]”, but this time with a completely new musical theme in A Major. The guitar supplies buoyant fingerpicked chords on the “ands” of a 2/4 meter, while the bass guides the Father’s humming
through alternating A major and C mixolydian melodies, with ample play between C-sharps and C-naturals (See Figure 5.14; Hear Track 7, 3:08-3:54). The Son (Nascimento) takes over this theme from the Father (Sirlan) at approximately the midpoint of the song, using open “ee” and “ah” syllables. As the 12-bar theme comes to a close, suddenly the drums initiate a contrasting triple meter in double time, bringing the song into the seventh and final vignette.

Figure 5.14 Sonic field analysis of “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 3:08-3:54.

The seventh vignette segues into a medium bossa nova groove featuring guitar at right and flanked at extreme left and right by a string section and men’s coro (See Figure 5.15; Hear Track 7, 3:55-6:56). Nascimento as the Son repeats the wordless melody from the sixth vignette, but without further dialogue from the Father. At 4:58, Nivaldo Ornelas returns for an extended solo improvisation. Though much of Nascimento’s compositions are jazz-influenced, he rarely adopted jazz performance practice. For Nascimento, in other word, songs generally remained songs and didn’t usually serve as vehicles for open improvisation over repeated sections of the musical form. “Hoje É Dia d’El Rey” is an exception. Throughout MdP, Ornelas models the timbre of his saxophone on Nascimento’s voice and often joins in unison (or at the octave)
before departing to other improvisations. Here, Ornelas continues to pay homage to John Coltrane’s “sheets of sound” style from a decade earlier (Hear Track 7, 6:05-6:30), yet never strays from the melody for too long before eventually fading out. In interviews, various Clube da Esquina members told me that jazz was admired and emulated for its harmonic and improvisatory exploration as an index of artistic democracy and freedom. Perhaps that sentiment seemed an appropriate way to resolve the adversarial narrative of “Hoje É Dia d’El Rey.”

As sonic field analysis helps to illustrate, Nascimento’s compositions on *Milagre dos Peixes* were not typical pop songs. Rather, many of them featured extended formal structures, frequent changes in texture, and, in the case of “Hoje É Dia d’El Rey,” a wordless dialogue between opposing figures. In particular, the cinematic scale of the suite’s audio production gives additional gravity to the wordless exclamations, and the frequent textural changes draw the

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161 See, for example, “Carlos, Lúcia, Chico e Tiago” at 3:00 and “Sacramento” at 1:10 on *MdP*. See also on *Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo* the songs “Milagre dos Peixes” at 2:20, and “Nada será como antes” throughout, but especially the intro and ending.
listener in to the varying timbre and diction of the Father and Son—opposing voices representing authoritarianism and youth—with youth eventually enduring.

Only three songs with lyrics were permitted on Milagre dos Peixes, while the remaining eight songs were performed wordlessly, like “Hoje É Dia d’El Rey,” and fortified by strategies of resistance. This section analyses three of those eight that were adapted from Nascimento’s film score for Os Deuses e os Mortos. Part of the Cinema Novo movement, the film was set in the northeastern sertão and told the story of a mysterious stranger and his entanglement with two feuding coffee clans. Nascimento’s score left some scenes in realist—and uncomfortable—silence, while action scenes were paired with dynamic performances of regional hand percussion styles. Just as brutality is a constant throughout the film, the cost of brutality—death—is depicted with mute, motionless spirits inhabiting scenes alongside the living main characters. These ghosts likely inspired the score’s wordlessness, and it would not have been a stretch for MdP’s listeners—whether they had seen the film or not—to equate wordlessness with the military regime’s ghosts—os desaparecidos [the disappeared].

Figure 5.16 shows a sonic field analysis of the opening verse of the album’s second track “Carlos, Lúcia, Chico e Thiago” (Hear Track 2, 0:00-0:46). Nascimento’s distant voice (Milton 1) begins the song with only a pulsating Piano 1 and Bass, then a nearer vocal overdub (Milton 2) joins the mix along with two versions of vocalist-percussionist Naná Vasconcelos (Naná 1 & 2, mixed hard left and right). The most innovative feature of the song—and perhaps the album itself—is the Vasconcelos’s technique in which he fuses vocal utterance with hand drumming to achieve a single emotive entity. If Nascimento’s vocal melody is a long, languorous call, then Vasconcelos’s vocal-percussive fusions serve as bold responses throughout the

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162 Os Deuses e os Mortos can be streamed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb5mVMwIOTg.
163 “Carlos, Lúcia, Chico e Tiago” can be streamed here: http://www.jobim.org/Nascimento/handle/2010.5/23140.
structure of the song, drawing the listener’s attention from the center of the sonic field, to the extremes, and back again.

![Sonic field analysis of “Carlos, Lúcia, Chico e Thiago” by Milton Nascimento from 0:00-0:45. Instruments in light grey enter toward the end of the musical excerpt.]

One result of the absence of text is a shift in listening practice. In popular song, the voice and text as a fused melodic element tend to dominate the foreground of the listener’s perception. Here, multiple and competing voices force the listener to confront texture as the album’s most salient element. The ear oscillates between the layers of musical texture to try to make sense of what is intended—listeners hear Nascimento’s voice, the static chunky piano, and the percussion-infused voices, and they struggle to determine what it might mean. Meaning is drawn from how the voices sound rather than what they might be saying—after all, Nascimento described the impact of his voice “like a gun” (Borges 1998). Likewise, Amaral has observed that “Vasconcelos [Vasconcelos] is more than a collaborator; he is a coauthor” (Amaral 2013, 136).

Vasconcelos has explained:

I had a background playing percussion, I played congas, bongos, and things like that, and my uncle had *candomblé* in his house, and I knew the rhythms of the rituals well. Nascimento’s group didn’t need a drummer; he needed somebody to do rhythm that was not samba, that was not bossa nova. So

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164 “Vasconcelos (Vasconcelos) é mais que um colaborador; é um coautor.”
I started working with Nascimento, and I got back to playing percussion, composing rhythms for his music (Robinson 2000). Nascimento sought him out not only as an innovative percussionist, but one that could construct distinctive rhythms from specifically *afro*-Brazilian resources.

The fourth track takes the experimentation with vocal-percussion fusion to the extreme in “A Chamada [The Call].” In the film, the main theme is the call of Iara, a seductive river mermaid of Brazilian folklore. Nascimento sings it in a high sweet falsetto accompanied by his gently arpeggiated guitar, like a lullabye (Hear Track 4, 0:00-0:45). The *rubato* quality allows each phrase a wide range of expressive potential (Compare with 0:45-1:15). For *MdP*, a host of voices from Vasconcelos and Som Imaginário is pitted against this serenity (See Figure 5.17). The vocal-percussion fusions feature taunting mutterings, pained shouts, moans, squawks, and squeals, each paired with a strident percussion instrument (Hear Track 4, 1:15-1:45). To exaggerate these eerie effects, the vocal-percussion fusions travel horizontally across the stereo mix, and vertically in accordance with changes in pitch and timbre, as if stalking and surrounding the voice—the river mermaid—and violão. The only words sung on this track were performed by Milton Nascimento: “*Eu estou cansado, me salva, estou cansado!* [I am tired, save me, I’m tired]” (Hear Track 4, 2:28-2:36). Milton 1 and 2 execute the exasperated lament with staggered entrances, voices overlapping, then melding together into the rub of a chilling minor second. Diniz has noted a spoken complaint (Hear Track 4, 1:12) (Diniz 2012, 125), when Nascimento utters, “*Como é que nós vamos gravar, a?* [How are we going to record, huh?]” as if to tell the censors, “You’ve censored so much, what else can we do?”

165 “A Chamada” can be streamed here: http://www.jobim.org/Nascimento/handle/2010.5/23140. Listening with widely spaced speakers or headphones is recommended to fully appreciate the left-right panning of the audio mix.
The wordless and unpredictable interjections throughout “A Chamada” evoke sympathetic, involuntary responses in the listener. Their kaleidoscopic movement and aleatoric pace are deliberately unnerving; howls and monkey-like calls provoke the body to a state of alarm, disorientation, and unease. In his study of violence as a structuring force in Israel and Palestine, ethnomusicologist David A. McDonald observed that performances can structure how violence becomes broadly meaningful (McDonald 2009, 59). Nascimento and his collaborators did not engage in clandestine activity, but their wordless utterances evoked strong emotions during a climate in which terror touched a significant number of Brazilians. Historian Nina Schneider described torture in Brazil as a “systematic state procedure from 1969/70 onwards,” and, as many as 20,000 were subjected to torture and 50,000 to imprisonment during the dictatorship (Schneider 2014, 72). In conjunction with the publishing of the names of banned lyricists in the liner notes, these experimentations with vocal-percussive fusions and audio mixing became a model for how audiences could feel about dictatorial violence and oppression.

“Tema dos Deuses [Theme of the Gods]” was used for the opening scene of Os Deuses e Os Mortos, a wide-angled shot revealing a guide leading haggard migrant workers across the arid
Northeast. The song is a prime example of Nascimento’s epic writing, opening with two sounds—Nascimento’s guitar and Vasconcelos’s percussion.\textsuperscript{166} Nascimento strums ploddingly through the eleven-bar form, which passes through various types of minor chords and as many time signatures. The very first chord sets the tone for the entire track with its grating quality—an E Dorian (#11) with no third. The augmented fourth jangles insistently against the open fifth and octave (Amaral 2013, 391). Nascimento’s guitar is panned just right of center and clean of any reverb giving the effect of close proximity, while Vasconcelos’s percussion instruments are soaked in reverb, giving the effect of a vast, open space (See Figure 5.18). Halfway through the verse, a chorus of five voices intones the theme for the first time, appearing as if from a great distance (Hear Track 6, 0:00-0:35). It is significant that the vocal coro is made up of band members; their intonation is accurate, but their vocal timbres are varied and raw to represent the everyday person.

\textbf{Figure 5.18} Sonic field analysis of “Tema dos Deuses” by Milton Nascimento. The lighter shades of grey denote instruments that join in as the piece progresses.

\textsuperscript{166} “Tema dos Deuses” can be streamed here: http://www.jobim.org/Nascimento/handle/2010.5/23140.
With each repeat of the dirge-like theme, new sonic elements are added to the mix (Hear Track 6, 0:35, 1:10, and 1:44). Only in the fifth repeat of the theme—two-thirds of the way through the song—does Nascimento sing (Hear Track 6, 2:16). He does not echo the repeated theme of the *coro* that can still be heard faintly amongst what has become a truly grandiose procession. Rather, Nascimento sings an improvised countermelody that slowly winds its way upward into the extremes of his chest voice. His voice moans, wails, and shouts, and the angelic falsetto for which Nascimento is so admired is completely absent from this vocalized frustration (Hear Track 6, 2:49-3:25). Meanwhile, Wagner Tiso’s insistent exploration of the blues scale on the piano—performed with an intentionally sloppy and uneven attack—during the final chorus gives a sarcastic edge to the pristine, yet powerful, orchestra.

Frith made a careful distinction about music’s role in our emotional lives, saying “music doesn’t make us sad but makes us feel sadness” (1996, 262). *MdP* allowed songs to serve as models for how and when to experience outrage, disgust, and anger in the face of dictatorial trauma, and the music allowed audiences to “experience outrage” for themselves. Music can prompt empathy, allow us to co-opt grief and ecstasy, or to change our stance on an issue.

The successful reading of *MdP* as an album of protest for so many people is precisely due to its lyrical ambiguity. Though protest songs with overt political content are useful for rallies and demonstrations, critical song that balances artistic and aesthetic choices with activist ones may actually be more affective, and ultimately effective. The aesthetic qualities that attract a broad listenership to *MdP* are not accompanied by political content that instructs listeners to act or think a certain way. Engaged fans likely think and act politically already. The unengaged fan keeps returning to the songs for aesthetic reasons, but confronts the ambiguous (or absent) lyrics
again and again—in pondering them over time, the self-declared apolitical fan may become more aware of the sociopolitical issues at stake.

Milagre dos Peixes was released just one year after the extraordinarily successful double album Clube da Esquina, and it too sold well. In addition to its success as a physical album, author Paulo Vilara described the success of live performances:

So, when Milagre dos Peixes was released in 73, it was the worst period of the dictatorship, it was the era of [General] Médici. And so the shows, for example, that Nascimento played were truly cathartic. They were the place where people could get together, or share emotions, as if we could keep dreams alive. As if dreams really didn’t grow old (Vilara 2012).

The power of wordless music lies precisely in the skirting of the symbolic realm of language, and for audiences, the wordless songs of Milagre dos Peixes allowed for personal, visceral responses to the music within the context of the historical moment. Listeners to MdP were free to interpret for themselves the bold experimentations in timbre, the unconventional musical arrangements and formal structures, and the protest-laden liner notes. Stripped of its text, the wordless utterances created an emotionally dramatic impact, and, ironically, subverted the intentions of the regime to silence dissent by creating greater opportunity to express it. Some listeners attended live performances to hear the voice of Nascimento, admired widely for its purity and spirituality, while others wanted to hear Som Imaginário, admired largely for their countercultural stance and long, improvised jams. Still others attended not only out of interest in the music, but also out of curiosity over Nascimento’s support of the student movements. Together, Nascimento and Som Imagínario created a completely original sound and sparked renewed interest in music of contestation.

Case Two: Sirlan and the Silenced Voice

Milton Nascimento’s story is that of a survivor whose work endured. The case helps us understand how censorship functioned and the limits of its efficacy. If we consider those artists whose work was silenced by authoritarian censorship, other perspectives arise. A native of Belo
Horizonte, Minas Gerais state, Sirlan Antônio de Jesus was Milton Nascimento’s friend and collaborator, and in 1973, he portrayed the voice of the Father on the aforementioned track “Hoje É Dia d’El Rey.” In 1972, a year before the release of Milagre dos Peixes, Sirlan’s debut album Profissão de Fé was censored in its entirety; but, unlike Nascimento’s record label, Som Livre refused to support the album. By viewing music censorship through Sirlan’s perspective, we can better understand the limits of artistic dissent and the personal and professional consequences at stake.

Like many of his contemporaries, Sirlan came to national attention at a song festival, the 7th International Festival of Popular Song in Rio de Janeiro in 1972, at just 19 years old. Though he did not win the top prize for “Viva Zapátria,” the judges created a prize of “Honorable Mention” to acknowledge his popularity with audiences (de Mello 2003, 421). When I arrived in Belo Horizonte to conduct dissertation research in 2011, “Viva Zapátria” had surfaced on several online music blogs. I first heard it the same week that I conducted research on armed clandestine resistance movements at the Arquivo Público Mineiro [Minas Gerais Public Archive]. Listening at just that moment stirred deep emotions, and I could see from the blogs’ comments that the song was deeply emotional for those that had lived through the 1970s.

In June 2012, I interviewed Sirlan at his home in Belo Horizonte and asked why censors had approved “Viva Zapátria” in a year when so many others had been censored. The title of the song cleverly combines the phrase “viva pátria,” which means, “long live the fatherland,” with the name of Emiliano Zapata, the legendary general who fought for communal land ownership in the Mexican Revolutionary War. Since popular land reform was one of the policies the Brazilian President João “Jango” Goulart supported when he was overthrown in 1964, the censors likely resented the homage. Populist Vice President Goulart unexpectedly found himself ascending to
the presidency after the resignation of Jânio Quadros only seven months after assuming office. Described as “anathema to the conservative military,” Goulart struggled with inflation and the deficit, which grew increasingly out of control by 1963 (Skidmore 2009, 168). That year, he also legalized rural unions, alienating him from powerful landowners and their allies in Congress. His commitment to agrarian reform may well have been the last straw for Goulart’s opponents, inciting them to a military coup.

