

Afterword

Affect Affects

Music, Politics and Affect in Latin America and Beyond

Andrew Snyder

Universidade Nova de Lisboa



O afeto afeta. These words are written on a T-shirt for sale sporting the name of Colombina Clandestina, a bloco, or Brazilian carnival ensemble, and referencing the street carnival of Lisbon of which the group is a part. For one who has read too much affect theory, the line appears to read as ‘affect affects,’ as if the Brazilian group were offering a tautological comment on the capacity for feeling to have an impact. A better translation, however, might be ‘affection has an impact,’ which makes more sense given another shirt for sale and listed on the group’s Instagram, which pictures two hands forming a heart.¹ Yet, whether or not the group meant to comment on affect theory and affect’s relationship to the political, the two possible translations are not too distinct. Indeed, Colombina has formulated a much broader theory of the felt emotionality of carnival as a praxis of activism. Formed primarily by Brazilian immigrants in Lisbon, the ex-metropole of the Portuguese-speaking world, Colombina Clandestina mobilizes these affects to make a public claim on Portuguese society through the joy of carnival.²

¹ https://www.instagram.com/colombinaclandestina/p/C2UoGG6Mcr5/?img_index=2

² *This afterword is backdated to the 7(2) issue from 2023, but appeared first online in February 2026. This work was financed by national funds through FCT — Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., with the project INET-md - Instituto de Etnomusicologia - Centro de Estudos em Música e

In this afterword to the special issue of the *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* on ‘The Affective Politics of Music in Latin America,’ I will return to Colombina and Lisbon’s street carnival as tangible examples that affective politics is not only an ivory tower discussion of abstract notions of feeling and matter having political potential. It is one that also emanates from on the ground theorizing, and even marketing, from Latin American musical groups regarding the capacity of affect to affect. Who, in this affective turn, turned first? The scholar or the musician?

What is a Latin American Musical and/or Political Affect?

But first, I’d like to question the frame of the issue itself. In her article in this issue on *Abakuá* performance in Cuba, Elizabeth Batiuk argues that a focus on affect through music offers a shift from affect theory’s preoccupation with the individual to ‘supraindividual processes [that] help account for how affective responses become amplified among community members and support a kind of collective agency in music and dance performance’ (2023, 82). In their editorial to the previous *JEA* issue on ‘Music, Affect and Politics,’ the editors similarly foreground music’s capacity to foment collectives, arguing that ‘a broader musicological turn to affect invites us to examine how musical affects shape identities, create (or constrain) communities, and engender forms of political comportments’ (Klette-Böhler et al. 2023a, 2).³ What kinds of communities are affectively constructed through music in Latin America? For me, a series of further questions are implied by this one.

Does grouping articles about music, politics, and affect in a region as gigantic as Latin America presume that there is enough coherence between such diverse case studies to think of a Latin American musical and political affects? If not, why consider this subject across Latin America at all besides the legacies of area studies? Conversely, if there is affective coherence across the region, does that coherence imply that the historical experiences and legacies of Iberian colonialism involved sensory regimes that were uniform enough to be comparable across their rule over and mixing with the diverse populations that became Latin Americans? Were Portuguese and Spanish colonialism so similar (to say nothing of the Caribbean) that Brazil, which so often conceives as Latin America as an entity outside itself, could be considered to have musical and political affects comparable to Spanish-speaking America? If affect in Latin America is a colonial product, is it necessarily then bounded up with what Aníbal Quijano calls the ‘coloniality of power,’ that is, the living the legacies of colonialism in postcolonial societies (2008)? On the flip side, has such a context of Iberian coloniality permitted the construction of affective counterpublics (Warner 2002) that have generated solidarities of pan-Latin

Dança, reference UID/00472/2025, DOI: 10.54499/UID/00472/2025, as well as individual financing from CEECIND/00933/2018 and 2023.11076.TENURE.210.

³ For more on this turn in ethnomusicology, see Hofman (2015), Guilbault (2019), Desai-Stephens and Reinsour (2020), Graber and Sumera (2020), and Klette-Böhler et al. (2023b), Sakakeeny (2024), Solomon (2025), Manabe and Drott (2025).

Americanism, such as wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt in Brazil? Do movements seeking to decolonize Latin American countries, such as Evo Morales's declaration of Bolivia as a pluri-national country, relocalize indigenous perspectives in ways that undermine sensory commonality with other Latin Americans?

Latin America is of course a construction, an 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006), but is it what Schuyler Whelden calls in this issue, drawing on Mabel Berezin, a 'community of feeling' (2001)? The region is a construction that emanates from commonalities of the colonial regimes of Spain and Portugal, themselves under the same crown from 1580-1640 during the heights of Iberian imperialism. Yet the concept of Latin America emerged only in the 1850s under the imperialist aegis of the French (Chasteen 2001). They posited commonality between other Romance-language speakers in contrast to their Anglo and Teutonic rivals, who were viewed as having distinct affective and expressive cultures. Latin America has been posited as a politically coherent whole through its common colonial and imperial legacies; that is to say, the region is not just a construction but an imperial construction.

