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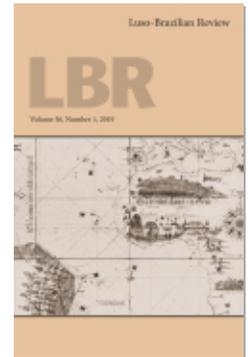
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Alternative Carnavalesque, Brass, and the Revival of Street  
Carnival in Rio de Janeiro

Andrew Snyder

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# From Nationalist Rescue to Internationalist Cannibalism

*The Alternative Carnavalesque, Brass, and the Revival of Street Carnival in Rio de Janeiro*

Andrew Snyder

*In Rio de Janeiro, the emergent street carnival revival of the past twenty years has come to rival in importance the city's "traditional" carnival of the samba school parades. This article explores the diverse repertoire choices of Rio's alternative brass band movement, which originated in the street carnival revival. I show how the movement, drawing on what I call the alternative carnivalesque, has transformed from a dominant preoccupation with cultural nationalism to embracing a belief that carnival should be a spontaneous space "to play anything," including a wide diversity of international genres. I explore how musicians have drawn on Brazilian tropes and ideologies from the past century regarding international engagements, such as "rescue" and "cannibalism." With this example, I argue for local and historicized theorizing of musical circulation rather than relying on generic theories that miss what is important to musicians in their local context.*

*No Rio de Janeiro, o "carnaval de rua," uma manifestação popular que emergiu nos últimos vinte anos, alcançou um patamar de igualdade em importância com o carnaval "tradicional" das escolas de samba. Este artigo explora as diversas escolhas de repertório dos movimentos alternativos das fanfarras carnavalescas do Rio. O artigo demonstra como os ideais subjacentes a este movimento, baseado no "carnavalesco alternativo," transformaram-se de uma preocupação predominante com o nacionalismo cultural para uma crença de que o carnaval deveria ser um espaço espontâneo para "tocar qualquer coisa," abrangendo uma grande diversidade de gêneros musicais internacionais. O artigo explora como os músicos se basearam em tropos e ideologias brasileiras do século passado, como o "resgate" e o "canibalismo." Defendo a teorização*

*local e historicizada da circulação musical ao invés de confiar em teorias genéricas que não levam em consideração o que é verdadeiramente importante para os músicos em seu contexto local.*

In Rio de Janeiro's carnival, crowds have grown to one hundred and twenty thousand people to experience the four hundred musicians of Orquestra Voadora, or the Flying Orchestra. This enormous ensemble has entertained carnival crowds annually since 2009 with a diverse set of brass music—Balkan brass, New Orleans second line, and pop songs mixed with Brazilian beats, from *samba* to northeastern *maracatú*. Distinct from the official *samba* parades, these free events of the street carnival (*carnaval de rua*) offer an ever more eclectic range of repertoires. When I began my eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Rio between 2014 and 2016, I initially referred to Orquestra Voadora's eclectic repertoire choices as a result of "globalization." Many musicians, however, reacted negatively to the word, associating it with cultural homogenization or grey-out, North American imperialism, and alienation from local traditions and agency. Voadora's trumpet player, Daniel Paiva, remarked, "We have always felt very colonized by the United States in the last century. When this word globalization came into fashion, it came as something 'cool,' but in fact it was a disguise of American domination" (personal interview).

Indeed, scholars too often attribute the heightened diversification and circulation of repertoires around the world to "globalization" in a way that portrays so-called "peripheral" countries as passive receptacles of global hegemonic values. In this view, globalization is, as Timothy Taylor defines it, the "recent regime under which nonwestern peoples are dominated and represented by the West" (113–4). Echoing other scholars, Martins Stokes has argued that the term "cosmopolitanism" helps foreground the limitations of "globalization," alerting us to "music as an active and engaged means of world making, not simply a response to forces beyond our control" (10). Theories of "glocalism" have also shown how global entanglements have produced a diversity of new hybrid forms in a variety of places.

While these alternative frameworks are helpful to highlight local musical agencies, I turn to two key frameworks used by my informants themselves to describe musical circulation. *Antropofagia*, or "cannibalism," is a Brazilian modernist concept that celebrates Brazilian consumption of any and all influences. It references indigenous practices of devouring humans, and famously colonizers, and it was employed by Brazilian modernists in the

1920s as a metaphor for cultural production that would put Brazilian artists in active engagement with influences from the rest of the world. In a long dialogue with *antropofagia* is nationalist *resgate* (“rescue”), which is devoted to the preservation and promotion of folkloric and national genres and is often anxious about international influence.