Figure 5.19 from the Arquivo Nacional in Rio de Janeiro documents an interview the Polícia Federal required Sirlan and lyricist Murilo Antunes to attend in order to explain the meaning of “Viva Zapátria.” Though the song clearly lamented Brazilian authoritarianism, they claimed it was an ode to Marlon Brando, who portrayed the lead role in the 1952 biopic Viva Zapata! The songwriters also denied participation in student and resistance movements in Belo Horizonte and knowledge of particular activists, but, in fact, both men had participated in demonstrations, knew clandestine operatives, and had each hidden an activist in their homes. According to lyricist Murilo Antunes, the pair avoided persecution by adopting heavy rural accents and claiming ignorance of all such political activity (Antunes 2007). The song was eventually approved, though Sirlan believes that festival organizers influenced the censors behind the scenes.

Musically, “Viva Zapátria” is deceptively simple. Though it is in G Lydian—often perceived as a bright, radiant mode—the strident melody highlights the leading tone and the sharp 4th scale degrees without resolution (Hear 0:45-1:05). An overall descending bass line combines with the melody to imply dark inversions and suspended chords giving the song an overall mournful tone. The lyrics use indices of authoritarianism—falcons (a type of jet), rifles,

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167 The original recording of “Viva Zapátria” can be streamed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1M-DSfUrz38.
Figure 5.19 “Viva Zapátria” by Sirlan and Murilo Antunes. The statement reads, “The term ‘Zapátria’ was made in homage to Zapata of Mexico, and in virtue that there already existed another song with the title ‘Viva Zapata!’ I thought it was better to modify it,” signed Murilo Oliveira A. Source: Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Document Number BR AN, RIO TN.CPR.LMU.14943.
and sirens—to emote bewilderment, estrangement, and dispossession. Lyricist Murilo Antunes takes clever advantage of the fact that Portuguese uses identical grammatical constructions for both statements and questions; sometimes Sirlan interprets the phrase, “onde estou,” to state a fact of being—“where I am” (Hear 1:24)—and other times to express despair at what the protagonist’s city has become—“onde estou?” or “where am I?” (Hear 2:24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esse meu sangue fervendo de amor</td>
<td>This, my blood boiling with love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aterrisam falcões onde estou</td>
<td>Falcons touching down where I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carabinas, sorriso, onde estou?</td>
<td>Rifles, a smile, where am I?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Um compromisso a sirene chamou</td>
<td>A commitment the siren called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplicatas, meu senso de humor</td>
<td>Duplicated, my sense of humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se perdeu na cidade onde estou</td>
<td>Lost itself in the city where I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viva Zapátria, saudou esse meu senhor</td>
<td>Long live Zapátria, hailed this my lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijos, abraços, ano um chegou</td>
<td>Kisses, hugs, year one has arrived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salve Zapátria, é, viva Zapátria, ê</td>
<td>Hail, Zapátria, ay, long live Zapátria, ay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essa cidade foi uma herança só</td>
<td>The city was only an inheritance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sirlan told me that, as he waited in the wings to perform at the festival, federal police officers beat him. He believes the censors regretted approving the song and that the police sought to sabotage his performance. Indeed, Zuza Homem de Mello, whose memoir documents his experiences as an audio engineer during the song festivals, reported that jury member and political activist Roberto Freire attempted to denounce TV Globo for interfering with the jury’s selections during a live broadcast. Freire was removed from the stage and beaten so severely that he spent two weeks in hospital (de Mello 2003, 427-9). Despite the intimidation, Sirlan performed well and was warmly applauded. A few weeks later, Sirlan’s performance of “Viva Zapátria” opened the A-side of TV Globo’s album of festival finalists by record label Som Livre, while the popular vocal group MPB-4’s cover of “Viva Zapátria” opened the B-side of the festival’s greatest hits by record label Phonogram. Sirlan was offered a record deal with Som Livre, but when he submitted his songs to the censors, all but one was vetoed:

I tried to make a record about 10 different times. I sent songs and they censored them, even music that wasn’t mine, but since I sent it, they censored [it]. I tried to make an album of music by other
people and no … in other words, they were worried and they took me out of circulation (de Jesus 2012).¹⁶⁸

Censorship of Sirlan’s work extended beyond lyrics and recordings as well. In December 1974, Sirlan was to play drums in a concert at the Teatro Marília in Belo Horizonte. Though some of Sirlan’s songs had been approved by this time, the censors threatened to prohibit the entire show if Sirlan were to participate, in effect censoring his very presence (de Jesus 2012). Two years later, Sirlan staged his own show,¹⁶⁹ and in June 1979, he finally released *Profissão de Fé* [Profession of Faith] (See Figures 5.20a and b). The late 1970s was a period of political *abertura* [opening] in Brazil, during which the regime had begun to relax restrictions and debated the possibility of direct presidential elections. *Profissão de Fé* was released and distributed just two months before the passing of the Political Amnesty Law, which pardoned political exiles, allowing their return to Brazil, while also pardoning crimes perpetrated by military dictators and co-conspirators (Vilara 2006, 240). Unfortunately, audiences’ tastes had shifted along with the political climate, and the momentum behind Sirlan’s festival success had receded. The album sold poorly, and, though he never stopped writing music, Sirlan pursued a career in advertising and radio production.

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168 “Eu tentei fazer um disco umas 10 vezes. Mandava música e censurava até música que não era minha porque eu mandava e aí censurava. Eu tentei fazer disco com música dos outros e não … ou seja eles estavam preocupados e me tiraram de circulação.”

169 See the article “O gato pulou [The cat jumped],” *Veja* (September 15, 1976, p. 70).
Today, Sirlan feels conflicted. He prefers not to think of himself as a victim, yet it pains him to watch the long and flourishing careers of so many artists who got their start in the 1970s.

In 2012, Sirlan told me he had decided to meet with a lawyer:

I am gathering materials to enter into a claim with the Amnesty Commission. I resisted this my entire life, but now I have decided to do it. It may be too late, but I will do it [...] They ended me, you know? I was absolutely destroyed, you know, my career was eliminated (de Jesus 2012).\textsuperscript{170}

The Amnesty Commission was established in 2002 following President Cardoso’s official apology for dictatorial abuses. A separate law granted reparations to families of the disappeared, while the Amnesty Commission provided reparations to victims of torture, imprisonment, and labor purges. By 2010, approximately 70,000 amnesty claims had been filed—64% were granted political amnesty and 23% received financial compensation (Schneider 2014, 73).

A bright moment has emerged for Sirlan. In 2012, Murilo Antunes produced a DVD retrospective of his career as a lyricist for which Sirlan recorded a contemporary interpretation of “Viva Zapátria” (Antunes 2012). I was at the recording session produced by Murilo’s son João Antunes, and felt very honored to be invited to record as a backing vocalist. For Sirlan, the experience seemed cathartic. He was moved by the enthusiastic participation of a younger generation of musicians, most of them born in the 1970s, and spoke freely about what it was like to perform during the legendary \textit{era dos festivais} [era of the festivals] and how the performance of “Viva Zapátria” had unfolded. Since posting the performance to YouTube,\textsuperscript{171} Brazilian fans have shared their reactions, including former city councilman and member of the Minas Gerais Truth Commission Betinho Duarte.

For Sirlan, censorship has meant much more than the prohibition of song lyrics.

Censorship insured the silencing of his artistic voice, one that was socio-politically aware and

\textsuperscript{170}“Eu tô juntando material pra poder entrar com ação da Comissão de Anistia. Eu relutei a vida inteira de fazer isso, mas agora eu resolvi que eu vou fazer. Já é tarde à mente, mas eu vou fazer [...] Acabavam comigo, né? Eu fui absolutamente destruída, né, a minha carreira foi eliminada.”

\textsuperscript{171}The song can be streamed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zn4lqA7mWMA.
unafraid of critique. Censorship also meant a radical shift in Sirlan’s professional and personal life. As historian Marcos Napolitano described the album *Profissão de Fé*, “What should have made his career also destroyed his career” (2009, 643).

Looking back at case studies one and two, Sirlan’s performance as the Father in “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey” helped his silenced voice to be heard, even if only on a small scale. Originally, Nascimento had chosen elder statesman Dorival Caymmi—a prolific composer, booming bass vocalist, and keen observer of life in northeastern Bahia state—to sing the part of the Father, but censors forbade his participation (de Souza 1973; Herdy 2015). Perhaps they sensed that employing the voice of Caymmi, a popular composer heralded as second only to Antônio Carlos Jobim in national importance and heretofore apparently apolitical, would add gravity and maturity to the attitude of dissent expressed throughout the album. The alternate choice of Sirlan, however, turned out to be a powerful one precisely because of his anti-dictatorial hit “Viva Zapátria.” In the end, Nascimento’s ability to express dissent resulted in large part from his broad acceptance as an MPB artist, while Sirlan’s relative obscurity, even despite his festival success, did not provide sufficient leverage against the military regime to continue his artistic career. Sirlan’s story reminds us that the military regime had many ways of silencing voices. In this case, the costs of silencing Sirlan’s voice were two-fold: the disruption of his career and eventual forced change of vocation, but also the deprivation from the public of his unique artistic perspective.

**Conclusion: Self-Censorship and Further Considerations**

In both cases, official censorship came hand-in-hand with coercion and intimidation by other government entities to silence human voices. Many artists also resorted to self-censorship in an attempt to avoid misinterpretations of their artistic work. Self-censorship is difficult to analyze since it necessarily deals in would-haves and could-haves—e.g. what someone would
have said without coercion, or what emotions could have been aroused if intimidation hadn’t caused artists to sanitize their work? Milton Nascimento’s ability to express dissent was possible due to the incremental success of the five albums preceding *Milagre dos Peixes*, particularly the runaway success *Clube da Esquina* in 1972. Conversely, Sirlan simply did not have the career momentum to debut a contestatory album during the *anos de chumbo* [leaden years].

How willing was Sirlan to compromise with censors? Based on a document from the Public Diversions Censorship Division [DCDP] in 1977, the answer is not very. Five years after its initial ban and well into political *abertura* [opening], Sirlan again submitted the song “Coragem [Courage],” one of his many songs censored since 1972. Its tone of defiance was not lost on the censors, who chose to continue its prohibition:

> The aforementioned composition is potentially capable of motivating misrepresentation, causing incitement to fight, to revolt and to protest.

With lyrics by Humberto Carneiro, the song was eventually recorded on *Profissão de Fé* with the title “Se você quiser chorar [If you want to cry].” The first two verses are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Se você quiser chorar de amor,</td>
<td>If you want to cry from love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>não tenha medo</td>
<td>don’t be afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se você quiser gritar de dor</td>
<td>If you want to scream from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e amargura</td>
<td>pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Não esconda o rosto,</td>
<td>Don’t hide your face,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>não se engane toda vida</td>
<td>Don’t be fooled all your life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Não espere a hora,</td>
<td>Don’t wait until the right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abre seu coração agora</td>
<td>hour, open your heart now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> Por que não chorar,           Why not cry,  
> quando se morre de desgosto   when you’re dying of distaste
> Por que não gritar,           Why not scream,  
> quando lhe apertam o pescoço   when they squeeze your neck
> Faça alguma coisa,            Do something,  
> antes de ver o fim do poço     before you see the bottom of the well
> Diga uma palavra ou pelo menos desespere Say one word or at least despair

Sirlan and his lyricists had ample opportunity to revise these lyrics—to employ self-censorship—but could not bring themselves to do so. In light of the number of censored songs, this choice came with a heavy price: the loss of Sirlan’s music career. Though Sirlan’s lyricists also lost out
on potential copyright earnings due to censorship, Murilo Antunes and Fernando Brant have worked for other artists throughout the 1970s and until today.\textsuperscript{172}

Nascimento, too, paid dearly for his musical activism in the 1970s—more than audiences and even band mates, friends, and family knew at the time. In 2012, Milton Nascimento confessed his ongoing fear of retribution from military officials who had persecuted him during the dictatorship:

\begin{quote}
I was prohibited from seeing my son. If I were to meet with him, they said that they would kill him. I stayed away for nearly 20 years […] No one understood, but I couldn’t tell anyone. They wanted to mistreat me. If I were to speak with someone—I don’t know how they knew—they threatened that person. I stayed quiet a long time. I started to drink […] The situation has improved, but these people are still there, still alive. I prefer to let this thing pass a little longer in order to speak about everything (de Lucena 2012).
\end{quote}

Though Nascimento had admitted in prior interviews that the safety of his son Pablo—born in 1972 to then-wife and São Paulo socialite Káritas—had been threatened, he had never expressed ongoing fear of reprisals. How recently had Milton Nascimento been threatened by dictatorial-era oppressors? How many others still experience persecution and intimidation? In interviewing many of Nascimento’s contacts, including those who had hidden clandestine operatives in their homes, all of them insisted that the dictatorship was in the past and that there was no concern whatsoever about my interview questions. Nascimento, however, fingered one persecutor: Erasmo Dias held the office of Secretary of Security for São Paulo state from 1974 to 78.\textsuperscript{173} His tenure coincided with the live recordings of \textit{Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo} in São Paulo in 1974, which lyricist Márcio Borges condemned as having a heavy police presence (Borges 2012, 324). Dias died in 2010, but clearly other tormentors survive that Nascimento will not name.

\textsuperscript{172} Sadly, lyricist Fernando Brant passed away on June 12, 2015 due to complications from liver surgery.

\textsuperscript{173} Dias became infamous for conducting a raid at São Paulo’s Pontifical Catholic University in September 1977 as students tried to re-establish the banned UNE [National Student Union]. \textit{Folha de São Paulo} reported that 3,000 police violently suppressed the 2,000 participating students, detaining up to 900.
The would-haves and could-haves return: Would Nascimento have written songs with more direct criticisms if he hadn’t faced such threats? Would he have denounced the dictatorship or explained the political meaning of his songs in interviews and at rallies? Could he have become an even more influential political artist and activist without facing intimidation? The song “Pablo” closes Milagre dos Peixes, and it is one of Ronaldo Bastos’s most enigmatic lyrics, describing a boy—Nascimento’s boy—with “fire in his hair” and “cloud dust in his shoes.” Ostensibly the song is apolitical, yet in closing the album, the performance of “Pablo” enacted one final protest.
CHAPTER 6

POST-CANÇÃO DE PROTESTO: EXTRA-LYRICAL STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE DURING LIVE PERFORMANCES IN 1970’S BRAZIL

Introduction

Studies of protest music in Brazil have overwhelmingly centered on popular music in the 1960s, a period which coincided with the start of the military dictatorship (1964-1985) (Bezerra de Meneses 1982; Stroud 2000; Butterman 2001; Dunn 2001; de Mello 2003; Leu 2006). Though Brazil had already seen another dictatorship under Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945), the term protest song—or canção de protesto—came into use only in the 1960s. Many protest songs at that time were premiered and disseminated during the televised song festivals, one of the few venues in which youths could gather in large numbers, and which was marked by raucous support for, or objection to, the aesthetic and political concerns addressed in the song lyrics and musical styles. Today’s internationally-recognized Brazilian musicians got their domestic start in these festivals, including Chico Buarque, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Edu Lobo, and Milton Nascimento, or, as was the case with Antonio Carlos Jobim, older musicians participated alongside their younger peers. After the AI-5 decree in November 1968, musicians were more tightly censored and the political orientation of the song festivals fizzled. The term canção de protesto fell out of favor in the 1970s, and only since the mass protest movements of 2013—sparked by rising fares on public transportation—has the term been cautiously and non-uniformly revived.