Revolutionaries in different ways also embraced such a notion of colonial commonality, such as Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín, who argued for pan-Americanism in their Independence Wars from Spain. Latin America also came into being as a resistant continental body through its conflicts and distinction from the other America—the predominantly Anglo North America, especially the United States, against which Latin American intellectuals framed themselves as anti-imperialist. Notably, the Uruguayan author José Enrique Rodó, in his 1900 essay *Ariel*, distinguished Latin America from the United States in affective terms. Drawing on the characters of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Rodó's Prospero is a wise teacher who urges young Latin Americans to choose the path of Ariel over that of Caliban. Rodó writes that

Shakespeare's Ariel symbolizes the noble, soaring aspect of the human spirit. He represents the superiority of reason and feeling over the base impulses of irrationality. He is generous enthusiasm, elevated and unselfish motivation in all actions, spirituality in culture, vivacity and grace in intelligence. Ariel is the ideal toward which human selection ascends, the force that wields life's eternal chisel, effacing from aspiring mankind the clinging vestiges of Caliban, the play's symbol of brutal sensuality. (1988 [1900], 31)

Indeed, Caliban is by contrast utilitarian and materialist and implicitly appears to represent the United States. Latin America appears to *feel* more, or perhaps feel more *truly* than the base instincts of Caliban North America. *Arielismo*, Nicola Miller writes,

with its ambivalence towards Reason, was comparable to the Russian nationalists' rejection of rationality in preference for 'life so full of feeling that one could choke on it, the inexpressible, the unlimited, the hyperbolic...In the wake of *Ariel*, to be an intellectual was to be anti-

imperialist; and to be anti-imperialist was to be anti-[US] American. Spanish American anti-imperialism developed on the *arielista* claim that, if Spanish America could not be economically equal to the United States, it might at least be spiritually superior. (1999, 178)

It is not difficult to find claims that Latin American musics are similarly more full of feeling—of spice, of */Azúcar!* (sweetness), of *duende* (soul), of *saudade* (nostalgia), of *alegría* (joy)—than other musical genres around the world. If we grant that Latin America is a construction, one putatively more affective than its Anglo counterpart, can we think of Latin American music as a coherent whole because of its heightened affects?—affects which similarly continue to distinguish the Iberian Peninsula, and the Mediterranean in general, as a more ‘soulful’ place in Europe’s own dichotomies of North and South (Grey 2013)? And does such heightened affective musical potential promote comparable political expression across the region as well?

Music, Affects and Politics in Latin American Nations

In their introduction to this issue (Klette-Böhler et al. forthcoming), the editors do not specifically address the question of whether there are peculiarly Latin American musical/political affects. They justify their geographical focus instead by filling ‘the gap’ of attention focused on the study of affect in the Global South. They impressively construct an intellectual genealogy for thinking about affect around Latin America, but one that is largely focused rather on distinct national perspectives, (though they do briefly mention ‘Latin American sentiment’ and the contribution of such thinkers to Latin America more broadly). They lay out early in the introduction: ‘Affective politics is at the very heart of much postcolonial nation-building, critique and theorization.’ Latin American theorists of musical affect are broadly understood as representing national traditions, such as Octavio Paz’s portrait of music and the arts as ‘sensory descriptions of the Mexican character and soul’. Whether such nations are separate affective entities or, rather, part of a broader regional affective tradition of Latin America is not a question that is posed.

The editors focus in particular on the intellectual genealogies of Cuba and Brazil, two countries that were those most impacted by the slave trade and whose music has circulated beyond its borders arguably more than any other Latin American country. Not coincidentally, the *JEA* issue is composed of two articles on Cuba and two on Brazil. The editors recount that José Martí modelled the Cuban *patria* on ‘affection, tenderness, sentimentality and piety,’ while Fernando Ortiz argued for a Cuban sensory culture that was the product of a transculturated mixture of influences. Similarly, in contrast to a previously Europhilic postcolonial elite culture, Mário de Andrade constructed a notion of a national Brazilian musical tradition based on the mixture of diverse elements that resulted in a ‘spice’ that was distinct from European musical traditions, especially Afro-descendent rhythms. The editors construe Andrade as understanding Brazilian music as being exceptionally affectively potent. The majority of thinkers discussed are from this period of the

building of national identity at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

It is perhaps unsurprising that such notions of musical-political affect might remain primarily in national registers. After all, popular music in Latin American countries played a crucial role in building the nation state during the twentieth century in ways that might forge a community of feeling for postcolonial nation states (samba in Brazil, son in Cuba, tango in Argentina, etc). If a broadly translocal notion of Latin America musical and political affect is underdeveloped in the issue's introduction, it is perhaps because the nation and its musical traditions continue to be for many Latin Americans a primary musical and political space of affective resonance. It is then unsurprising that the four articles assembled for this issue broadly examine music, politics, and affect within the context of the nation-state, if not even smaller units, such as national ethnic minorities.