What is at stake in exploring these categories is understanding how Rio’s carnival musicians position themselves in relation to the rest of the world in their own words. With this example, I argue for local and historicized theorizing of musical circulation, rather than applying generic theoretical frameworks. Rio’s brass musicians draw on these long-standing Brazilian ideologies, frameworks, and precedents to conceptualize their engagements with musical genres from Brazil and around the world. While many view shifts from nationalism to internationalism as mirroring evolutionary stages from the nation state to the globalized world, I show that Brazilian musicians have strategically long employed the frames of *resgate* and *antropofagia* in relation to contemporary cultural and political realities.

In this article, I explore the practices and repertoire choices of some of the most influential carnival brass ensembles (called in different cases *fanfarras*, *bandas*, or *blocos de sopra*) that have been emblematic of the transition of the street carnival revival of the past two decades from nationalist *resgate* to internationalist *antropofagia*. I underline the agency of these musicians “at the periphery” in their repertoire choices by contextualizing them within long-standing debates regarding Brazilian artistic production in relation to the influences of the rest of the world. While my research has focused on the street carnival’s brass movement, as I played trumpet in all the brass ensembles discussed here, I believe the shifting aesthetics of the brass *blocos* (participatory street carnival music organizations) resonates with the aesthetic transformations of the larger street carnival revival, which encompasses a broad variety of musical ensembles. What ideologies, cultural preoccupations, models, and events have animated the street carnival revival towards embracing such variety? How might this musical diversity force us to revise our understanding of the traditional role of Rio’s carnival as enacting a singular national identity? What kinds of national and international affinities are forged through these new fusions?

## Changing Repertoires of Rio’s Carnival

Despite their ethics of spontaneity and experimentation, pre-Lenten carnivals are often rites of traditionalism, in which certain repertoires, practices, and events gain auras of “authenticity.” Embracing the trend of cultural nationalism of the early twentieth century, the Brazilian government supported the *samba* schools beginning in the 1930s in order to promote a particular

unified construction of *brasilidade*, or Brazilian national identity. *Brasilidade* was based on recognizing African heritage, celebrating racial mixing, and constructing *samba* as the “authentic” national expression. With the rise of the *samba* schools and the construction in 1984 of a closed spectator space known as the *sambódromo*, street carnival events declined in the second half of the twentieth century in the context of a military dictatorship intolerant of crowds. For many of my informants who view the *samba* parades as touristic spectacles, carnival itself was essentially “dead” by the 1980s.

While Rio’s carnival is still primarily known throughout Brazil and the world for the *samba* school parades and their singular *samba-enredo* competition, the city has seen an exponential growth of street carnival events such as Voadora’s parade. After a period of relative dormancy during the dictatorship (1964 to 1985), Rio’s *blocos*, or street carnival music organizations, are back with a vengeance, having gone through two periods of repertoire expansion that drew on *resgate* and *antropofagia* respectively. Now with over five hundred official *blocos*, and many more unofficial ones, the importance of street carnival and its growing musical diversity rivals and, for many, eclipses that of the *samba* schools. While Brazil is perhaps not known for brass ensembles with brass (*bandas*, *ranchos*, *frevo*, and others) were some of the earliest musical expressions of this enormous festivity (Queiroz) and have again become a dominant presence in Rio’s growing street carnival.

By the 1990s, in the hangover from Brazil’s right-wing dictatorship, the power of *samba* to represent the national body had been weakened by the decentralization of media production and the proliferation of regional genres. Hermano Vianna, in *The Mystery of Samba*, had asked, “Does this also spell the end . . . of the version of Brazilian identity created with so much care and effort by many groups with a converging interest in ‘things Brazilian? What can now assure the unity—even if only the musical unity—of Brazil?” (106). In Rio in the late 1990s, the response of this revived movement of brass *blocos*, overwhelmingly middle-class and predominantly white, to such a question was not to defensively hold on to the *samba* paradigm as the singular authentic expression of *brasilidade*, nor to celebrate globalization as a response. Rather, they forged a repertoire that would reimagine the nation around the *resgate* of a multiplicity of Brazilian “popular,” especially folkloric, traditions. Embracing a form of diversified cultural nationalism that could represent the nation in its plurality beyond the singularity of the “*samba* paradigm,” they mixed classic genres of Rio’s street carnival with Brazilian regional genres, claiming to “rescue” (*resgatar*) carnival itself from commercialism and a restricted representation of *brasilidade*. While this movement emerged as an alternative to the “monoculture” of Rio’s *samba* schools, it would become perceived as traditionalist in its embrace of “classic” Brazilian musical traditions.