While interviewing Milton Nascimento and his collaborators in 2012, none felt comfortable with the label “protest singer” or “protest music.” Some felt the terms were more appropriate for highly participatory music, while others felt they connoted inferior quality, such
as uncomplicated harmonic language and streamlined musical form for ease of memorization. Nascimento has generally not been considered—including musicologists, historians, and even by some fans and songwriting partners—to be a writer of protest songs *per se*, but most describe his 1970s body of work as political. Though some have suggested this seeming contradiction is due to his lyricists’ favoring more cryptic or indirect styles, it is probably better explained by Nascimento’s non-engagement with the media in the early 1970s—he simply didn’t talk openly about politics and protest until the Diretas Já movement in the 1980s.

The late Brazilian musicologist Santuza Naves has proposed the use of the term *canção crítica* [critical song] to refer to music with political content or social critique starting with samba in the 1920s. Though the term is a reasonable alternative, it doesn’t seem powerful enough to really capture the difficult circumstances in which Brazilian musicians found themselves in the early 1970s. After all, part of the power behind the label “protest song” is the emotion that comes along with it—images of fists raised high, public demonstration, and defiance against authority.

In Chapter 5, I argued that post-AI-5 political conditions were such that artists could no longer feasibly write *canção de protesto*. Does adopting the term *canção crítica* mean that Milton Nascimento didn’t *do* protest? Besides the lack of venues for public protest, participatory protest songs would have risked the censorship of entire albums (both song lyrics and the distribution of recordings), arrest, or imprisonment, and, in Nascimento’s case, he risked the “disappearance” (assassination) of his only son Pablo. Rather, Nascimento adopted the kinds of protest that suited the tense climate of the 1970s—he continued to use metaphor and coded language to skirt censorship, as well as adopting wordless performance strategies in order to express dissent on the album *Milagre dos Peixes*. These extra-lyrical strategies adopted by he
and other artistic contemporaries may not have been thought of as protest song, but they were certainly *doing* political music. Nascimento’s music didn’t lose political significance in the minds of fans at least; his song “Coração de Estudante [Student’s Heart]” became one of the anthems of Diretas Já, the campaign for direct elections that helped end the dictatorship by 1985.

This chapter explores several live performances during the *anos de chumbo* to reveal what performance conditions were like for resisting artists that studio albums aren’t able to reveal. Without existing video, it is difficult to understand what audiences might have felt or understood about these live performances. This chapter looks at journalistic coverage, interviews with the musicians, archival evidence, and audio recordings of Milton Nascimento’s participation in two live albums recorded within a 6-month period. First, I summarize Milton Nascimento’s tours of university campuses in the late 1960s, his subsequent recordings, and his reluctance to talk openly to the press about politics. Next, I analyze samba composer Jards Macalé’s live concert in December 1973 in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Though all songs for the concert had been approved by censors, the live album was prohibited from distribution due to the politicized performances of the nearly 3 hour-long concert until 1979, when a condensed version was released by RCA. The concert was re-mastered and re-issued in 2015, and I use those recordings alongside journalistic accounts, interviews, and documentary footage to describe the various authority figures present during the performance, the audience dynamic, and the performative strategies that Milton Nascimento and many other artists used to articulate a dissenting stance. I close with an analysis of Nascimento’s live double album *Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo*, recorded in May 1974, in comparison with its studio predecessor. Alongside lyrics and musical form, I investigate how
venue, genre conventions, instrumentation, and the selection of repertoire, were all crucial aspects to creating an atmosphere of political contestation in live performance.

**Part One: Nascimento’s early career: Movimento Estudantil and the significance of Milagre dos Peixes**

From the beginning of his career, critics and fans were both fascinated and confounded by Milton Nascimento’s musical style, paradoxically described as both quintessentially *mineiro* and utterly idiosyncratic at the same time. For example, Nascimento’s music features strumming patterns and falsetto vocals characteristic of the *folia de reis*—melancholy devotional songs in honor of the journey of the three magi—and yet he adapted them for odd and changing time signatures. Likewise, Nascimento’s harmonic progressions borrow heavily from modal melodies like those of *modas de viola*—improvised or pre-composed storytelling accompanied by *viola caipira* (10-string guitar)—as well as functional harmony of popular music and mixed modal/functional harmony of jazz. His peculiar style is often attributed to regional influences from his home state of Minas Gerais, and at various points throughout his career, *mineiridade* has brought Nascimento both distinctive recognition as well as marginalization from music characterized as quintessentially “Brazilian.”

Nascimento’s early period in the late 1960s was often seen as being particularly *mineiro* due to its somber, melancholic, and intellectual nature, even while critics widely praised the quality of his compositions and their social conscience—particularly the song “Morro velho [Old hill].” But his reluctance to talk to the press about his music, about politics, and especially about any relationship between the two is arguably the strongest example of Nascimento fulfilling the *mineiro* stereotype of reticence and standoffishness. Nascimento’s reluctance to speak to the press about the meaning of his songs has resulted in his not earning the label of activist, despite his involvement with university tours and with landmark social events, such as the Passeata dos
Cem Mil [March of 100 Thousand] protest march in June 1968 in Rio de Janeiro. In a 2010 documentary, Nascimento described the turmoil of the late 1960s under the dictatorship:

It was a … really violent … thing and, for example, various artists left Brazil; [they] were sent away, or [they] left before they could be sent away, and I thought, ‘I won’t leave Brazil for anything. They can kill me, they can do what they like, but I won’t leave.’ Radio, television … they closed their doors to me, I mean, because [they thought] my music was music for intellectuals and that the public wouldn’t understand [it]. So when I went out with the students, we went to places that had little gymasia, for 2 or 3 thousand people, 5 [thousand] or whatever. At every venue, the people went crazy for those songs. So, I thought, ‘What do they mean…the people don’t understand?’ (emphasis original; Mercês 2010).

Nascimento recalls his frustration at having been celebrated by the press as the next big thing at the 1967 Festival Internacional da Canção [International Song Festival] broadcast by TV Globo, yet could not get booked for radio, television, and concert engagements like other rising stars of his generation. Rather, Nascimento accepted an invitation to tour university campuses with pop singer-songwriter Marcos Valle, who had built a substantial following as a bossa nova singer and composer alongside brother, lyricist Paulo Sérgio Valle. While Nascimento opened for Valle on tour, both artists adopted more politically-conscious lyrics and incorporated international influences, especially rock. The artists were often invited by campus-wide student governments [DCE, or Diretório Central dos Estudantes] to stage musical events in order to raise proceeds for the movimento estudantil [leftist student resistance movement].

In 1968, Valle invited Nascimento to record a duet as the title track for his album Viola Enluarada [Moonlit Guitar]. Though the musical harmony, arrangement, and vocal styles evoke

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174 “Era uma coisa … muita violenta … e, por exemplo, várias artistas saíram do Brasil, ou foram mandados embora, ou saíram antes de serem mandados embora, e eu falei, ‘Eu não saí do Brasil por nada. Podem me matar, podem fazer o que quiser, mas eu não sai.’ Rádio, televisão … eles fechavam as portas pra mim, quer dizer, porque minhas músicas eram música para intelectual que o povo não ia entender. Então quando eu saía com os estudantes, a gente ia pra lugares assim que tinha ginásiozinho, assim, de 2 ou 3 mil pessoas, 5 ou qualquer coisa. Em todo lugar, o pessoal ficava louco com essa músicas. Ai, eu ficava pensando, ‘Como que é aquilo … o povo não entende?’” All translations by the author unless otherwise noted. The quote appears at 39:30 in the documentary.

175 Though historian Marcos Napolitano has described this type of touring as the Circuito Universitário, he refers to it primarily between 1971-75, and these networks certainly existed before that (Napolitano 2004, 108, 112, 122).
the romantic sentimentalism of the early 1960s, the lyrics constantly link the acts of playing
guitar and singing with resistance and war.176

A mão que toca um violão
Se for preciso faz a guerra,
Mata o mundo, fere a terra.
A voz que canta uma canção
Se for preciso canta um hino,
Louva à morte.

The hand that plays a guitar
If necessary, will make war,
Kill the world, wound the earth.
The voice that sings a song
If necessary, will sing an anthem,
Praise death.

Other lines link a hand, a guitar, a song, and a blade as images of resistance, and the song closes
by repeating the word liberdade [freedom]. Though Nascimento’s bandmates have said that this
feverish period of touring barely kept them afloat financially (Tiso 2012), the tours created fierce
audience loyalty with a political consciousness that was pivotal to his success in the 1970s.

Nascimento’s popularity among students was undeniable, but his next few albums
received mixed reviews. Though a strong supporter of Nascimento’s work, journalist Tárik de
Souza hinted in 1969 at the perception that his music might be too complicated for a mass
audience:

With only one LP recorded in nearly two years and the performance of his song “Travessia” at the II FIC
[Festival Internacional da Canção] (1967), Milton Nascimento has managed to influence the vast majority
of the new Brazilian composers and even the well-known Marcos Valle and Dori Caymmi. Exploring a
little traveled path—church plainchant—, Nascimento, an excellent singer and guitarist, transformed
himself into one of the most important Brazilian composers. The difficult harmony and subjective lyrics of
this LP need to be heard several times for the filtered pure messages to transmit the great force of Milton
Nascimento’s themes… (de Souza 1969).177

For another critic, the harmonic complexity and incorporation of sacred music on the 1970
album Nascimento signaled a path leading away from pop music:

176 The song “Viola Enluarada” can be streamed on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw4rfmrYzZU
177 “Com apenas um LP gravado há quase dois anos e a apresentação de sua música ‘Travessia’ no II FIC (1967),
Milton Nascimento conseguiu influenciar grande parte dos novos compositores brasileiros e até mesmo os
conhecidos Marcos Valle e Dori Caymmi. Explorando um caminho pouco divulgado—o cantochão de igreja [church
plainchant]—, Nascimento, excelente cantor e ótimo violonista, transformou-se num dos mais importantes
compositores brasileiros. A harmonia difícil e as letras subjetivas deste LP precisam ser ouvidas várias vezes para
que as mensagens puras filtradas transmitam a grande força dos temas de Milton Nascimento…”
Milton Nascimento shows that he is composing better than ever, that his voice is one of the best in this country, and, like Edú Lobo, we think it won’t be long before Nascimento will start to write classical music. He is already showing very serious musical research with his melodies (Laranjeira 1970). While it is true that Nascimento’s work certainly has classical influences, it was more through his exposure to film music than through any purposeful research. While Nascimento dug into Anglo-American rock and jazz, Edú Lobo, by contrast, studied orchestration with Albert Harris and film music with Lalo Schiffrin in Los Angeles from 1969 to 1971 and wrote film scores upon his return to Brazil.

Critic Walter Silva clearly felt that Nascimento’s collaboration with American musicians threatened the *brasilidade* of his music, which evidently from the critic’s repeated referral to Nascimento as a “moço negro [black young man]” was rooted in his blackness. Silva praises Nascimento’s portrayal of a black farmhand on a white *fazenda* [plantation] in the song “Morro velho” as a metaphor for Brazil’s musical history, but condemns Nascimento’s new influences from rock and pop:

> Then, we told the *moço negro* that being only sad and truthful wasn’t enough; the boy started to laugh, laughter that wasn’t his; with hair that wasn’t his own and his other compositions that also were no longer his own. He went to North America, didn’t discover himself, nor was he discovered, and is even today, still in search of himself, forgetting that he’s still here, easily found, in his first [hit] “Morro velho.” Return to it, *negro moço* Milton Nascimento (Silva 1971).

It isn’t hard to understand why Nascimento avoided talking to the press about his music, when journalists had such audaciously prescriptive opinions. Silva effectively decided which parts of an artist were authentic and which were not, and worst of all, according to racial biases: black Brazilian musicians could *only* perform as symbols of Brazil’s racial democracy, and any other expression of their identity was deemed un-Brazilian.

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178 “Milton Nascimento mostra que está compondo melhor do que nunca, que sua voz é uma das melhores deste país. E, como Edú Lobo, a gente sente que Nascimento não vai demorar muito para começar a fazer uma música erudita. Ele já vem mostrando em suas melodias uma pesquisa musical muito séria.”

179 “Aí, disseram ao moço negro que ser triste e verdadeiro apenas, não bastava, o moço passou a rir, risos que não eram seus; usou cabelos que não eram seus e suas outras composições também não eram mais suas. Foi para a América do Norte, não o descobriu, nem foi descoberto, e está até hoje à sua própria procura, esquecendo-se que ele ainda está, facilmente encontrável, no seu primeiro ‘Morro Velho.’ Volte para ele, negro moço Milton Nascimento.”
Nascimento began to incorporate avant-garde musical experimentation at the close of the 1960s by collaborating with the psychedelic prog rock band Som Imaginário [Imaginary Sound] led by childhood friend and pianist Wagner Tiso. In 1970, Nascimento performed long residencies with Som Imaginário at the Teatro Opinião, Teatro da Praia, and the Sucata nightclub in Rio de Janeiro and at the Teatro Gazeta in São Paulo as well as recording his third album Nascimento (Instituto Cultural Cravo Albin). Wagner Tiso described these live performances as altogether different from the recordings he released with Som Imaginário and Milton Nascimento, since they allowed for spontaneous development of the repertoire in front of youth audiences, who were primed to soak up this new countercultural attitude. Tiso felt that the audience incited them to experiment with the music just as much as—and if not more than—the band incited the audience into a countercultural stance.

That experimentation with musical style, countercultural dress, and attitude (See Figures 6.1a, b, and c)\(^{180}\), however, did not go unnoticed by authorities. When I asked Wagner Tiso to describe his experiences with censorship, he replied that not only were lyrics censored during the era, but that Som Imaginário faced objections to their “strong sound.” I asked him what he thought the authorities feared:

Like the demeanor. Som Imaginário was persecuted; I remember that I was subjected to tense interrogations. In our case, it was our performances. We played in an aggressive manner, inciting the public to a certain revolt, you know? […] Twice I went directly from the show to the police station to give a statement: what was I doing, if I knew so-and-so, did I know Luiz Gonzaga Jr. [Gonzaguinha], if I knew so-and-so, who are his friends. I told them, ‘Me, no, I’m a musician, I play [music].’ [The police responded,] ‘But you’ll get yourself hung by your hair, over at the São Paulo police station…’ The Security Police of São Paulo used to hang people by their hair on pointed toes on the floor, on tiptoe. So, yeah, people turned in [other people] because of that, you know? But I didn’t have to turn people in. I didn’t even write lyrics. I played in order to disrupt, but I played music, you know? (Tiso 2012).\(^{181}\)

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180 Interestingly, Nascimento’s personal archive of photographs contain very few images taken between 1973 and 1976, perhaps reflecting the difficulty of this period in his career.
181 “Tipo o comportamento. Som Imaginário era perseguido, eu lembro que deu altos interrogatórios. No nosso caso, era nosso performance. A gente tocava de uma maneira agressiva, incitando o público a uma certa revolta, né? […] Eu fui duas vezes direto do show para delegacia para prestar depoimento: o que eu estava fazendo, se eu conhecia não-sei-quem, você conhece Luiz Gonzaga Jr., você conhece não-sei-quem, quem são os amigos dele. Falei, eu não, sou músico, estou tocando. Mas vê se pendurar pelo cabelo, lá na delegacia do São Paulo … Polícia Seguro de São
This strategy of playing avant garde music with free improvisation, distorted guitars, and countercultural hair, dress, and demeanor caused a sensation among youth audiences, and it was precisely for this reason that the band was targeted by agents of the regime.