Ståle Wig, for example, explores the *pregón* tradition of vendor street cries and the musical inventiveness of the tradition in the changing context of successive political regimes. Tellingly, the *pregón* has itself been nationalized as an essential element of *cubanidad*, as Wig notes Cuban intellectual Miguel Barnet's belief that the tradition is "an integral element of our cultural terrain" (2023, 26). It is an element of what Michael Herzfeld calls 'cultural intimacy' that assures 'common sociality' to the *pueblo* (people) (1997:3). It appears that such a protagonist role of the *pregoneros* in forging national affects is based in Havana's own centrality as the country's capital, magnifying its own traditions, as many capitals do, as the affective heart of the nation. The putative golden age of the *pregón* was in Havana at the turn of the twentieth century when Cuba was passing between the imperial spheres of influence of Spain to the United States. Upon the country's transformation to a communist society, the *pregón* was viewed as a symptom of capitalist individualism and the *pregonero* a 'little capitalist,' thus propitiating a 'narrative of decline' in aesthetic value due to the shift in values supporting *el hombre nuevo* (the new man). Yet the *pregón* surfaced again in the Special Period when Cuba lost economic stability with the collapse of the Soviet Union and informal forms of work resurfaced. Now with the internet, Wig argues, one can witness new forms of musical inventiveness surface that continue to build affective socialities with other Cubans.

Here the community of feeling is that which is constructed between the individual *pregonero* and other Cubans helping to maintain a sense of national culture through changing political circumstances. Elizabeth Batiuk takes a look at Cuban performance also in relation to the Communist state, focusing on the racial, ethnic, and religious minority of the Afro-Cuban Abakuá. Batiuk undertakes a meticulous analysis of a staged ritual performance in which the performers subverted the conventions of 'official' state folklore which generally create a presentational performance for spectators in ways that deracinate the performance tradition from important affective elements for community practitioners. She shows how the performers undermined these limitations by using participatory and coded performance elements that created what she calls 'feelings of coherence' in 'context-dependent ways' (2023, 82). These elements revitalized community links on this

occasion in a manner that ‘aligns with and criticizes revolutionary politics’ (2023, 80) by centering Afro-Cuban culture as independent from the state. Her emphasis is on a minority community’s construction of affective community in relation to the nation, represented by the state.

Schuyler Whelden takes in some ways a similar approach of examining a minority in relation to an authoritarian state, in this case a political minority of leftist theatergoers who form a ‘community of feeling’ around the musical theater piece *Opinião*, forged in relation to the nascent Brazilian dictatorship in the 1960s. He examines in detail the performance of Maria Bethânia’s song ‘Carcará’ and its role in the musical. For Whelden, it was less the double meanings of the lyrics of the song, the traditional place for looking for political dissent in Brazilian song of the period, than its embodied performance that led the dictatorship to fear the song’s subversive potential and ultimately censor it from the musical. Bethânia’s very body signified Blackness and the Afro-descendent region of Bahia in ways that threatened the military’s notion of national community based in a conciliatory ‘racial democracy.’ The intensity of her performance—Whelden notes that she was described as a ‘catalyst for emotions’ (2023, 45)—fused anger and hope in ways that allowed the audience to ‘feel something’ and nurtured their sense of political possibility during a period in which such futures were being foreclosed by the dictatorship. He speculates that ‘Bethânia’s tenure in *Opinião* showed the potential for political movements originating in the cultural realm. It may have even awoken the regime to the mobilizing potential of an emotionally charged musical performance’ (2023, 60).

Shannon Garland’s article on branded Spotify playlists curating the music of São Paulo, Brazil, is the only one that reaches beyond the nation state in its exploration of the forging of affective connections. This transnational link is not, however, with the rest of Latin America, but with an international telecommunications company and the individual culture brokers she discusses. The immense knowledge of the city’s music made these women employable as paid freelancers for the role of constructing the branded playlists, composed mostly of Brazilian music but US American popular music as well. She views the women who were contracted by Motorola and the Brazilian bank Itaú for this work as ‘affective laborers,’ discussing the notion in relation to earlier feminized categories of immaterial labor. Garland’s concern is to challenge the conventional notion that these emerging forms of affective labor, which generate capital for companies, are ‘unproductive’ in Marxist terms because they supposedly do not contribute to the direct production of surplus value. Quipping that ‘Affective politics in this sense is when affects are literally put to work,’ she argues that the mere fact of labor producing affect does not necessarily translate it to being unproductive: ‘Affects have thus been essential to the growth of these industries in Brazil, not just in the guise of products for consumers, but also in the commodification of labor power — without which no capitalist institutions or social relations could be maintained’ (2023, 18).

While these articles are mostly case studies of music, affect, and politics within the frame of the nation-state, it is not hard to imagine that other scholars might extend

such explorations of ‘feelings of community’ to post- and supranational categories such as Latin American itself. Though there were many nationally based expressions of the folk-based political song genres of the 1960s and 70s, such movements falling under the broader pan-Latin term *Nueva Canción* (New Song) constitute such a musical politics of Latin American solidarity—a solidarity not diffused merely through lyrics but through genre choices as well. *Salsa*, derived from the Cuban son played predominantly by Puerto Rican immigrants in 1970s New York but mixed with various other genres and musicians of other national origins, served to unify a sense of pan-*latinidad* for Latin American immigrants in the city. Their recordings in turn fomented transnational senses of solidarity throughout the region, turning the city of Cali, Colombia, into the self-declared salsa ‘capital of the world,’ not for its musical production, but for its dancing to music recorded largely in New York (Waxer 2002). Colombia’s own *cumbia* has served as a more recent affective platform for building senses of pan-*latinidad*, with a rich history of regional forms from Peruvian *chicha* to Argentinian *cumbia villera* (Fernández L’Hoeste and Vila 2013).