In the mid-2000s, brass musicians who had cut their chops in the street carnival began experimenting with sounds available through new mediations, including an influx of immigration, the internet, festival networks, and an increase in resources for traveling and touring. Opening a second stage in Rio's contemporary brass movement, they called their new movement *neofanfarrismo*, or "new brass-bandism." Drawing on *antropofagia*, they affirmed the belief that one could "play anything" (*tocar qualquer coisa*) in Rio's carnival. While continuing to draw on the earlier street carnival's Brazilian repertoires, they would also make street carnival a space for *cumbia*, Afrobeat, punk rock, and even video game music interpreted by brass. Given the predominance of cultural nationalism and traditionalism in Rio's carnival, and carnivals elsewhere in the Americas, this was not necessarily an obvious stance to take. This move represents, therefore, a momentous shift in the cultural aesthetics of one of the largest public festivities in the world. By pushing this radically open musical eclecticism, it is no overstatement to claim that bands like Orquestra Voadora have ushered in a new era within the history of Rio's famous carnival.

In the alternative brass movement, therefore, musical circulation is not only a matter of engaging with present, international resources—the movement also creatively draws on the resources in circulation from the past and recreates them all. In thinking about musical circulation as a creative diachronic and synchronic system, I agree with Matt Sakakeeny, who argues that circulation generates new cultural forms, reaching both into the past and diverse locations of the present. Moreover, I suggest that this gradual diversification is not simply indicative of a movement from national to post-national identity, drawing on Thomas Turino's contention that there are many continuities between colonialism, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism, though they are often understood in opposition to one another. That is, cultural nationalism and cosmopolitanism are discourses in dialogue with one another, often both reflective of privileged middle-class subject positions of those who have selectively used national and international resources to forge post-colonial culture. As Stephen Greenblatt argues that cultural mobility must be understood in relation to the sense of the "rooted," I examine these discourses in "friction" (Tsing) with one another.

The alternative brass movement is an expression of what I call the alternative carnivalesque, which seeks to critique and expand the dominant repertoires of carnival beyond carnival itself and beyond the local context of Rio de Janeiro. In this expression, the alternative carnivalesque is an expression of privilege, worldliness, and whiteness in Brazil, and musical eclecticism is itself a value of cosmopolitanism and *antropofagia* and, in a more limited scope, *resgate* as well. By drawing on alternative resources, brass participants seek to critique the unified authenticity of a festivity that had

been authenticated through commodifying blackness, in particular through adopting *samba* as the national music.

Because the entire ethos of carnival is celebrated as a counter dominant tradition, the “alternative carnivalesque” may appear redundant. But because carnival has been so often used and appropriated as a mode of hegemonic governmentality (Guilbault; Roach; Vianna), the alternative carnivalesque seeks to renew carnival’s purported criticality, in this case through criticizing and reframing the repertoires of the famous festivity. Like Bakhtin’s consideration of the carnivalesque as a literary mode, I view the alternative carnivalesque as a mode of expression through which *neofanfarristas* challenge what they view as hegemonic cultural and political power of official carnival.

Such a critique involves at times problematic positioning of this predominantly white musical community as “more authentically” carnivalesque than the official expressions of the *samba* schools, which they view as commodified and controlled by the state. This critique resonates with scholarly discussions of the popular *samba* schools as well as being artistically compromised (Raphael; Sheriff). Carla Brunet, however, shows that the *samba* schools remain enormously important to the community members who participate in them. While members may also have critiques of these institutions, they would not view them as “inauthentic.” Furthermore, the racialized positioning of the alternative carnivalesque in this case as white does not foreclose its black expressions, such as the *blocos afro* who cannibalistically drew on a variety of musical resources from around the Afro-diasporic world. It is important, therefore, to point out the privileged position of those who argue that this manifestation of carnival might be somehow more authentic than the *samba* schools. Nevertheless, the alternative carnivalesque is an animating discourse of the brass movement.

### The Long Debate between Nationalist *Resgate* and Internationalist *Antropofagia*

Like counterparts in many other countries in the Americas in search of “national identity,” intellectuals of the Brazilian modernist movement in the 1920s began debating how Brazilians might forge national art forms that would not be merely imitative of European models. The two positions of nationalist *resgate* and internationalist *antropofagia* emerged as ways of thinking about Brazilian artistic production in relation to the rest of the world that have resounded ever since. Mário de Andrade, who documented a variety of regional Brazilian cultural practices and is widely viewed as Brazil’s first ethnomusicologist, fostered a discourse of nationalist *resgate* based in a search for manifestations of “authentic” Brazilian popular culture. Gilberto Freyre argued in the 1930s that Brazilian culture was inherently based in the

“intimate” cultural mixing between white and black Brazilians. Using this intellectual scaffolding, cultural nationalism based in mixed-race identity became the official policy of the Getúlio Vargas dictatorship, which presided over Brazil’s “golden age” of popular music in the 1930s and 40s. These were the decades in which genres based in Afro-Brazilian practices, such as *choro* and *samba*, became official genres of the nation and in which the *samba* schools went from being persecuted to nationally visible, government-sponsored organizations. The discourse of *resgate* is an important term in many cultural revival movements, and it continues to be prominent in the heritage institutions of UNESCO and IPHAN in Brazil.