In 1972, however, Nascimento released his most successful album yet. *Clube da Esquina* showed off all of Nascimento’s influences: regional guitar and vocal traditions, samba, jazz, rock, orchestration, an extraordinary vocal range, pan-Latin American song, and socially-conscious lyrics. Though Nascimento and his Clube da Esquina collaborators describe the album’s reception as mixed, many reviews were glowing. One reporter extolled that:

> Milton Nascimento’s music unites elements of folkloric music from Minas Gerais with that of South America, formulated with quasi-erudite formal concerns. The influence that Milton Nascimento exerted owes less to his music than to his position as a “serious” composer, that aims to take popular music to more complex levels of creation and interpretation (“Último dia do show do Milton Nascimento” 1972).  

Another magazine reported that *Clube da Esquina* held 8th place on the national charts upon its release, and two months later had already sold 10,000 copies (“A voz de esfinge,” 1972).
By 1973, Nascimento’s career was finally booming, but the military regime’s artistic and civic restrictions were at their strictest. The urban clandestine resistance movements had been stamped out by the dictatorship—either through imprisonment, assassination, or exile—, and the Brazilian army had launched a campaign to extinguish rural clandestine activists as well. The Araguaia guerrilla war took place in the northern Amazon region of Brazil in which the army took more than two years—including the use of napalm—to overcome 80 Marxist operatives, mostly former students and rural workers. Today, their bodies are still listed as “disappeared” along with many others buried in mass graves, such as the one in the Perus neighborhood of São Paulo (Pellegrini 2015).

Brazilian protest music scholarship has often focused on the censorship of song lyrics (Perrone 1989; Butterman 2001), but live performances were also subject to censorship. Government censors attended live performances of music and theater—normally sitting in the front rows—in order to ensure that singers and actors adhered to the censored lyrics and scripts, and musicians and audiences were well aware of the presence of plain-clothes police and intelligence agents at their performances. In January of 1974, the Ministry of Education issued a circular titled “Artistas ou agentes do mal? [Artists or agents of evil?]”. It railed against student-organized performances as being part of an “international communist movement” using art to target “incautious” students as potential recruits for “organized subversion” (Bortot and Guimaraens 2007, 38). Similarly, Figure 6.2 shows a police report from DOPS [Department of Social and Political Order] in Belo Horizonte dating from 1975, showing that five police were sent to observe a Milton Nascimento performance at the Palácio das Artes, though nothing out of the ordinary was observed. The letter to then-Police Superintendent of Belo Horizonte reads:
Figure 6.2 Correspondence between DOPS-MG and the Palácio das Artes in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, regarding police presence at a concert by Milton Nascimento. Source: Arquivo Público Mineiro, DOPS collection.
SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA

Exmo. senhor

Dr. David Hasan

III. Chefe do C.P.P.

Comunica-se as determinações contidas na 02/054/11/75 informando o que relativo a seguir:

Que no dia 07 e 08 do mês de outubro compareceu a Fundação Paço das Artes, com os detetives Orlando Reis, Daniel Daniel Filho, Antônio Silva, Edel de Azevedo Campêlo, Ricardo de Paula e Antônio Pereira de Oliveira, onde fizeram o Felicemente solicitado, conselho ao que apresentou-se o cantor Milton Ham檐cante.

No dia 07 o espetáculo teve o seu início às 21,30 horas, e no dia seguinte iniciou-se às 21,10 horas e se terminou às 24,30 horas, sendo que nestas duas espetáculos não ocorreu muito mau, não registrando modificationes.

E o que torno a informar-vos.

Belém, 10 de junho de 1975.

[Assinatura]

Mauricio Pereira de Oliveira
Superintendente de Detetives.
We solicit your excellence to examine the possibility of sending five detectives on the 7th and 8th of the current month for security during the production of Milton Nascimento’s concert between the hours of 8 and 10:30 pm, to be held in the Grand Theater of the Palácio das Artes Foundation.

This request, Mr. Superintendent, is due to a variety of problems caused during prior presentations (pop music), in which undesirable elements were in attendance, causing consternation to security and good order.

Other than the concerts starting nearly an hour later than indicated in the letter, an inspector reported that, “everything went very well, without any abnormality noted.”

The most infamous censorship of a live performance during the anos de chumbo was that of Gilberto Gil and Chico Buarque at the Anhembi Convention Center in São Paulo in 1973. The event was promoted by Phonogram Records and featured collaborative performances among its roster of artists from May 10-13. Gil and Buarque co-wrote the song “Cálice [Chalice]” during Semana Santa [Holy Week] several weeks before the performance (Guimarães 2004, 151-2). The chorus was a direct reference to the suffering of Jesus that eventually culminated in the crucifixion, and the song was swiftly prohibited days before the event (Nunes Leal 2005). Figure 6.3 shows the word “VETADO” [vetoed] visible in various places. Censors clearly caught on to the homophonic relationship between the Portuguese word cálice [chalice], and the inflammatory command cale-se [shut up], written next to the first three lines of the song:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Pai, afasta de mim esse cálice (cale-se)} \\
&\text{Pai, afasta de mim esse cálice (cale-se)} \\
&\text{Pai, afasta de mim esse cálice (cale-se)} \\
&\text{de vinho tinto de sangue} \\
&\text{Father, take away from me this chalice (shut up)} \\
&\text{Father, take away from me this chalice (shut up)} \\
&\text{Father, take away from me this chalice (shut up)} \\
&\text{of blood red wine}
\end{align*}
\]

A recent Brazilian documentary includes footage showing that, despite the prohibition, Gilberto Gil (at left in the video) sang nonsense words, while Chico Buarque (at right) interjected the title “Cálice” (Gavin 2012). The performance unfolds, then, as if Buarque is a censor telling Gil to “shut up,” and producers quickly turned off Buarque’s microphones, silencing him in reality (Severiano and Homem de Mello 1997). In 1972, Buarque told a reporter that

183 “tudo correu muito bem, não registrando nenhuma anormalidade”.

184 See 8:26-8:46 of the performance: https://vimeo.com/42785910
229

Figure 6.3 Lyrics from “Cálice” by Gilberto Gil and Chico Buarque censored on May 10, 1973. Source: Arquivo Nacional, Serviço de Censura de Diversões Públicas: Letras Musicais collection, Rio de Janeiro.
People are saying that I have the role of hero, or that I intend to transform myself into a flag or a Brazilian opposition leader. That’s not it. I’m not a politician. I’m an artist. When I yell or complain it’s because I feel that they’re doing things that impede my creative work, on which I depend and all artists depend. But, if to defend the freedom of expression today is a political act, then I don’t have any way of escaping that. 

As I showed in Chapter 5, Nascimento suffered equally strict censorship of his album 

_Milagre dos Peixes_ [Miracle of the Fishes] as that of Chico Buarque’s work. Unlike Buarque, however, Nascimento chose not to talk about the politics of music, preferring to let his performances speak for themselves. Riding on the success of the album _Clube da Esquina_, Nascimento chose a more experimental approach for _MdP_, and the album rose to cult status as a symbol of defiance after publishing the names of the censored lyricists in the album’s liner notes. Nascimento’s musical career was inextricably bound up with politics and activism as much as it was with the aesthetic vagaries of the broader music industry. Youth audiences, on the other hand, seemed unfazed by his lack of political rhetoric and were content to read his presence at leftist university events, defiant lyrics, and experimental musical sound as a strong dissenting voice.

**Part Two: Jards Macalé’s _Banquete dos Mendigos_: Musical Performance and Human Rights**

At the close of 1973, Milton Nascimento was invited to perform at an event held at the Museu de Arte Moderna, the MAM, in Rio de Janeiro. The concert was organized by composer Jards Macalé, a classically-trained guitarist, pianist, and orchestrator better known as an MPB [música popular brasileira] artist in the 1960s and 70s. Macalé invited a broad range of Brazilian musicians to perform, such as pre-bossa nova crooner Johnny Alf, northeastern _baião_ accordionist Dominguinhos, Chico Buarque (who had recently returned from self-exile in Italy), and several new artists debuting albums that year, including rock singer Raul Seixas (who would

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185 “Tem gente pensando que eu tenho vocação de herói, ou pretenda me transformar em bandeira ou num líder das oposições do Brasil. Não é isso, eu não sou político. Sou um artista. Quando grito e reclamo é porque estou sentido que se estão pondo coisas que impedem o trabalho de criação, do qual eu dependo e dependem todos os artistas. Mas, se defender a liberdade de criação é hoje um ato político, também não tenho porque fugir dele.”
later be called the Father of Brazilian Rock), samba-soul singer Luiz Melodia, and singer-songwriter Gonzaguinha, the son of baiao legend Luiz Gonzaga.

Throughout the 1960s, the MAM had helped to launch the careers of provocative artists, such as visual artists Hélio Oititica and Lygia Clark from the Tropicalista movement and the poets of Nuvem Cigana [Gypsy Cloud], which included Ronaldo Bastos, one of Nascimento’s primary lyricists. When Macalé approached the MAM as a potential venue, the director of the museum’s cinema suggested that the concert be paired with an upcoming event promoted by Brazil’s United Nations office. The event would commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document created on December 10, 1948 in the wake of WWII. Having been largely isolationist on the international stage, Brazil spent the bulk of WWII trying to protect its shipping lines from German submarines, but eventually acknowledged the nation’s many Italian descendants by sending 25,000 troops to fight in 1944. With the close of the war the following year, Brazil became a founding UN Member State, and as such, pledged to uphold the human rights declaration.

Macalé met with several of the musicians and event organizers to conceptualize the concert at Chico Buarque’s house, where it was decided that poet and UN employee Ivan Junqueira would read out 18 of the declaration’s 30 articles during the concert (Maiato and Santos 2014). Like any artistic event, Macalé was obligated to submit a list of songs to the censors, along with a description of the event. Some songs were prohibited from the concert, but many were approved. What surprised Macalé most, however, was the censorship office’s handling of the declaration itself:

The human rights letter came, that we had also sent to the censors, [and it] came back censored, with the seal of the censors. I have it at home. It says, ‘liberated by the federal censors.’ The guy is saying this about
a letter that is celebrating its 25th anniversary. So, in it there were several words, like “censorship,” “torture”, that were scratched out, you know, censored (Gavin 2012).186

When artists who take part in activism or the staging of protest music are successful, it is often due to some type of institutional support, however small. In staging this concert, Macalé had the support of the UN regional office in Brazil and the MAM—two well-respected civic institutions—and their support helped give legitimacy not only to the idea of uniting protest singers, countercultural figures, and elder popular musicians together on one stage, but of cloaking the concert in the language of human rights. When the declaration arrived with several censored words, it was the museum director who encouraged the artists to perform the songs they wanted, and when the declaration’s articles were read out, it was a UN employee who spoke. These institutional representatives helped to absorb some of the risk the artists faced in taking a critical stance. Likewise, with the participation of popular musicians, the UN in Brazil hoped to raise awareness about human rights among a large—and disenfranchised—youth audience.

Emptied of chairs and with a large UN banner behind the improvised stage, the concert was performed in the cinemateca and attracted more than 4,000 attendees, many of them students (ONU-BR 2015). Bruce Henry, an American singer and bass player who has lived in Rio de Janeiro since the late 1960s, performed with his band Soma. He described a tense atmosphere for performers, not only on that night, but at concerts generally:

So I think that everything that they [the military regime] did at that time was to intimidate. The very fact that the police would surround the mixing board, that you would have censors in the first row, always, to know that they were always present (Gavin 2012; emphasis original).187

Historian Marcos Napolitano noted Jards Macalé’s preoccupation with this intimidating presence four years before, when he yelled from the stage of Rede Globo’s Festival Internacional da

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187 “Então eu acho que tudo que eles faziam nessa época, era para intimidar. O próprio fato da policia estar em volta da mesa de som, de você ter a primeira fila de censores sempre, de saber que eles estavam sempre presentes.”
Canção in 1969, “Cuidado! Há um morcego na porta principal. Cuidado! [Be careful! There is a bat at the main door. Be careful!]” (2009, 641). Napolitano concluded that by calling out the presence of these “bats,” Macalé was publicly denouncing both political repression and censorship, as well as educating the politically naive among the audience.

The artist line-up was varied in terms of generation and musical style and included artists whose careers were largely apolitical, such as Johnny Alf and Dominguinhos. The event seemed aimed at providing balance; each artist played 2–4 selections, and those that played politically critical songs often played hits as well. For example, Paulinho da Viola opened the show with the carefree samba “No pagode do Vavá [Vavá’s Pagode],” about his longtime friend at the Portela samba school, composer and cavaquinho player Norival “Vavá” Reis (A Dança da Solidão Odeon 1972). Paulinho’s second song, however, was the morose and dissonant samba “Roendo as unhas [Biting my nails],” of which he was forced to loop the opening bars as shouts and hisses emerged in the audience (Hear DHBM, Vol. 1, Track 2, 0:00-1:50). The disturbance in the crowd continued through Paulinho’s opening lines:

Meu samba não se importa que eu esteja numa de andar roendo as unhas pela madrugada
My samba doesn’t mind if I’m in the mood to walk around biting my nails in the middle of the night

With the height of torture, disappearances, and intimidation by the military dictatorship, the perpetual vamp of the song is the perfect metaphor for time stopped, life on pause. It is a curious samba with no real verse or chorus; the 4-chord vamp intro is not an intro at all, but repeats throughout the song, while the melody provides the only structural progress. The murmurs and shouts eventually disappeared in time for his more improvised—and more dissonant—final verse:

Meu samba não se importa se desapareço
Se digo uma mentira sem me arrepender
Quando entro numa boa ele vem comigo
E fica desse jeito se eu entristecer
My samba doesn’t mind if I disappear
If I tell a lie without regretting it
When I’m feeling good, the samba goes with me,
And stays that way when I’m sad
Paulinho sings with a certain dark optimism that his music will carry him through the dictatorship. But the song itself has no resolution and, living in that moment, perhaps he wasn’t convinced there would be for Brazil’s political situation.

Paulinho’s musical performance was introduced by UN-Brazil employee Ivan Junqueira. In the historical moment of institutionalized torture, the curtailing of all student gatherings in Brazil, and of foreign atrocities (such as the Vietnam conflict that had imploded so spectacularly over the past decade), Brazil’s youth found it hard to believe that human rights were relevant to them, not merely an abstract concept. Junqueira explained that the concert commemorated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Hear DHBM Vol. 3, Track 14, 2:43-3:41):

…Which is perhaps the most important document of the United Nations and perhaps even of all humanity. The future of this document belongs to you, young people. [Applause, cheering]. In accordance with the show’s musicians, and, I believe, with all of you, they authorized me to read some of the articles of this declaration, that I don’t know if you’re familiar with—just a few articles—so that it can be officially presented to this Brazilian youth. Article One: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason…[Swell of cheering and applause]…They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood (Macalé 2015). As Junqueira read out the articles, the crowd responded with tentative cheering and applause, but when he read out the fifth article—“No one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”—a swell of cheering, screaming, and applause rose and lasted for more than thirty seconds.