Of course, Iberian colonialism did produce similar governing structures around the region, which fomented comparable historical experiences that have provided a frame for musical dialogue in postcolonial contexts. For the descendants of Africans brought through the slave trade, the national framework has often been rejected in favor of expressions of pan-Blackness (Gilroy 1993), such as Brazilian samba-reggae which drew on Jamaican reggae’s pan-Blackness to reject national frames of racial conciliation. While all these transnational movements have been discussed by other authors, such work has mostly been undertaken in terms of the discursively based frame of identity from which the affective turn has turned in favor of more ineffable concepts such as belonging. Returning to the musical and political construction of Latin America in terms of affect could produce rich results that expand the sophisticated work done by the authors of this issue—with apologies to those undertaking such work of whom I am not aware.

Festivity, Affect and Politics

If this JEA issue is part of a larger affective turn in music studies, this turn, in turn, is part of a much broader affective turn across the humanities and social sciences. My own work has mostly been in the intersection of ethnomusicology, festive studies and Latin American studies, and I have often incorporated affect theory, initially implicitly and now explicitly, into my thinking about the politics of festivity. In *Critical Brass*, I explore a brass band movement whose activism is based not in the conventional semantics of lyrics but in the materiality of sound. It is this that allows bodies to assemble in festive crowds that may in some cases become activist crowds and even form into social movements, a form of activism I call ‘instrumental activism’ (Snyder 2022). Similarly, in our forthcoming volume, *Festival Activism*, David McDonald, Jeremy Reed and I argue that festivals have intrinsic characteristics, such as participation and assembly which could be understood also

affective elements, that make them effective spaces for the manifestation of festive ‘tactics of intervention’ (2025).

Notable studies for understanding music, festivity, and other cultural expressions in relation to affective politics have been undertaken by Latin American scholars. As a coeditor of the *Journal of Festive Studies* since 2023, I have recently had the pleasure of collaborating with guest editor Miguel Valerio, as well as the journal’s other coeditors Isabel Machado and Martha Radice, on the thematic issue on ‘joy as resistance’ (Valerio et al. 2025). While the articles include case studies from beyond Latin America, given Valerio’s own scholarly ties, the region is by far the most represented in the issue, and it shows how much affect theory, even if not always framed as such, has become an important analytical tool for scholars focusing on the region.

For Valerio, ‘joy’ is a crucial tool through which marginalized communities have resisted oppressive power structures. His framing of the thematic issue emerged from his monograph whose title *Sovereign Joy* signals the political power of affect. The book explores the performances of festive Black kings and queens by Afro-descendant communities in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Mexico, explaining how these rituals allowed them to negotiate their social standing in colonial society (2022). Indeed, revisiting colonial society in Latin America before nation states existed and were parts of the much larger units of colonial viceroys is an important way to destabilize the predominance of the national framing that I have noted thus far. Similar Afro-descendent royal performance traditions, often kept alive through Catholic brotherhoods, can be found throughout Latin America from Cuba to Brazil. These were syncretic practices that helped maintain cultural survival, adaptation and sovereignty for Black communities around Latin America. Ricardo Mariani takes a similar tack in this issue, showing that Afro-descendent participation in the feast of San Miguel ‘was a potent form of cultural agency for Afro-Puerto Ricans overcoming many obstacles’ (2025). According to Eduardo Ángel Cruz (2025), Indigenous ‘Devil Dances’ (*diabladas*) syncretized with colonial festive forms across the Andes, similarly played a role in joyfully maintaining cultural survival.

The articles focused on more contemporary case studies often dialogue, explicitly or implicitly, with the notion of ‘decolonial joy,’ advanced by Frances Negrón-Muntaner. In her study of an art installation in Puerto Rico through which participants challenged US imperialism, she defines decolonial joy as ‘the (active) manner by which people become aware of, reason with, and connect the emotion of joy to a desire for decolonial justice’ (2020, 188). In ‘Reclaiming Streets, Liberating Bodies,’ Fernanda de Carvalho Azevedo Mello similarly shows how the carnival ensembles known as *blocos* in Recife, Brazil, have advanced multiple forms of feminist and queer critiques of the patriarchal structures intrinsic to postcolonial structures through the joy of musically occupying the streets (2025). These articles go beyond, but often include, music, and they signal the broader turn towards affective politics in Latin America of which this *JEA* issue is an important part.

Postcolonial Intimacy

In my own research, I cannot go too far beyond mostly anecdotal experience in my effort here to question what it is that might make the study of music, affect and politics *in* Latin America coherent—though certainly I have witnessed the fluidity of Latin genres in Latin American music spaces. In the brass band movement of Rio de Janeiro that is the focus of *Critical Brass*, Brazilians blocos play, often in partnership with Latin American immigrant musicians, a wide range of Latin genres in ways that ‘sound solidarity’ (Allen 2020) with other Latin Americans, who are themselves otherwise referred to in Brazil as *gringos* (outsiders).

Indeed, it is in immigrant spaces where, for obvious reasons, the nationalist frame through which music, politics and affect perhaps most often operate is destabilized. In my recent work on Brazilian music and carnival practices in Lisbon, Portugal, I have sought to construct an affect-based framework for understanding the postcolonial relationship of these two countries, the Luso-Brazilian relationship (Snyder forthcoming, 2025, 2023). A final discussion of this forthcoming monograph will serve to ruminate on how we might understand transnational expression of music, politics, and affect here, precisely not *in* Latin America, but in the ex-metropole—Lisbon, Portugal—of Latin America’s largest country, Brazil. It is in this context that the Brazilian immigrant carnival bloco Colombina Clandestina argues that affect affects (ok fine, that affection has an impact—same difference).

As does Wig in his study of Cuban *pregón*, I draw on Charles Herzfeld’s notion of cultural intimacy. Herzfeld’s examples, however, are predominantly tied to a national frame, in his case contemporary Greece. Some of the most well-known applications of Herzfeld’s theory in ethnomusicology, such as in Turkey (Stokes 2012) and Ukraine (Sonevytsky 2019) also use cultural intimacy as a framework for understanding nationality. My aim in the book is to expand cultural intimacy to the postcolonial relationship between Portugal and Brazil, hence ‘postcolonial intimacy.’ The book is a part of a broader affective turn in postcolonial studies, a field that emerged in literature departments and has been critiqued for its focus on the discursive. Departing from the observation of Neeta Kanna in *The Visceral Logic of Decolonization* that ‘decolonization will necessitate an engagement not only with the discursive practices of empire, but also with how these habits of mind are secured by emotive ones’ (2020, 2), the book contributes to filling the lacuna of ‘affect studies ha[ving] largely failed to establish within postcolonial studies’ (9). Ethnomusicologist Tom Solomon notably argues that ‘ethnomusicology is uniquely qualified to explore postcoloniality as lived, embodied experience’ (2012: 235).

I understand postcolonial intimacy as the affective context of familiarity predicated on the countries’ postcolonial relationship and shared language, as well as the history of circulation of communities, cultural expressions, and material culture. I argue that postcolonial intimacy always, necessarily, and affectively conditions Brazilian musicking in Portugal. I examine how the Luso-Brazilian relationship is experienced, enacted, negotiated, and at times transformed through the

performance of Brazilian music in Portugal. Cultural familiarity based in colonial legacies has only been heightened in a mediatized world in which Brazilian culture and music began to saturate Portugal in the twentieth century. As Brazilian migration increased in the past decades, making Brazilian immigrants by far the largest national minority in Portugal, immigrants have brought new genres, further diversifying the musical soundscape of Brazilian music in the country. If the dominant discourses of immigration call attention to the otherness, alterity, estrangement, and cultural illegibility of immigrants, the postcolonial immigration of Brazilians to Portugal has an affective dimension of familiarity based in postcolonial intimacy. Postcolonial intimacy encompasses the felt tensions between similarity and difference between members of the two societies (Feldman-Bianco 2001), and a deceptive sense of familiarity that is ever present in musical performance.

Despite the positive valence of the word, I stress that intimacy does not necessarily imply a relationship of mutual understanding, much less so in a contemporary Europe that is becoming ever-more xenophobic; rather, postcolonial intimacy has reactionary but also liberatory potential. It is the ‘sentiment of coloniality’ through which particular forms of exclusion, xenophobia, and stereotyping, as well as appropriation, collaboration, and solidarity, manifest in the Luso-Brazilian relationship. Postcolonial intimacy in the case of the Luso-Brazilian relationship is ultimately ambivalent because it encompasses a plurality of at times contradictory experiences, what I call ‘sentiments of coloniality,’ such as fascination and revulsion with the postcolonial other, which often seem to go hand in hand.

Another such sentiment of coloniality is *saudade*, a concept resonant in both countries and their music. Fado scholar Lila Gray describes *saudade* as ‘a philosophical-historical poetic topos of longing’ that ‘exists as a way of being in the present and feeling the past ... while dreaming for a future’ (2013, 83). *Saudade*, most often translated as nostalgia, is often cast in both countries as expressing a conservative politics. To be politically *saudadoso* is to long for the time of the authoritarian Salazar in Portugal or the military dictatorship in Brazil. But *saudade*, I argue, also offers an affective politics of liberation. For Brazilian immigrants in Portugal, the multitemporality of *saudade* can point at once to a longing for home and the past, while ‘dreaming for a future,’ in this case of a future of integration in Portugal, as I witnessed on the Sunday of carnival in Lisbon in 2025.

On that day, I set off trumpet in hand to play with the Lisbon’s Qui Nem Jiló bloco for the group’s carnival parade. The bloco plays the northeastern genre of forró, but the three-person *pé-de-serra* format of forró (consisting of triangle, the *zabumba* drum and accordion) is dramatically expanded and diversified in this participatory manifestation of the genre. The bloco’s percussion section is formed by multiple *zabumbas*, triangles, and *pandeiros* (tambourines). We began to move through our repertoire of classic forró songs while processing down the streets of the Penha de França neighborhood. As I glanced beyond the bell of my trumpet, I saw people embracing each other on their balconies above and singing along to the well-

known songs, which my Brazilian collaborators assured me that the Portuguese knew well.

As we entered the area of the main praça of Penha de França, the bloco's mestre, Enrique Matos, called 'Asa Branca,' perhaps the most famous forró of all. The song recounts the extreme conditions of drought in the Northeast interior (*sertão*) that force even the *asa-branca* bird to migrate. The lyrics of many forró songs recount such stories of migration from the dry Brazilian Northeast for the bustling economies of the Southeast, of which 'Asa Branca' is the archetypal example. The song's composer, accordionist Luiz Gonzaga, himself had migrated to Rio de Janeiro where he recorded Northeastern styles which were ultimately consolidated in the genre of forró. The audience sang along with full lungs:

Now I'm far, many miles away
In this lonely, aching solitude.
I wait for the rain to fall again
So I can return to my homeland.