Clearly, in the midst of the anos de chumbo, the article against torture had great meaning to the audience. They greeted the ninth article—“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”—with similar enthusiasm. After all, the Truth Commission Report published

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188 Indeed, the military dictatorship was paying attention to the conflict, and in Tocantins, it was reported that rural people were imprisoned in “buracos do Vietnã” [Vietnam holes], which were dug into the earth and covered with grates (Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014, p. 350).

189 “…que é talvez o documento mais importante das Nações Unidas e talvez mesmo de toda a humanidade. O futuro desse documento pertence a vocês, jovens. Em acordo, com os músicos do espetáculo, e, eu creio, com todos vocês, eles me autorizaram a ler alguns artigos dessa declaração, que eu não sei se vocês conhecem—apenas alguns artigos—, para que ela seja oficialmente apresentada a essa juventude brasileira. Artigo Primeiro: Todos os homens nascem livres e iguais em dignidades e direitos. São dotados de razão…São dotados de razão e consciência e devem agir em relação um aos outros com espírito de fraternidade.”
in 2014 estimated that perhaps as many as 20,000 Brazilians were subjected to torture under the military dictatorship between 1964 and 1985 (CNV 2014, 350), while political scientist Anthony W. Pereira has estimated that as many as 50,000 Brazilians were arrested and/or imprisoned (2005, 68).

The concert was a rare opportunity for Rio de Janeiro youth to gather in large numbers, and even then, they gathered only with the utmost attention to *ordem* [order] and *bons costumes* [good moral principles], the watchwords of the regime’s public safety department DOPS [Department of Social and Political Order]. Lacking seating for a large audience, the youths filled the auditorium seated cross-legged in neat rows, often with their hands politely folded across their knees (See Figure 6.4). The image is a far cry from the boisterous televised festivals of just a few years before where youths stood, cheered, booed, and held up banners.

![Figure 6.4 Direitos Humanos no Banquete dos Mendigos by Jards Macalé and Xico Chaves. Recorded live at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro on December 10, 1973 and re-issued by Discobertas in 2015.](image)

Outside the MAM, upholding order meant something more sinister. Flyers for the event had alarmed DOPS officials, and as the more than 4,000 audience members enjoyed the show, military police encircled the venue with tanks (Vieira 2015), and the audience’s eventual exit had to be negotiated (Gavin 2012). In this tense climate, Junqueira’s words must have been stirring:
I read with indignation, you know? Worthy of imprisonment, because they could arrest me for the tone of my reading, not only for the words that were in the declaration (Gavin 2012). In fact, Ivan Junqueira’s voice sounded pinched with emotion and nervousness (Hear DHBM Vol. 3, Track 14, 2:43-3:41).

DOPS tanks outside the museum were not the only problem. Musician Bruce Henry described the difficulty of keeping the live recording a secret from the censors and police (Gavin 2012). A military official asked him about the continuously spinning tape, so the audio technicians claimed it was a type of effects unit supplying reverb to the bass. Suspicious, the officer posted several officials around the audio console. At the show’s conclusion, Henry managed to switch out the recording with a blank reel, which he made a great show of giving to a roadie to take home—and which was duly confiscated by police outside the venue. Outspoken composer Jorge Mautner explained in a recent article commemorating the album’s re-issue that he believed reading out the declarations enacted tangible change:

> The public, the students, the military, and the artists were there. It was a time in which part of the left saw Human Rights as something bourgeois, and afterwards they understood better what it meant. Everyone left there with new desires, which were present during the Diretas [protests for direct presidential elections] and in the 1988 Constitution (Vieira 2015).

Between censors, police, and tanks, the reading of the human rights declarations was not only an act of political critique, but also a statement of hope for a future democracy.

In 1972, Mautner had taken over the popular column “Underground” at the alternative leftist weekly newspaper *O Pasquim* in Rio de Janeiro (Dunn 2014, 450). Mautner reacted to the grave restrictions on Brazilian society by using anti-authoritarian humor and countercultural references in his columns, as well as by writing darkly comedic songs. At the MAM, he performed “Samba dos Animais [Animals Samba],” which equated contemporary Brazilian

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190. “Eu lia com uma indignação, entendeu? Digna de prisão, porque eles podiam me prender pelo tom da leitura, não tanto pelo texto que estava lá na declaração.”

191. “O povo, os estudantes, os militares e os artistas estavam lá. Era uma época em que parte da esquerda via os Direitos Humanos como algo burguês, e depois se entendeu melhor o significado. Todos saíram dali com novas vontades, que estariam presentes nas Diretas e na Constituição de 1988.”
society with absurdity and suggested a more peaceful coexistence between humans and animals. Towards the end of the song, Mautner employed a frequent device in children’s songs: calling out the name of an animal, and then imitating the sound that animal makes. To maximize the absurdity of the song, however, Mautner’s guitarist called out the names of animals that are nearly impossible to imitate—including the mosquito, bee, earthworm, spider, fly, and scorpion—while Mautner emitted bizarre snorts, squeaks, and slurps (Hear DHBM Vol. 1, Track 7, 4:04-4:55).

While ridicule of contemporary society was Mautner’s favored strategy for dissent, recent articles celebrating DHBM’s re-issue often point to Chico Buarque’s performances as the most politically barbed (Vieira 2015). One author described Buarque’s performance with MPB-4 as particularly scathing on “Pesadelo [Nightmare]” due to several taunting lines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Você corta um verso, eu escrevo outro</td>
<td>You cut a verse, I write another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Você me prende vivo, eu escapo morto</td>
<td>You imprison me alive, I escape dead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring plainly to his own censorship and to the assassination of imprisoned Brazilians, Buarque’s performance is particularly effective with MPB-4 singing in defiant unison: “Que medo você tem de nós / Olha aí! [You’re so afraid of us / Look over there!]” Each one breaks briefly out of unison to speak-sing the phrase, “Look over there,” one after another, as if to tell the authoritarian regime they don’t know from which direction the people’s response is coming.

Aside from writing direct and daring lyrics, Buarque was happy to make his audiences aware of the censorship he faced. Between songs, Buarque tells the audience he doesn’t have permission to perform “Vai trabalhar, vagabundo [Get to work, lazy bum],” thereby explicitly bringing censorship to the fore. Instead, Buarque played the yet unfinished song “Jorge Maravilha [Marvelous George]” in homage to pop singer Jorge Ben. He gets many of the guitar chords wrong, struggling to remember his own lyrics, but the audience soaks up every wry
phrase: “Você não gosta de mim / mas sua filha gosta [You don’t like me / but your daughter does].” The biggest laugh from the audience comes when Buarque makes a transformation of the common phrase from “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” to “mais vale uma filha na mão do que dois pais voando [a daughter in the hand is worth two fathers in the bush]” (Hear DHBM Vol. II, Track 13, 1:20-1:60). Though Buarque’s performance functioned as a sneak peak into an unfinished work, it was more powerful for precisely that reason. Sharing something incomplete created an atmosphere of intimacy and confession, as if he and the audience were conspiring against authority figures (explicitly, fathers, and implicitly, censors). Indeed, Vieira notes that censors prohibited the release of the album in 1974 on the following grounds:

The album’s songs, performed by various artists, including Chico Buarque, Paulinho da Viola, Raul Seixas, Edú Lobo, and Gal Costa, have unfavorable political connotations towards the government (Vieira 2015).193

Fred Coelho, professor of literature and theater, has pointed not to Buarque, but to Gonzaguinha’s performance as one of the most directly political of the concert (Hear DHBM Vol. 1, Track 14, 0:40-2:32).194 The first line of each verse of “Palavras [Words]” repeats the title three times, allowing for the maximum of disgust, dissatisfaction, and exasperation in Gonzaguinha’s voice. Other lines from the verses include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eu já não aguento mais</td>
<td>I just can’t stand it anymore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Você promete, engana e nada faz</td>
<td>You promise, disappoint, and do nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desde quando sorrir é ser feliz?</td>
<td>Since when does smiling mean you’re happy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantar nunca foi só de alegria</td>
<td>Singing was never done just out of joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com tempo ruim,</td>
<td>In bad weather,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todo mundo também dá bom dia!</td>
<td>We still say, “Bom dia! [Good day]”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

192 Though some have claimed Buarque was referring to then-candidate for dictatorial presidency General Ernesto Geisel’s daughter—and her proclaimed love of Buarque’s music—, but Buarque has denied it (See the 1977 interview with Tarso de Castro in the Folha de S Paulo, September 11).

193 “As músicas do disco, interpretadas por vários nomes, entre os quais Chico Buarque, Paulinho da Viola, Raul Seixas, Edu Lobo e Gal Costa, têm conotações políticas desfavoráveis ao governo.”

194 Gonzaguinha is the nickname of Luiz Gonzaga, Jr., musician and son of the beloved baiao composer of the same name.
The achingly slow tempo demanded attention, and the audience was rapt. He closed the song with a coda from the classic 1950s bolero “Diez Años” by Rafael Hernandez with Portuguese lyrics by Lourival Faissal (Hear DHBM Vol. I, Track 14, 3:28-4:29):

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E assim
se passar ao dez anos
sem houver teu rosto
sem olhar teus olhos
sem beijar teus lábios
assim foi tão grande a pena
que sentiu minha alma
ao recordar

And so
If we get to 10 years
Without having your face
Without seeing your eyes
Without kissing your lips
The pain was so great
That I felt in my heart
To remember [it]…
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Though the cheering audience recognized a hit song, perhaps they also recognized the double entendre of the line, “And so, if we get to 10 years,” an allusion to the dictatorship that would soon reach the 10-year mark on March 31, 1974, just over three months following the concert.

While Gonzaguinha stirred emotion with quiet intensity and nostalgia, Raul Seixas provoked through an explosive performance. Incorporating spoken poetry a là Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix-style distorted guitar riffs, and an electrified berimbau rhythm, Seixas embodied the countercultural outrage of a generation fed up with increasingly tighter restrictions on self-expression. Though he had performed with the band Raulzito e os Panteras since at least 1968, Seixas didn’t gain national attention until the debut of his solo album Krig-ha, Bandolo! in July 1973, just a few months before Banquete dos Mendigos. Seixas performed four songs from his debut album, including the avant-garde performance of “Mosca na Sopa [A Fly in your Soup].” The repetitive nature of the verses—in which Seixas describes his generation as an annoying fly in the dictatorship’s soup—speaks of an unflinching commitment to contestation. The chorus insists (Hear DHBM Vol. 2, Track 7, 4:30-4:50):

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E não adianta
Vir me dedetizar
Pois nem o DDT
Pode assim me exterminar
Porque você mata uma
E vem outra em meu lugar

And it’s no use
Come and DDT me
Since not even DDT
Could really exterminate me
Because you can kill one
But another will take my place
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Whether the scratch of distorted guitars, the crack and wail of Raul’s voice, or the overall bombastic performance of the band and backing singers, no other performer mixed grit, lucid social criticism, countercultural ebullience, and mystical references in that way.

In the context of politicized lyrics, flamboyant performances, and a heavy military presence, Milton Nascimento’s performance was in keeping with his *calado* [reticent] reputation. Nascimento performed two of his most popular hits from *Clube da Esquina*, as well as the 1956 Tom Jobim-Vinicius de Moraes classic “A Felicidade [Happiness].” As I noted in Chapter 4, while Jobim’s song is joyful, celebratory, and bittersweet, Nascimento’s solo version from the 1970 album *Nascimento* is much more dissonant, ambiguous, and melancholy. For the 1973 concert, however, a quintet provided a lush harmonic framework, a decidedly more jazz-influenced delivery than the recording. This selection could have been intended as a more mainstream offering, perhaps to please a mass audience and the plethora of other artists on the marquee, particularly since Nascimento was not known as a romantic or sentimental singer. As a popular hit, however, its melancholy message of happiness as fleeting and sadness as life’s emotional default was certainly relevant to the times, most passionately interpreted at Nascimento’s repeat of the line, “and falls like a tear [*e cai como uma lágrima*]” (Hear *DHBM* Vol. 3, Track 1, 2:08-2:56).

Nascimento’s first selection earned him warm applause and cheers, paving the way to perform two hits with political connotations. Social historian Maika Lois Carocha has indicated at least two types of 1970s songwriters. Some used the “linguagem da fresta [language of omission]” turning to figures of speech, metaphors, invented words, and even sound effects to curtail censorship. A second type used the language of

…‘*desbunde,*’ an expression used to designate MPB song lyrics based on a utopia not fixed in time or space, with ‘*viagens* [journeys],’ ‘*portos* [ports],’ ‘*cais* [quays/wharfs],’ ‘*partidas* [departures],’ ‘*trens*
Indeed, Ronaldo Bastos’s lyrics to “Cais [Wharf]” speak of the imagination becoming a dock from which the protagonist can launch himself into another reality. What is more, the protagonist shows that an alternate vision is available to anyone who can imagine it. However, the song’s distinctive instrumental theme—in which the listener is swept away into this newly imagined reality—was left out of this live performance, perhaps foiling the expectations of the biggest fans of the album *Clube da Esquina*, released the year before.

According to Christopher Dunn, the term *desbunde* was originally a leftist epithet criticizing those that left armed clandestine activity as countercultural drop-outs or as politically indifferent or alienated (2014, 431-2). Likewise, Brazilian anthropologist and historian Antônio Risério has described the *desbundado* as more concerned with the quest of internal transformation than with political change. During the *anos de chumbo*, however, for every politically alienated drop-out, there were just as many youth that funneled their political frustration into alterative channels:

The focus on the dichotomy between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary movements overlooks broad sectors of urban middle-class youth who rejected the armed struggle and sought to oppose state power in other ways, including the adoption of aesthetic and social practices positioned as countercultural (Dunn 2014, 434).

Nascimento’s set closed with the boisterous “Nada será como antes [Nothing Will Be as It Was],” which lyricist Bastos has described as a response to Walnice Nogueira’s 1968 controversial article. Her criticism of the MPB lyrical trope of the *dia que virá* [the day that will come]—in songs like Chico Buarque’s “Apesar de você [In spite of you]”—as completely ineffectual in
leveraging social action (Diniz 2012, 107). Bastos has argued that though many of his songs were political, they also addressed broader issues:

…everything, in a way, was political, but it wasn’t only political. About issues like the end of adolescence, the question of existentialism, people were reading a lot of Sartre and I hadn’t read anything about Marx. So, I think there were these political metaphors, mainly in ‘Um gosto de sol’ and ‘Nada será como antes,’ like ‘resistindo na boca da noite um gosto de sol [resisting in the jaws of the night a taste of the sun]’ (Diniz 2012, 208, quoting Tedesco 2000, 178-179).

Bastos’s lyrics describe a resistance that has already begun: the protagonist already has his “feet on the road [com o pé na estrada]” and already feels “alvoroço [tumultuous]” in his chest, rather than waiting for some future day to arrive, as Nogueira criticized. The song also describes solidarity among male youth in the face of shared fear and instability, rousing the crowd to clap along (Hear DHBM Vol. 3, Track 3, 3:24-5:09).

Nascimento’s participation—more subtle and nuanced than his flamboyant peers, such as Raul Seixas—communicated a powerful statement of political dissent on December 10, 1973. Alongside such harsh images as Jards Macalé’s “Anjo exterminado [Exterminated Angel]” and Luiz Melodia’s “Abundantemente morte [Abundantly dead],” Nascimento’s songs and presence helped solidify an anti-dictatorial stance.