During the performance of 'Asa Branca,' bloco members unfurled a Portuguese and a Brazilian flag next to each other. The juxtaposition was meant to create a symbolic proximity between the two cultures and recontextualize this anthem to the internal migration of Brazil in a new migratory context, of Brazilians to Portugal. As forró is a music that expresses the *saudade* of migration, the longing for that which has been left behind, in Lisbon, forró's affect of migratory longing took on particular relevance for the Brazilian immigrant community. The founder of the bloco, Enrique Matos, recounted that

Forró owes much to the people from the Northeast who left their homes and their lands to work in the big city. These lyrics were born of suffering... We play songs that reach deep down inside people and touch their *saudade*, to make them sing their *saudade*... People here are also homesick, and we want to heal their *saudade*... People close their eyes and sing from inside with soul. (Interview 2024)

Through participation in the blocos, Brazilian immigrants build senses of belonging and community in multiple directions. Collective singing of a song of migration that declares a desire to return to one's homeland like 'Asa Branca,' for example, forges affective links to Brazil. But the accompaniment of the song's performance with a display of bi-national unity symbolized by the Brazilian and Portuguese flags also signals the building of affective links to Portugal, while holding the tension of multiple identifications, *saudades*, and postcolonial intimacies in balance.

The bloco Colombina Clandestina, which proposes that affection has an impact (*o afeto afeta*), offers a different emotional and affective vocabulary to musically play to immigrant experience. Given this postcolonial Lusophone Atlantic migratory



Photo: Carnival revellers at Colombina Clandestina by Raquel Pimente.

context of Brazilians in Portugal, Freire herself has often referred to Colombina Clandestina as a ‘decolonial project,’ that is, one which ‘has a sense of undoing, and undoing also opens a space for a different kind of doing’ (Bacchetta and Maese-Cohen 2010, 181). For Colombina, this new form of doing is above all manifested through the realm of affect, the body, and emotion. They write on their website that, ‘carnival is,’ above all ‘a feeling [*sentimento*],’ and ‘Our projects create new narratives for public space and connect people through a feeling: joy [*alegria*]! It is through joy that we protagonize minorities and subvert the normalities that exclude them.’⁴ I interpret Colombina, then, as an expression of decolonial joy (Negrón-Muntaner 2020) by their mobilization of decolonial critique through an affective vocabulary of liberation.

Colombina, however, in their aim to decolonize oppressive power structures inherent to postcolonial intimacy moves past the identity category of Brazilians in Portugal. The group, in fact, calls far less attention to its Brazilianness in favor of its three ‘pillars’ of ‘feminism, diversity, and public space.’ Taking the first two pillars together, I argue

that the bloco advocates an intersectional carnival activism, whereby they highlight the experiences of female, queer, Black, and other marginalized communities in relation to their immigrant status. Their intersectional frame is best understood as an implicit critique of the coloniality of power in a much broader sense. For Quijano (2008), coloniality formed the basis of the modern world and other categories of oppression, especially race, which structure contemporary hierarchies in

⁴ CC website <https://colombinaclandestina.com/o-coletivo-artivista/>. Accessed on February 27, 2023.

postcolonial and postmetropolitan societies. María Lugones (2007) has further developed the concept of ‘the coloniality of gender,’ arguing that the construction of normative gender and sexuality cannot be separated from the legacies of colonialism. I suggest that Colombina’s critique is not simply aimed at Portuguese society but at a broader Luso-Brazilian coloniality that binds the two countries through postcolonial intimacy.

Central to the musical development of the group are the various workshops, or *oficinas* (Snyder 2019a), that provide regular training in the various sections of the bloco—including the samba percussion instruments, brass instruments, dance, stilts, and voice—and this training culminates in participation in the annual carnival performances. The collective name of the oficinas is ‘Artistic Practices of Disobedient Bodies,’ designed ‘for restless, poetic, and powerful bodies’ (CC website). The notion of ‘Artistic Practices of Disobedient Bodies,’ implies a theory of affective embodiment similar to musicologist Stephen Amico’s view that ‘the body, and the actions of the embodied subject, however primary they might be postulated, never exist outside of the constraining structures and strictures of culture’ (2014, 170). Culture forms the body and can be reformed by it. We might also understand the notion of artistic practices of disobedient bodies as implying a theory of performance similar to that of Judith Butler, who defines gendered performance as ‘a repetition of stylised acts’ (1988, 519). According to Butler, it is through the body that we learn to perform identity categories, such as those of gender, race, and class, forming repetitive acts that mark us within these categories. As I have argued elsewhere, artistic practices can offer the opportunity for learning as well as *un*learning dominant performativities (Snyder 2019b).

This is what Colombina postulates in their understanding of artistic practices as vehicles for instilling embodied *disobedience*, opening up the possibility for non-normative gestures of what ethnomusicologist Thomas Solomon calls ‘the meaning-making moving body’ (2025, 14). Taken with the bloco’s pillars, the notion of disobedient bodies locates a space for the embodied, affective expression of intersecting and non-normative gendered, racialized, sexual, immigrant, identities. Moreover, engagement in Colombina is proposed as a decolonization of the body itself, as Freire wrote to the larger group in 2022: ‘Colombina is a project that acts to decolonise collective thought about our bodies, especially those of immigrants.’ Reinforcing the connection between decoloniality and the body, Gustrava et al. (2024), call the feminist/queer blocos of Lisbon ‘*deCUlonial*,’ combining decolonial with ‘*cu*,’ or the Portuguese word for ‘ass,’ and arguing that this focus on the pleasure of the *cu* disrupts colonially imposed sexual binaries.

In other terms, in Colombina Clandestina it is through bodily affect that the discursive theories of the bloco are meant to be realized, here in this intimate, transnational, postcolonial space beyond the confines of either nation state. Affect is sometimes understood as ‘pre-discursive,’ yet the organizers of Colombina seems to accord with Ana Hofman’s view that ‘the affective turn’s productive potential does not lie in abandoning the semiotic, representational and discursive paradigms, but in the production of meeting points for the semantic and affective

dimensions/venues at the site of the sound experience' (2015, 48). Such an intervention is crucial for the notion of affective politics advanced by the editors of this issue more broadly. Politics are often felt, sounded, and thought simultaneously.

Who Turned First?

If the debate about affect can often sound academic and abstract, its implications are in an important sense quite obvious to musicians around the world, including Latin Americans in and outside of Latin America. Indeed, I would proffer, to answer my own silly question of who, the musician or the scholar, turned first to the affective turn, that musicians never turned. They have always felt the political and used music to express and transform it. Perhaps scholars turned first because musicians were already there.

What is new in affect theory is that scholars have developed methods and vocabularies to talk about something as ineffable as felt experience. What is new too is that the perspectives of Latin Americans on these questions that frame their emic affective vocabularies are also gaining representativity in an academic debate that has too often centered the global north.

I have questioned in this afterword, moreover, whether a debate on music, politics and affect in Latin America necessarily reconstructs a notion of Latin America as an affectively coherent whole, or whether such conventional area studies divisions impose sensory regimes based in coloniality upon diverse communities who have sought to decolonize them. Ultimately, the 'community of feeling' in question—whether the nation, a racialized minority community, a pan-Latin group of Latin American immigrants, or a postcolonial imbrication with an ex-metropole—will arise from the particularities of the case study and the perspectives of interlocutors. As Latin America continues to be an important community of feeling in its own right, it is also one that deserves comparative analysis between Latin American nations, even if such a continental framing is not always the most pertinent one in every case. Thus, this *JEA* issue has admirably provided an important contribution centered in diverse Latin American musical practices and perspectives to the affective turn, as scholars around the world have come to realize more palpably what musicians already know—that affect affects.

References

- Allen, Erin T. 2020. 'Sounding Solidarity at the Suffolk County ICE Immigration Detention Center.' In *HONK! A Street Band Renaissance of Music and Activism*, edited by Reebee Garofalo, Erin T. Allen, and Andrew Snyder, 262–275. New York: Routledge.
- Amico, Stephen. 2014. *Roll Over, Tchaikovsky! Russian Popular Music and Post-Soviet Homosexuality*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso.

- Angel Cruz, Eduardo. 2025. 'The Death of Andean Devils, the Life of Counter-Reformation Saints: Dances of Joy, Resistance and Adaptation in Colonial Latin America.' *Journal of Festive Studies* 7.
- Bacchetta, Marcelle, and Paula Maese-Cohen. 2010. 'Decolonial Praxis: Enabling Intranational and Queer Coalition Building.' *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 18(2): 147–192.
- Batiuk, Elizabeth K. 2023. 'Calling the Ancestors to Dance: Affect, Meaning, and Agency in Abakuá Performance.' *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 7 (2): 79–108.
- Berezin, Mabel. 2001. 'Emotions and Political Identity: Mobilizing Affection for the Polity.' In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, 83–98. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
<https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226304007.003.0006>
- Butler, Judith. 1988. 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.' *Theatre Journal* 40(4):519–531.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3207893>
- de Carvalho Azevedo Mello, Fernanda. 2025. 'Reclaiming Streets, Liberating Bodies: Feminist Blocos and Collectivity as Resistance in the Carnival of Olinda, Brazil.' *Journal of Festive Studies* 7.
- Chasteen, John Charles. 2001. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Desai-Stephens, Anaar and Nicole Reissour. 2020. 'Musical Feelings and Affective Politics'. *Culture, Theory and Critique* 61(2–3): 99–111.
- Feldman-Bianco, Bela. 2001. 'Brazilians in Portugal, Portuguese in Brazil: Constructions of Sameness and Difference.' *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 8 (4): 607–50.
- Fernández L'Hoeste, Héctor, and Pablo Vila, eds. 2013. *Cumbial!: Scenes of a Migrant Latin American Music Genre*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Garland, Shannon. 2023. 'Music, Phones and Bank Loans: The Unproductive Labor of Branded Spotify Playlists and the Limits of 'Affective Labor.''' *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 7(2): 1–24.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Graber, Katie J., and Matthew Sumera. 2020. 'Interpretation, Resonance, Embodiment: Affect Theory and Ethnomusicology'. *Ethnomusicology Forum* 29(1): 3–20.
- Grey, Lila Ellen. 2013. *Fado Resounding: Affective Politics and Urban Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Guilbault, Jocelyne. 2019. 'Keynote: Party Music, Affect and the Politics of Modernity'. *Journal of World Popular Music* 6(2): 173–192.
- Hofman, Ana. 2015. 'The Affective Turn in Ethnomusicology'. *Музиколозија/Musicology* 1(18): 35–54.
- Gustrava, Gustavo, Marina Rainho, Paulo Raposo. 2024. 'Carnaval de Colonial em Lisboa: piranhagem como prática política queer imigrante.' *Revista Antropológica* 56(2):1–24.