Part Three: Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo: An Orchestrated Resistance

Political Music and the Live Album: Comparing Milagre dos Peixes to Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo

In 1974, Nascimento and Som Imaginário recorded Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo [Miracle of the Fishes Live] with full orchestra at the Teatro Municipal de São Paulo. Though they share the same name, Ao Vivo is not, strictly speaking, a live version of the critically-acclaimed studio album Milagre dos Peixes (EMI-Odeon 1973)—it is much more. Many Brazilians I spoke with during my research conceptualized MdP and Ao Vivo interchangeably, often favoring one over

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196 “(...) tudo, de certa maneira, era político, embora não fosse só político. Em questões como a saída da adolescência, uma questão existencialista, as pessoas leram muito mais Sartre e eu não tinha lido nada de Marx. Então, acho que existiam essas metáforas políticas, principalmente em “Um gosto de sol” e “Nada será como antes”, com “resistindo na boca da noite um gosto de sol”.

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Moreover, scholars writing on the music of Milton Nascimento have taken *Ao Vivo* entirely for granted, often confusing the studio and live versions (Napolitano 2009, 643). Though sociologist Sheyla Diniz has pointed to some significant differences, even she described the repertoire as “*quase igual* [nearly identical]” (2012, 128). In fact, of the original 11 songs on *MdP*, *Ao Vivo* keeps just half (6 songs) and adds 10 additional songs, meaning that more than 60% of the album is completely different material, and thus, merits further consideration.

In Chapter 5, I showed how *MdP* communicated a stance of defiance and dissent, despite only 3 of the 11 songs containing lyrics. Conversely, twelve of the sixteen tracks on *Ao Vivo* contain lyrics, and, as a result, the four wordless songs are situated within a much broader swath of lyrics. Unlike *MdP*, the political impact of *Ao Vivo* did not rely on the strangeness of sonic experimentations with timbre, articulation, and wordlessness. Furthermore, Naná Vasconcelos—the “coauthor” of *MdP* (Amaral 2013, 136)—did not participate in *Ao Vivo*, and acoustic guitarist Nelson Ângelo also departed for other projects. For *Ao Vivo*, Nascimento instead called upon electric guitarist Toninho Horta and drummer Robertinho Silva for a more conventional pop-rock sound as well as orchestral composer-arrangers Wagner Tiso, Paulo Moura, and Radamés Gnatalli. As a result, the texture shifted toward the integration of grand orchestral arrangements with a progressive rock band.

Orchestras had long accompanied popular singers in Brazil, and Radamés Gnattali was one of Brazil’s most prolific composers and orchestrators for Rádio Nacional. His 30-year career there yielded famous recordings by Orlando Silva, Pixinguinha, Dick Farney, and Ary Barroso’s quintessential “Aquarela do Brasil.” The participation of Gnattali and the Orquestra Sinfônica do Rio de Janeiro alongside a band of *cabeludos* [long-hairs] was unprecedented and attracted not only popular audiences, but Brazil’s elite music patrons and artists as well.

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197 And perhaps forgetting just how different they are.
Ao Vivo was a sonic landmark in Brazilian music history for being the first live album between a rock band and a symphony orchestra. In histories of rock used for social protest, the electric guitar—especially a distorted electric guitar—is often held up as the quintessential timbre of protest, such as Jimi Hendrix’s deconstruction of the American national anthem at Woodstock (Turino 1999, 242). For Turino, Hendrix’s interpretation of “The Star-Spangled Banner” created new meaning in the context of the late 1960s by juxtaposing indexical associations of the distorted electric guitar (the rock counter-culture) and the national anthem (nationalism). In Nascimento’s case, he used Som Imaginário’s British progressive rock and American avant-garde jazz influences, such as the timbres of organ, saxophone, and electric guitar, lengthy multi-part formal structures, and extended improvisation to signal the Brazilian counterculture and its associations with the disruption of public order—experimental lifestyles, drug use, changing sexual mores, and political organization and resistance. These countercultural indices were juxtaposed with those indices of the orchestra and Rádio Nacional figurehead Radamés Gnattali—the Brazilian cultural elite, social decorum, tradition, and nationalism.

Ao Vivo, then, differs from MdP in personnel, texture, and sonic indices, as well as repertoire. Some songs were selected for their socio-political reputation from past albums—such as “Milagre dos Peixes [ Miracle of the Fishes],” “Nada será como antes [Nothing Will Be as it Was],” and “Viola, violar [Guitar, violate]”—while others were chosen as popular hits about frustrated or betrayed love—such as “Sabe você [Do You Know?]” and “Chove lá fora [It’s Raining Outside]”—as metaphors for political exasperation. These selections not only appealed to a broader public—since many of them were radio hits—, but could also bookend wordless songs to speak more directly to the audience.
*Ao Vivo*’s opening suite is unapologetically avant-garde. The opening track “A Matança do Porco/Xá-Mate” is a suite comprised of a song apiece by Som Imaginário bandleader-pianist Wagner Tiso and saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas. “A Matança do Porco [The Killing of the Pig]” originally accompanied a powerful scene from Ruy Guerra’s *Os Deuses e os Mortos* in which veteran dramatic actor Othon Bastos’ character slaughters a pig. Starting the concert with this piece allowed the audience to hear the electric guitar, organ, and saxophone perform extended improvisations (Hear *Ao Vivo* Track 1, 0:00-5:15). The minor key theme resembles a somber liturgical procession, but in its first rendering during the 9-minute suite, it is transformed into a psychedelic march featuring Tiso’s distorted Rhodes and Toninho Horta’s distorted guitar, replete with bent notes and the subtle use of a wah-wah pedal. These timbres are complemented by a heavy backbeat from drummer Robertinho Silva and a relentless, dirge-like bassline from Tavito. After the introduction of the melody, Horta takes over with a solo mixing rock and blues elements and finally shifting focus to the first entrance of saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas. Though working with a primarily clean timbre, Ornelas immediately incorporates fluttering and arpeggio techniques from Coltrane’s “sheets of sound” period before returning to thematic material to cue the entrance of the orchestra.

With the entrance of “Xá-Mate [Mate Tea],” the suite sets an epic tone for the evening by showing that Som Imaginário and the orchestra are not merely separate and complementary elements, but a hybrid of classical film music, jazz, and rock styles (Hear Track 1, 5:15-9:25). Though providing light colors at first, the orchestra enters *en force* halfway through the first track to play Nivaldo Ornelas’s austere processional. The baroque processional features the strings for the first time in a legato lament as Ornelas provides a pristine countermelody over the string texture (Hear Track 1, 6:23). Ornelas’s baroque ornamentations are in stark contrast with
his countercultural exclamations from the opening piece. At the fifth repetition, bassist Tavito switches to acoustic bass mirroring the Baroque passage in the low strings, and as the theme continues, French horns, trombones, and trumpets add to the somber occasion.

The second track “Bodas [Nuptials]” opens with a long, bombastic free improvisation between drums and saxophone, while the latter brashly imitates the sound of a ship’s horn (Hear Ao Vivo Track 2, 0:00-1:10). At more than ten minutes into the concert, Nascimento finally sings—to whistles and applause. The lyrics criticize the exploitation of natural resources by the British government and military interference in colonial Brazil surrounding the 1862 sinking of a British naval ship off the coast of Rio Grande do Sul. In 1845, England had prohibited the slave trade across the Atlantic and, when the boat sank, had been pressuring Brazil to abolish slavery. The first line begins, “in the port, a gunship arrived,” as Nascimento is accompanied softly by electric guitar. Though Ruy Guerra’s lyrics immediately strike a critical stance, sociologist Sheila Diniz has noted that it is the manner of their delivery that communicates an embittered relationship:

Some of the verses highlight the repetition of certain words, insinuating the framing of different semantic definitions. ‘Prata [silver],’ for example, designated the material with which a serving tray was made and, at the same time, the traffic of riches that the English had carried out. Likewise, “mata [forest or woods]’ expressed, on the one hand, the exuberance of Brazilian woodlands and, on the other, the verb ‘matar [to kill]’ in the imperative form (Diniz 2012, 127).

Nascimento’s thorny diction—sharp consonants and sibilant S’s and Z’s—is key to the emotional impact of the song. He manages to repeat words so exactly that I questioned whether he was using a delay pedal to do so (he wasn’t). The growled and rasped repetition of the word “mata [woods/kill]” towards the end of the song is particularly chilling (Hear Ao Vivo Track 2, 3:01-3:40):

198 “Algumas de seus versos davam destaque para a repetição de certas palavras, insinuando a construção de diferentes definições semânticas. “Prata”, por exemplo, designava o material com o qual era feito uma bandeja e, ao mesmo tempo, o tráfico de riquezas que os ingleses teriam efetuado. Já “mata” expressava, por um lado, a exuberância das florestas brasileiras e, por outro, o verbo “matar” no modo imperativo.”
Reflecting on the 10-minute instrumental preamble followed by Nascimento’s defiant interpretation of “Bodas,” the opening of *Ao Vivo* is very bold. The orchestra—in many ways a symbol of the establishment in Brazil for its collaboration with such official institutions as Rádio Nacional and its upper-class erudition—echoes film music more than the classical concert hall when juxtaposed with Nascimento’s contestatory tone. Diniz rightly asserted that *Ao Vivo* was “a type of ‘settling of accounts’ with EMI-Odeon’s rejection and, above all, with the military regime’s censorship” of *MdP* the year before (Diniz 2012, 128). Not only had three songs been censored on *MdP* (see Chapter 5), but Odeon had also prohibited the recording of “Bodas,” in which Ruy Guerra’s song lyrics were deemed too risky to Odeon’s parent company, the British-owned EMI (Diniz 2012, 127). The inclusion of other songs from *MdP* along with “Bodas [Nuptials]” ensured that *Ao Vivo* maintained a strong critical stance.

The remaining three sections of *Ao Vivo* are comprised of key songs from *MdP,* Nascimento’s past hits, covers of pop tunes by other artists, and the premiere of one new song. This case study shows how the juxtaposition of political songs from *MdP* with Nascimento’s more mainstream hits as well as covers by other artists communicated a dissenting stance, often through documenting individual or collective struggle. Moreover, orchestration, texture, musical form, and epic scale along with song lyrics are crucial to shaping musical meaning.

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199 “…uma espécie de “acerto de contas” para com o veto da EMI-Odeon e, sobretudo, para com a censura militar.”

200 *Ao Vivo* includes live versions of 6 songs originally recorded on *Milagre dos Peixes:* “Milagre dos Peixes,” “Pablo” and “Pablo No. 2” (which appear as a single track on *Ao Vivo*), “Tema dos Deuses,” “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey,” “A Última Sessão de Música,” and “Sacramento.”
“Milagre dos Peixes” has long been praised for criticizing the unwholesome alliance between the military regime and the media. In his book on Milton Nascimento and the city of Belo Horizonte, historian Bruno Martins Viveiros suggested that perhaps the lyrics about a “gênio televisor [TV genius]” and “nossos novos santos [our new saints]” were aimed at the regime’s propaganda machine (Viveiros Martins 2009, 167). With phrases such as “Brasil, ame-o ou deixe-o! [Brazil, Love it or Leave it!]” and “Ninguém segura esse país! [No one can hold back this country!],” the regime’s Special Advisory of Public Relations [Assessoria Especial de Relações Públicas] (1968-74) aimed to “formulate and apply a policy capable of domestically predisposing, motivating, and encouraging a collective desire for the national endeavor of development…” (de Abreu and de Paula 2007, 30).^201^ Fernando Brant’s lyrics critiqued this stance by maintaining that any rhetoric promoting Brazilian economic development was empty if it didn’t also promote social and spiritual development—an appreciation for nature, beauty, and humanity. The song is the first on *Ao Vivo* to feature Nascimento’s violão, and it leads the orchestra like it did on *MdP*. The final open repeat in Nascimento’s falsetto—“eu vejo esses peixes e vou de coração [I see these fish and go with my heart]”—is more powerful with Som Imaginário than on the studio recording, yet loses none of its poignancy with the soaring strings.

Musician-author Chico Amaral hesitates to indicate specific lyrics as expressing political resistance, but instead argues that the grandiosity of film music alongside more subtle, indirectly political lyrics enabled Nascimento to address socio-political concerns:

…This epic that is portrayed in some of Nascimento’s songs, like “Outubro,” “Crença,” many [others], right? [They’re] a grand thing that sometimes others don’t understand what aesthetic it is. This epic [nature] also came up because of the dictatorship. It has the presence of evil, of dictatorship, of tyranny, and people talked a lot about struggle, death, fighting, heroes” (Amaral 2010).^202^

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^201^ “formular e aplicar uma política capaz de, no campo interno, predispor, motivar e estimular a vontade coletiva para o esforço nacional de desenvolvimento…”

Brant has described “Outubro [October]” as a dedication to his and Nascimento’s birthdays as well as to transformation (October is springtime in Brazil) and revolution (the Bolsheviks of October 1917) (Vilara 2006, 44). These semantic meanings snowball into the phrase “fazer meu Outubro de homem [have my October coming-of-age]” in which adulthood also signifies facing down oppression.

While the song’s lyrics seem optimistic on the surface, Wagner Tiso and Paulo Moura’s arrangement reveals the cracks in that hopefulness. The opening melody—sung over a slow bossa nova groove punctuated by Nascimento’s jagged rasgueado—outlines a B minor 7 motive [B-D-E-F#-A] over an Em11 chord. An English horn interrupts this melancholic atmosphere with a Stravinsky-like birdcall featuring two pairs of fifths—G#-D# and D#-A#—which provide direct dissonance against B minor’s defining tones, the minor third D and the minor seventh A (Hear Track 4, 0:58-1:06). The pre-chorus is particularly jarring in which first the trembling flutes, then the thundering full orchestra, perform triplet variations alongside Nascimento’s guitar.

Like “Outubro,” the grandiosity of the arrangements throughout Ao Vivo signal the scale of political opposition that must be overcome. “Sacramento [Sacrament],” for example, stuns with Nascimento’s bereft introduction accompanied only by Horta’s electric guitar. Their duet is soon overtaken by overwrought strings and winds and Ornelas’s mournful saxophone, highlighting the lyrics’ equation of Catholic imagery with grief, absence, and loss.

Chapter 5 discussed Nascimento’s recent revelation—that the dictatorial menace who threatened to disappear his son Pablo in 1974 should he perform in São Paulo had continued to threaten Nascimento throughout his life (de Lucena 2012). Nascimento’s rollicking performance of “Nada será como antes [Nothing Will Be as It Was],” is more defiant with Som Imaginário
(without orchestra) and seems to rally fraternity both figuratively in the lyrics and performatively among the band, before returning to another epic journey on the wordless “Hoje é Dia d’El Rey [Today is the Day of the King].” Though the studio arrangement underscored a dialogue between Father and Son—sung by musician friend Sirlan and Nascimento, respectively—Nascimento’s solo interpretation becomes a powerfully direct condemnation of police threats going on in his personal life, though the audience couldn’t know it. His diction of the song’s only lyrics—“Filho meu! [My son!]”—are, in turn, solemn and acidic (Hear Ao Vivo Track 7, 1:10 and 2:35). Though similar to the studio version, the live performance allowed each tempo change to stretch and breathe, making the appeals to his son all the more striking.