- Herzfeld, Michael. 1997. *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. Routledge.
- Khanna, Neetu. 2020. *The Visceral Logics of Decolonization*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Klette-Böhler, Kjetil, Lorena Avellar de Muniagurria, Bjørn Schiermer, and Chris Stover. Forthcoming. 'The Affective Politics of Music in Latin America.' *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 7 (2).
- Klette-Böhler, Kjetil, Lorena Avellar de Muniagurria, Bjørn Schiermer, and Chris Stover. 2023a. 'Editorial.' 7 (1): i-viii.
- Klette-Böhler, Kjetil, Lorena Avellar de Muniagurria, Bjørn Schiermer, and Chris Stover. 2023b. 'Affective Turn, or Return? A Critical Overview of Music and Affective Politics.' *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 7 (1): 143-172
- Lugones, M., 2007. 'Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System.' *Hypatia*, 22(1): pp.186-209.
- Manabe, Noriko, and Eric Drott. 2025. 'Introduction: Rethinking Protest Music.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Protest Music*, ed. Noriko Manabe and Eric Drott. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mariani, Ricardo. 2025. 'The Black Feast of St. Michael: Afro-Catholicism, Collective Joy, and Cultural Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico.' *Journal of Festive Studies*.
- McDonald, David A., Andrew G. Snyder, and Jeremy Reed, eds. 2025. *Festival Activism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Miller, Nicola. 1999. *In the Shadow of the State: Intellectuals and the Quest for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Spanish America*. London: Verso.
- Negrón-Muntaner, Frances. 2020. 'Decolonial Joy: Theorising from the Art of Valor y Cambio.' In *Theorising Cultures of Equality*, edited by Suzanne Clisby, Mark Johnson, and Jimmy Turner, 171–94. London: Routledge.
- Quijano, Aníbal. 2008. 'Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America.' In *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, edited by Mabel Moraña, 181-224. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rodó, José Enrique. 1988 [1900]. *Ariel*. Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Sakakeeny, Matt. 2024. 'Music, Sound, Politics.' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 53: 309–29. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-041422-011840>.
- Solomon, Thomas. Forthcoming. 2025. 'Music and the Body: From Cognition to Performance.' *European Journal of Musicology* 23 (1): 5-30.
- Solomon, Thomas. 2012. 'Where is the Postcolonial in Ethnomusicology?' In *Ethnomusicology in East Africa: Perspectives from Uganda and Beyond*, edited by Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza and Thomas Solomon, 215–250. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Sonevitsky, Maria. 2019. *Wild Music: Sound and Sovereignty in Ukraine*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Snyder, Andrew. Forthcoming. *Postcolonial Intimacy: Brazilian Music and Carnival in Portugal*. University of Chicago Press.

- Snyder, Andrew. 2025. 'Colombina Clandestina: The Intersectional Carnival Activism of a Brazilian Bloco in Lisbon.' *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies*.
- Snyder, Andrew. 2023. 'Affective Aspirations of Activist Musical Diplomacy at the Bicentennial Celebration of Brazilian Independence in Lisbon.' *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 55 (1): 1-31.
- Snyder, Andrew. 2022. *Critical Brass: Street Carnival and Musical Activism in Olympic Rio de Janeiro*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Snyder, Andrew. 2019a. 'Playing the System: The Capitalist Industry of Participatory Music Education in Rio de Janeiro's *Oficinas*.' *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 31 (3): 119-144.
- Snyder, Andrew. 2019b. 'From Nationalist Rescue to Internationalist Cannibalism: The Alternative Carnivaslesque, Brass, and the Revival of Street Carnival in Rio de Janeiro.' *Luso-Brazilian Review* 56(1): 106-129.
- Stokes, Martin. 2010. *The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Valerio, Miguel, Andrew Snyder, Isabel Machado, and Martha Radice, eds. 2025. 'Joy as Resistance.' Special Issue, *Journal of Festive Studies* 7.
- Valerio, Miguel A. 2022. *Sovereign Joy: Afro-Mexican Kings and Queens, 1539–1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Warner, Michael. 2002. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books.
- Waxer, Lise A. 2002. *The City of Musical Memory: Salsa, Record Grooves, and Popular Culture in Cali, Colombia*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Whelden, Schuyler. 2023. 'We Feel Something: Music, Politics, and Emotion Under Authoritarianism.' *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 7 (2): 44 - 67.
- Wig, Ståle. 2023. 'Street Rhythms and the Revolution: On the Meanings and Melodies of Cuba's Ambulant Vendors.' *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 7 (2): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.5617/jea.10324>