The next segment of repertoire shows how Nascimento selected popular cover songs that could be used as metaphors for political resistance, particularly when juxtaposed with his own socially-charged compositions. Carlos Lyra’s “Sabe você [Do You Know?],” with lyrics by Vinicius de Moraes, comes from the 1963 play Pobre menina rica, in which a poor man addresses his wealthy lover (Diniz 2012, 128). Here, Nascimento performs with all the subtlety and conversational diction of the best jazz singers, as he turns an argument between lovers into one between citizen and dictator. The beggar/citizen continually asks what the lover/dictator knows about love—about troubadours, about walking side-by-side through the night, about flowers, about heartache—responding to each: “não sabe, eu sei [you don’t know, I know]” (Hear Ao Vivo Track 8, 0:54-1:22). Here, Nascimento’s interpretation is equal parts tenderness (0:58), sarcastic disgust (1:04), and resignation (1:12). The last lines resonate best as anti-dictatorial:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portuguese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Você pode ser ladrão quando quiser</td>
<td>You can be a thief any time you like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mas não rouba o coração de uma mulher</td>
<td>But you can’t steal a woman’s heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Você não tem alegria, nunca fez uma canção</td>
<td>You have no joy, you’ve never written a song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Por isso a minha poesia, você não rouha não</td>
<td>And that is why my poetry, you can never steal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Nascimento, the statement is powerful, not only because *MdP* was censored the year before, but because he so rarely sang love songs. Fans would quickly single out the smoldering “Me Deixa em Paz [Leave Me in Peace]” as one of his biggest radio hits from *Clube da Esquina* in 1972, but as a duet it had as much to do with singer Alaíde Costa’s performance as his own. Nascimento’s foray into crooning was warmly received.

Marking the halfway point of the concert, “Viola violar [Guitar, violate]” is one of the most energetic performances on the album and raised the honeyed barbs in the ballad before it to an impassioned declaration with full orchestra. This medium partido-alto samba with a double-time orchestral interlude compliments Borges’s characteristically abstract, yet acerbic, lyrics quite well. They depict a bittersweet relationship between music-making and mortality with lines such as, “*Minha viola toca seu retrato / Cantando a morte em tom de brincadeira* [My viola plays/touches your portrait / Singing of death in a mocking tone].” Composed by Nascimento and lyricist Márcio Borges, the song was approved by the SCDP [Serviço de Censura de Diversões Públicas, or Censorship Service of Public Diversions] on June 19, 1973, provided they submit a recording for approval. Other songs approved by the SCDP during that month were subsequently recorded on *MdP*, yet “Viola violar” made its debut only on *Ao Vivo* the following year.

With his two hits from *Clube da Esquina*, Nascimento returns to the language of *desbunde*, which EA Garcia described as lyrics that circumscribe “a utopia not fixed in time or space” (Carocha 2006, 193). In that definition, perhaps attributing the term *desbunde* to Nascimento’s collaborating lyricists is inappropriate, since while their songs certainly imagine alternative realities, they do not disconnect from reality so much as to approach a true utopia. “Clube da Esquina [Corner Club]” glories in the loyalty of friends that share a common cause,
but that also share a common history and current closeness. Márcio Borges’s lyrics suggest a
type of utopia in the comfort of fraternity, where despite the darkness of night, Borges’s
protagonist claims:

\begin{verbatim}
mas eu não me acho perdido
from the dark of night my voice arose
do fundo da noite partiu minha voz
it’s time for the body to defeat tomorrow
já é hora do corpo vencer a manhã
another day is coming
outro dia já vem
\end{verbatim}

Nascimento’s lone violão and voice portray instability and precarity until joined in the end by a
resplendent orchestra. “Cais,” as heard earlier, portrays a lone figure constructing an imaginary
alternative to a harsh reality. Through numerous melodic transformations, key changes, and
tempo changes, Wagner Tiso’s orchestration of the closing theme of “Cais” demonstrates the
power of film music to suggest the passage of time, distance, and interior headspace (Hear Ao
Vivo Track 10, 1:15-3:45).

The final third of Ao Vivo continues to confound genre through Nascimento’s distinctive
hybrid of jazz, film music, South American song styles, and pop. Much like the MdP version,
“Tema dos Deuses [Theme of the Gods]” begins as a loping acoustic guitar/voice theme with an
aggressive rasgueado and slowly builds into a hulking orchestral march accompanied by a
bombastic rock band. It is precisely this type of song that nags the listener, Is it rock? Folk?
Classical? The theme is a mutual unfurling of orchestral textures and Nascimento’s vocal
interpretation, with his final two choruses bolstered by the power of Som Imaginário and a full
orchestra, garnering thunderous applause from the live audience (Hear Ao Vivo Track 12, 2:34-4:04). As if to affirm its filmic roots, “Tema dos Deuses” is immediately followed by “A Última
Sessão de Música [The Last Musical Screening],” in which Nascimento sits at the piano to
bang out what sounds like a classic movie theme amidst the ambient sound of orchestral
musicians practicing bits of repertoire and chatting on stage.

\footnote{In Portuguese, \textit{sessão}, or session, is best translated as “screening” in the context of film.}
“San Vicente” uses a fictional Latin American city to find continental unity amidst common social disparities. At the end of the song, the track is mixed to include just part of Nascimento’s address to the live audience, which has been cited as a dedication to singer Agostínho dos Santos, actress Leila Diniz “and various other friends taken by the hand of God” (Dutra 1974). Nascimento credited Agostínho dos Santos as a musical influence and mentor, and he met Leila Diniz through his friendship and collaboration on *Os Deuses e os Mortos* with filmmaker Ruy Castro, to whom Diniz was married (1965-71). Strangely, Diniz and dos Santos died in separate airline disasters in 1972 and 1973, respectively (Hear *Ao Vivo* Track 14, 5:10-5:16). Nascimento’s diction while addressing the audience sounds curiously sarcastic, and his emphasis on the word “Deus [God]” sounds as though he might be hinting that the other friends he lost, were due to a different culprit altogether.

In his memoir, lyricist Márcio Borges lists off victims of suicide due to dictatorial hopelessness—Deise and Serginho—and friends who had been imprisoned or “disappeared” by the regime: “Galeno, Beto Freitas, Inês, and Ricardo Vilas” (Borges 2011, 199-200). In fact just 6 months prior to the *Ao Vivo* concerts in October 1973, Borges helped conceal clandestine activist José Carlos Novaes da Mata Machado from police in his Rio de Janeiro apartment for several weeks until he could be put into permanent hiding (Borges 2004, 299-307). Machado had been involved in the COLINA and VAL-Palmares movements in Minas Gerais, at one point

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204 “…e vários outros amigos que a mão de Deus levou.”

205 Though Borges doesn’t explain the circumstances of Deise and Serginho, he does blame the paranoia of the times as driving his friends to suicide. Of those that disappeared, Borges referred to VAL-Palmares activist Cláudio Galeno Linhares, married to Dilma Rousseff from 1967-69 and imprisoned for several years; VAL-Palmares activist Carlos Alberto Soares de Freitas, who was disappeared following his imprisonment in Rio in 1971; Inês Etienne Romeu, who was raped and tortured for three months and became the only survivor of the “Casa da Morte” in Petrópolis, where Romeu testified that Freitas was assassinated; and Ricardo Vilas Boas Sá Rêgo was imprisoned in 1969 for clandestine work with factory workers, and was then exiled in Mexico in exchange for the return of the American ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick, who had been kidnapped by clandestine militants (Borges 2011, 215; Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014, 535). Ricardo Vilas was also a musicians, and before he was arrested, had performed in Edú Lobo’s award-winning performance of “Ponteio” in 1967, and according to Borges had also performed with Nascimento before entering clandestine activity in 1968.
working with Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff. While Borges transported the activist’s wife and son to safety outside Belo Horizonte, other friends and family attempted to move Machado out of Rio to the Minas Gerais countryside. They were intercepted, and Machado was subjected to torture and eventually assassinated two weeks later (Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais 2008). Borges channeled his crushing disappointment into lyric-writing and the production of *Milagre dos Peixes ao Vivo*.

Nascimento chose as his penultimate song—Tito Madi’s classic 1957 waltz “Chove lá fora [It’s Raining Outside]”—a ballad that could be interpreted both romantically and metaphorically. Tiso accompanies Nascimento on organ as the lyrics speak of a cold, continuous rain while the protagonist mourns a love lost. The greatest pain is not knowing where his lover is—also the greatest pain for the thousands of families of the detained, tortured, and disappeared under the military dictatorship. The 2014 Truth Commission Report still lists at least 210 officially-recognized victims of assassination whose bodies have yet to be located (Comissão da Verdade 2014, 577-581). The song concludes despairingly (Hear *Ao Vivo* Track 15, 2:30-4:14):

_E a chuva continua mais forte ainda_  
_A dor de não saber_  
_Saber lá fora onde estás, como estás_  
_Com quem estás agora_  
_And the rain continues even stronger now_  
_The pain of not knowing_  
_Not knowing, where you are out there, how you are_  
_And who you’re with now_

To confirm that he is indeed addressing the “disappeared,” Nascimento ends the concert with both incarnations of the song that carries his own estranged son’s name, “Pablo” and “Pablo No. 2.” Ronaldo Bastos’s lyrics go mostly unsung in this version; rather Nascimento uses falsetto to signal boyhood and repeats his son’s name in the midst of wordless singing. Nascimento’s voice trembles at times and he clears his throat throughout the performance (Hear *Ao Vivo* Track 16, 0:30-2:20). With Nascimento seated at the piano, concluding the show with the particular performance was a small, but daring, protest directed squarely at his regime tormentors—and
one that only they and the secretive Nascimento could understand. As the song closes, the drums segue into a new, frenetic pace that seems to draw the orchestra into cacophony (Hear Ao Vivo Track 16, 3:40). Finally, with a cowboy whoop, Nascimento launches into the rollicking “Pablo No. 2,” closing the concert with festive mirth—the celebration of a survivor.

**Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo: Reception and Impressions from the Musicians**

*Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo* exploited the progressive rock and avant-garde jazz leanings of Som Imaginário—open improvisation, distorted electric guitar, extended saxophone techniques, and elongated formal structures—while using the orchestra to evoke the grand dimensions of film music. EMI-Odeon made a huge investment in *Ao Vivo* in order to coordinate the symphony orchestra’s wages and travel and to book venues that could accommodate the technical and acoustic demands of a live recording. Wagner Tiso explained that first, Nascimento, Som Imaginário, and the orchestra performed a sold-out open rehearsal for the 1,200-seat Teatro João Caetano in downtown Rio de Janeiro. The cover of *Ao Vivo* was taken in the empty theatre, while the inner liner notes featured black and white stills of that performance (See Figure 6.5). Next, the Orquestra Sinfônica do Rio de Janeiro traveled to São Paulo by train for consecutive performances at the Teatro Municipal de São Paulo on May 7 and 8, 1974, which became the live album (Amaral 2013, 266).

Perhaps due to past criticisms of being too “intellectual”, Nascimento felt the need to defend his use of the orchestra to music journalist Tárik de Souza:

> The show isn’t a classical thing. The orchestra acts as a complement to our work (de Souza 1974).

De Souza went on to describe the album as a mark of the flourishing of the second phase of Nascimento’s career, in which his image as the *bom moço* [nice young man] on the albums

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206 “O espetáculo não é um negócio erudito. A orchestra entra como complemento do nosso trabalho.”
207 This phrase is best translated as “nice young man,” but also has connotations of an artist that doesn’t run foul of the government, censors, or the conservative segment of society generally.
Travessia and Courage had been transformed into more animated live shows with countercultural overtones, beginning with the album Nascimento in 1970. Three years later, Milagre dos Peixes yielded sales of more than 15,000 copies (de Souza 1974).

Reacting to the live concerts at the Teatro João Caetano in Rio de Janeiro, another journalist confirmed the show’s warm reception:

The art of Nascimento—called difficult or pretentious by some—proved to be totally accepted and understood by the public, and this was precisely due to, and without traces of, the painstaking division of responsibilities between the singer, his music, the orchestra, and the band—all of indisputable individual and collective quality (Dutra 1974).

Indeed, following these initial successes in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Nascimento took the entire orchestra on a short (and expensive) tour of other Brazilian cities, and Ao Vivo went on to sell more than 50,000 copies by 1977, Nascimento’s best-selling album up to that point in his career.

In remembering Ao Vivo, musicians immediately referenced emotional memories of the socio-political events surrounding the shows. When I asked guitarist Toninho Horta if there was tension in the air for the live recordings, his response was unequivocal:

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208 “A arte de Nascimento—chamado por alguns de difícil ou pretensiosa—provou ser integralmente aceita e entendida pelo público. Resultado exato e sem restos de uma cuidadosa divisão de responsabilidades entre o cantor, sua música, a orquestra e o conjunto—todos de indiscutíveis qualidades individuais e coletivas.”

209 See “Finalmente surge um superstar brasileiro” in Pop (May 1977, p. 76).
Yes, [Nascimento] had recorded the album [Milagre dos Peixes] in the studio, you know? So, since the lyrics had been censored, he sang it, played the entire album instrumentally, without singing [the words]. So we felt emotionally on edge during that live recording. Of course, his career with all that hubbub and everything, it made for highly [charged] performances on the day. It was beautiful, a beautiful time (Horta 2012).²¹⁰

Horta was convinced that the audience’s reaction was not so different from his own. In his memory, their response was:

Absurdly emotional. Because the songs were beautiful, Bituca was singing like crazy, the band was great, and the orchestra had that extra “wow factor,” you know…the orchestral parts were emotional, too. It was beautiful. And the venues too, were the Municipal Theater of São Paulo and the Teatro João Caetano in Rio, places that also had great potential for stirring emotion (Horta 2012).²¹¹

For Horta, then, it wasn’t only the music itself, but the particular combination of Nascimento as an unassuming mineiro outsider to the glamour of Rio cultural life, Som Imaginário as an index of countercultural experimentation, and the symphony orchestra and these universally-recognized venues for high artistry that stirred such powerful emotions.

Comparing his experience performing on MdP with the live shows, saxophonist Nivaldo Ornelas felt that the regime understood very little about the music and lyrics on the studio album. He felt that they merely censored it out of instinct or suspicion, but that the censorship ultimately propelled them to give grittier performances (Ornelas 2012). Like lyricist Fernando Brant, Ornelas agreed that MdP had a visceral impact on listeners, but for the saxophonist it was the physical act of gathering people together for the live recordings of Ao Vivo that made for an unforgettable experience:

Total insanity. Very rehearsed, very prepared. It was with an orchestra, you know. And…it was an event. It was…it struck [you] in the chest: behhhhh! [Punches his fist into his chest]. The impact was very strong in your mind musically and even for the public, too. More than anything, all of the artists with good taste

²¹⁰ “É, tinha gravado o disco todo no estúdio, né? Aí, como teve censura das letras, ele cantou, tocou o disco todo instrumental, sem cantar. Então, tava com emoção à flor da pele naquela gravação ao vivo. Lógico a carreira dele com aquele tiririm e tal, então eram altas performances no dia. Foi lindo, uma época linda.”

²¹¹ “Absurdamente emocionante. Porque as músicas eram lindas, o Bituca tava cantando pra caramba, a banda era boa, e a orquestra tava aquele tchan, assim…o lado orchestral emociona também. Foi bonito. E os lugares também, foi no Teatro Municipal de São Paulo e Teatro João Caetano no Rio, lugares também de muita potencial de emocionar.”
An outdoor performance had been planned specifically for students on the University of São Paulo campus following the live recordings. Borges recalled that it had been prohibited by police, but with the success of the shows at the Teatro Municipal, Nascimento went ahead even while the campus was “surrounded by DOPS trucks and ‘riot police,’ but inside the crowd roared freely” (Borges 2011, 324). It is important to remember that the students’ reaction to this show was not simply the result of that particular performance, but also a consequence of Nascimento’s continuous touring throughout Brazil and long residencies at clubs in Rio and São Paulo in the early 1970s. As Tiso explained:

So we established Som Imaginário touring throughout Brazil. And that created a mystique, you know, really crazy performances…Nascimento was shirtless. We played the heaviest openings to the show with distorted guitars, and people started to create a mystique around Nascimento and Som Imaginário. Yeah, for being different and impactful. It’s like they say, breaking the structures. We were deconstructing everything that had happened [before], because bossa nova was music for apartments, you know? Music for hotels, in good taste, it’s excellent, but…and it even influenced the whole world…but it didn’t have impact, you know? [Slaps back of hand into palm of the other]” (Tiso 2012, emphasis original).

In 2012, Wagner Tiso reunited some of the members of Som Imaginário for a series of concerts in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte. Quoting from an interview published by Estado de Minas, drummer Robertinho Silva commented on the mixture of musical styles during their tenure supporting Nascimento:

Robertinho Silva remembers that the group took their cue from the Movimento Manifesto, that united people like Ivan Lins and other singers and composers to confront the dictatorship. ‘Before Som Imaginário, I was radical about jazz, instrumental music, and bossa nova. With the group, I learned to listen to the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix, which I applied to Nascimento’s music. Since I came from dance halls, I

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212 “Loucura total. Muito ensaiado, muito preparado. Foi com orquestra, né. E … foi um acontecimento. Foi um … socou no peito: behhhhh! Porque o impacto foi muito forte na mente musical e até pro público também. Antes mais nada, todos os artistas de bom gosto estavam lá. All of them. [Laughs]. Tava todo mundo lá e foi um impacto muito grande, muito, muito, meu deus.”

213 “O Campus estava cercado de camburões do DOPS e tropas de choque. Mas lá dentro a multidão ululava, solta.”

214 “Então fizemos o Som Imaginário saindo pelo Brasil. E aí criamos uma mistica, né, as apresentações muito loucas … o Nascimento tava sem camisa. Fazia as aberturas pesadíssimas nos shows com as guitarras destorcidas, e as pessoas começavam criando uma mística em torno do Nascimento com o Som Imaginário. É, por ser diferente e impactante. É como se diz, quebrando as estruturas. Tava desestruturando tudo que tinha acontecido, porque o bossa nova era uma música de apartamento, né? Uma música de hotel, de bom gosto, é excelente, mas … inclusive que influenciou todo mundo … mas não tinha impacto, né? [Slaps back of hand in palm of other hand].”
brought a rhythmic influence to his music. The group opened my mind to not have prejudice against anything. I dove into pop music for good,’ he confesses (Magioli 2012).

Robertinho initially linked music with other societal values—good taste, formality, officialdom. As a performer, playing other styles opened him up to other ways of thinking, other ways of being, and undoubtedly audiences went through the same experience throughout the early 1970s.

Conclusion

Attending one of Nascimento’s shows, then, was not only a musical experience, but an opportunity to try on new mores, beliefs, and opinions, and to do so in public. In October 1973, audiences did this by attending the MAM’s 25th Anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The resulting double album documents a truly diverse cadre of popular musicians—from the apolitical (Johnny Alf and Dominguinho) to the radical (Raul Seixas and Jorge Mautner). Nascimento’s performance is notably subdued in comparison to such brash performances from Seixas, Macalé, and Gonzaguinha, but the conditions in which audience members interpreted Nascimento’s performance were the same—censors surrounded the audio console, tanks surrounded the outside of the museum, and articles of the declaration were read aloud, condemning the use of censorship, unjust imprisonment, and torture.

Audiences’ musical tastes and political values were challenged once again in 1974 during the live rehearsals and recordings for Milagre dos Peixes Ao Vivo. Wagner Tiso proved to be a formidable creative force as pianist, organist, conductor, and musical director. Tiso wrote arrangements and orchestrations that drew on his contrasting experiences performing jazz and bossa nova in Rio de Janeiro’s nightclub circuit in the mid-1960s, studying orchestration with Paulo Moura in the late 1960s, and performing progressive rock with Som Imaginário in the

215 “Roberto Silva lembra que o grupo veio na leva do Movimento Manifesto, que reunia gente como Ivan Lins e outros cantores e compositores para enfrentar a ditadura. “Antes do Som Imaginário, eu era um radical ligado ao jazz, ao instrumental e à bossa nova. Com o grupo aprendi a ouvir Beatles e Jimi Hendrix, que apliquei na música de Nascimento. Como vim de bailes, levei a influência rítmica para a música dele. O grupo abriu a minha cabeça para não ter preconceito contra nada. Entrei na música pop de vez”, confessa.”
early 1970s. The resulting combination of classical form and instrumentation with jazz harmony and psychedelic experimentation resulted in the collision of conservative and countercultural sounds and attitudes. The act of listening to challenging sounds and ideas collectively was itself a political act, and one that didn’t escape the dictatorship, since they chose to send censors, police, and tanks to monitor the performances. These tense circumstances, however, strengthened the experience surrounding the performance, and in the words of Toninho Horta, created an impact that was “absurdly emotional” for performers and audience alike.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

The Clube da Esquina coalesced as a musical collective during a turbulent time in Brazil’s history, and no less so in Minas Gerais state. As this dissertation has argued, the literature on Brazilian popular music credits the Clube da Esquina collective with the creation of a distinctive regional sound, but rarely as artists known for protest song. None of the Clube da Esquina collective chose or were forced into exile; nor did they actively participate in clandestine resistance movements. Nevertheless, conditions surrounding expressive production in Minas Gerais altered not only the musical output of the movement, but the values surrounding its creation as well. If fraternity was a deeply felt value common among the budding musical friendships in Belo Horizonte before the dictatorship, then the oppressive years under dictatorship inspired that loyalty to become outspoken and defiant.

The Clube da Esquina’s engagement—and disengagement—with the nationalist musical discourse that originated in the song festivals of the mid-1960s provides an alternate perspective by which to interpret the role of MPB in expressing ideas about “region” and “nation.” Due to forced and self-exile, the dominant voices in musical protest—the Tropicalistas, Chico Buarque, and Geraldo Vandré—fell largely silent by 1970, while most Clube da Esquina members, including Nascimento, remained in Brazil. Much has been made, for example, of the Tropicalista’s use of the electric guitar, decried by musical nationalists as a symbol of foreign invasion. In practice, the use of electric guitar was already widespread by the late 1960s, and analyses tend to lack discussion of performance practice, flattening the use of electric guitar into that of uncritical rock distortion. Conversely, relatively few discussions dwell on the use of voice
during the counterculture. Milton Nascimento has been recognized around the world for possessing one of the most distinctive and flexible vocal instruments, and on *Milagre does Peixes*, it is Nascimento’s vocal timbre, diction, articulation, and tone that are central to its interpretation as contestatory. Furthermore, Nascimento allies his voice with vocalist-percussionist Naná Vasconcelos and other members of the band to evoke a myriad of dissenting stances.

Lyricist Fernando Brant has been one of few Clube da Esquina members to speak openly about political values in the 1960s and 70s:

> We were conscious of our country, of its misery and authoritarianism, but we also knew how to look at the world. Since that time, we carried with us what later became a certainty: Culture is democracy; culture doesn’t bring hate or violence. It is not by chance that what we constantly occupied ourselves with and worried over was the search for harmony (Estanislau 2008).

Embedded in this statement are several hints of the Clube da Esquina’s relationship to regionalism and nationalism as artists making music in Minas Gerais, Brazil. In his article on nationalism and music in Latin America, Thomas Turino argued that, “pride and shame are two sides of the same national sentiment coin” (Turino 2003, 174). Brant characterizes his own nationalist sentiment as one of shame; he describes the nation as being in “misery” while the state was ruling via authoritarianism. The latter half of Brant’s statement shows how the Clube da Esquina placed themselves ideologically in relation to the nation-state by knowing “how to look at the world.” The Clube da Esquina focused its energy into creating a regional artistic expressive force that actively reconfigured *mineiro* values and beliefs in relation to current events. This subnational, inward-looking focus allowed the creation of a powerful feeling of solidarity that appealed to both domestic audiences form other regions as well as international audiences, thus becoming supranational as well.

Viveiros Martins has argued that the key symbol of the Clube da Esquina’s politico-
musical message is fraternity, and that the collective’s music opened a

space where the architectural ambience of public natural [space] could protect a political community founded on a civic ethos, where citizens would be capable of exercising virtue and liberty (Viveiros Martins 2009).216

The very name of the musical movement Clube da Esquina, or Corner Club was coined after the manner in which the major proponents of the movement met—literally on a street corner, a public space. Their musical interactions were not limited to a single role during recording sessions, but fulfilled the needs of the whole collective. The Clube da Esquina's sound draws upon the regional characteristics of Minas Gerais, including its mountainous lifeways, religious and folk practices, as well as diverse international influences to reach beyond the regional and assert a fraternal citizenship of Latin America and of the world.

Milton Nascimento’s music is not only politically resonant, but socially and economically as well. Histories of Minas Gerais, recent and not, pay great homage to the captains of mining industry (and occasionally their slave counterparts), but neglect those collective laborers that worked the land to supply Brazil with food. Chapters 3 and 4 act as bookends to illustrate the yin and yang of rustic and urban lifeways in Minas Gerais. Nascimento’s music often pays tribute to the nameless faces of Brazilian manual labor, while also reveling in the sense of community those laborers formed. His music sounds the affinity for the mineiro countryside—mountainous and otherwise—while also infusing it with the perceived urban sounds of jazz, rock, and film music.

One of the greatest challenges in this dissertation was in developing a methodology with which to analyze sonic texture and proportion in the music of Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina. Traditional musical analysis and lyrical analysis are necessary for pinpointing stylistic features and narrative meaning, but it is the epic scale of film music that so effectively guides a

216 “...espaço onde o ambiente arquitetônico de natureza pública poderia abrigar uma comunidade política fundada a partir de um ethos cívico, onde os cidadãos seriam capazes de desenvolver o exercício da virtude e da liberdade.”
moviegoer’s emotional experience. Nascimento employed orchestration, arranging, audio techniques, and vast musical forms in order to communicate deeply felt emotions. Here I return once again to sonic field analysis to help me to listen with fresh ears to one of the songs featured in the introduction: “Tudo que você podia ser,” the opening track of Clube da Esquina (See Figure 7.1). For me, this song speaks to the larger identity of the Clube da Esquina, in the sense that “an identity is always already an ideal, what we would like to be, not what we are” (Frith 1996, 274). As Frith suggests, within the confines of authoritarian social oppression, the Clube da Esquina’s songs “imagined forms of democracy and desire, imagined forms of the social and the sexual,” to not only cope with political reality, but to inspire imagination that could eventually metamorphize into a new reality: a musical movement within a larger countercultural social movement.

Central to Milton Nascimento’s reimagination of a new reality was his ability to evoke vast space. He and the Clube da Esquina used dense harmonic textures that are characteristically mineiro, but also borrowed musical conceptions of vastness from the cinema of the 1950s Western. His sound isn’t that of sparse, empty space, however, but varied colors, textures, and vibrant activity.

Figure 7.1
Track 1. “Tudo que você podia ser [Everything that you could be]”
Style description: Mineiro folk-rock anthem
0:00. For so long, I assumed this violão was played by Milton, but when I listen closely, I realize it doesn’t have Milton’s characteristic nuance—repeated chords with some of them ghosted, moments of abrasive rasgueado, playful sliding among parallel harmonies… Rather this album announces a new commitment to collaboration by not opening with Milton on violão. Lô Borges’s guitar—along with childhood friend Beto’s fluid bass playing—helps bring the British invasion rock of the Beatles to Minas Gerais.
0:13. “Through sun and rain, you dreamed that it would be better later. You wanted to be the great hero of the streets…Everything that you wanted to be.” Márcio’s words are those of all youth—dreaming, hopeful, optimistic, ambitious…
0:22. Chico Amaral would say that these opening chords are very Miltonian: oscillating between i and iv in the intro, then between i and v in the verse. All minor chords.
0:28. The intro establishes a vast sense of space by starting with nylon-string guitar at far left, vocals in the center with relatively light reverb, then introducing a clean electric guitar at far right with twangier
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**Figure 7.1 (cont.)**

Electric overlapping it at extreme right. This wide separation between rather dense, but acoustically dry (little reverb), harmonic elements makes Milton’s voice radiate like a beacon in a fog (See Figure 7.2).

0:32. The extremely high register of the organ’s ascent to a sustained minor 7th above the root softens its dissonance. Lovely.

0:40. “I know a secret. You’re afraid. Now you only think of going back. You don’t talk about Zapata’s ring and boots anymore. Everything you should be, without fear!” Now, Márcio’s lyrics talk about the fear and disillusionment of youth, of hiding from challenges and revaluating dreams in the face of adversity.

1:10. The shaker here sounds Brasil, and Minas in particular, by maintaining the guitars as determining the groove, yet not a samba or bossa nova groove = Mineiro folk-rock. Bongos can also be heard at extreme left with the hi-hat at left matching the shaker (See Figure 7.3).

1:24. Even once the drums enter, the shaker retains its prominence in the mix—it’s louder, yes, but it inhabits the whole of the space on the right that the hi-hat, snare, and two tom-toms inhabit on the left (See Figure 7.4).

1:38. “Ah, sun and rain on your path, but it doesn’t matter. It’s okay. You still think it’s better than nothing, Everything that you can be…Or nothing!” Milton has shown a beautiful falsetto—and a fully male one—already in this song, but allowing his voice to break on purpose on “Or nothing!” signifies the defiance of youth overcoming doubt.

2:30. Milton’s ride out over the vamp is extraordinary as I realize that even in youthful defiance, Milton never relies on machismo as a singer. Rather, he turns to an angelic, yet powerful, falsetto, over which Wagner Tiso intertwines playful organ lines in a crystalline timbre—both of them soaked in reverb.

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**Figure 7.2** Sonic field analysis of “Tudo que você podia ser” by Milton Nascimento and Márcio Borges from 0:00 – 0:40; *Clube da Esquina* (EMI-ODEON 1972). The lighter shades of grey denote subsequent entrances of new instruments as the excerpt unfolds.
The fraternity espoused in so many songs by Nascimento and the Clube da Esquina was not only a musical theme, but also a philosophy for musical collaboration and for social belonging. “Tudo que você podia ser” does all three by addressing the adversity all youth face that binds them together, by allowing each musician to contribute to this composition and arrangement as each saw fit, and by deepening through music a collective friendship. Though Milton Nascimento is a formidable composer and performer in his own right, his success was
assured only through the process of collaboration, during which he was exposed to new
influences or persuaded out of prejudices (such as an initial dislike of the Beatles). Many
dissertations can surely be written on Nascimento as a composer, as a performer, as a person; but
collaboration is so essential to his character, that doing so would leave the work riddled with
oversimplifications and exclusions. Conversely, there was insufficient space leftover for an
analysis incorporating race, gender, and queer studies, about which there is much ground to
cover. Likewise, music theorists and musicologists have much to address in Nascimento’s use of
mixed modal and functional harmony in composition, Toninho Horta’s distinctive samba-jazz
style, Beto Guedes’s rustic rock, Lô Borges’s mineiro Beatles rock, Wagner Tiso’s arranging
style, and much more.

In closing, I envy those scholars to come. Nascimento has said that he has more stories to
tell when the last of his dictatorial tormentors finally passes away. Which mineiro will
Nascimento be when that happens? The one that ruminates pensively over his life, or the one that
tells a long, impassioned story? When that day comes, there will be much more to write about.
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