By contrast, the poet Oswald de Andrade (1928) proposed a position he referred to as *antropofagia*. Romanticizing Brazilian indigenous practices of cannibalism, he argued that Brazil’s greatest artistic strength was based on active devouring of all possible influences, including of international and metropolitan cultures, and digestion and transformation of them all into new Brazilian artistic products. Reacting against Eurocentric attitudes, “Oswald proposes a complete reversal of the consumption of colonized subjects . . . not any act of submission but rather a transculturation . . .” (Rocha 45–46). Emerging as an important metaphor for Brazilian modernism in the wake of the 1922 Brazilian Modern Art Week in São Paulo, *antropofagia* has since been employed by poets, painters, and musicians working in popular, folkloric, and classical realms. Brazil has had, therefore, a conceptual framework that promotes Brazilian artistic agency to engage with any and all influences throughout the world for the past century.

It would be simplistic to dualistically oppose Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade as being nationalist and cosmopolitan respectively. In their longer trajectories, one sees a variety of attitudes about the nation and its relation to various Others in the work of both authors. These shifting tensions are sensible in light of Turino’s argument that nationalism and cosmopolitanism are not dialogically opposed but rather mutually constitutive discourses. It is not my aim here to go in depth into the diversity of thought of these authors but rather to point to this moment of cultural postcolonialism as an origin point for animating discourses of Brazilian cultural production.

Bryan McCann, underlining the long-lasting importance of the decades in which these positions became dominant cultural frameworks, has argued that, in Brazil, “Innovation occurs within the patterns established between the late 1920s and mid-1950s. After fifty years of reiteration and revision, these patterns have acquired a range of meanings and the density of tradition” (245). McCann argues that these positions were not dialectically opposed but rather depended upon one another and have animated debates on Brazilian cultural production ever since. In this sense, I do not propose that these two positions constitute a fundamental archetype or essence of

Brazilian creativity. Rather, they are familiar cultural references and debates that have informed the cultural politics of subsequent musical movements. In Steven Feld's terms, these two poles could be seen as manifestations of "anxious" and "celebratory" narratives regarding musical hybridity, the former fueling a "kind of policing of the locations of musical authenticity and traditions" while the latter emphasize "fusion forms as rejections of bounded, fixed, or essentialized identities" (152).

The long-standing tension between anxious and celebratory narratives can be seen in examples throughout the history of Brazilian popular music in the twentieth century. For example, the legacy of cultural nationalism bequeathed by Vargas and the construction of certain genres as authentic national expressions pushed against Brazil's historically Eurocentric orientation. Interest in internationally influenced musical styles and exchanges, such as *bossa nova* and 1950s Brazilian rock, arose in tension with the cultural nationalism of the previous decades. In response, leftist musicians articulated a discourse of nationalist *resgate* that they viewed as anti-imperialist in defining the genre of Brazilian Popular Music, or *MPB*. More than a particular style of music, *MPB* became a kind of policing boundary of permissible genres that could "authentically" represent *brasildade*. *MPB*, according to Sean Stroud, was essentially a "defense of tradition," or a narrative about Brazilian nationalism that had emerged with the Vargas regime. While *MPB*, by its very name, might seem to be a wholesale embrace of Brazilian popular music, notable Brazilian popular genres that are dismissed as commercial or too influenced by American music are outside of its realm. For Stroud, *MPB* is the musical expression of the leftist Brazilian middle class and has acted as its cultural icon because it is associated with notions of "quality."

The restricted scope of *MPB*'s cultural nationalism was famously challenged by the *tropicália* movement in the late 1960s. The *tropicalistas* embraced international trends of the day, especially psychedelic rock, avant-garde classical music, and electric guitars—which were initially anathema to *MPB*—and theoretically anything else. They explicitly invoked cultural *antropofagia* as a strategy to articulate an adventurous artistic counter culture. Rather than adhering to what the *tropicalistas* called *MPB*'s "defensive nationalism," which seeks to rescue and protect certain genres of Brazilian nationalism, *neofanfarristas* embrace what Caetano Veloso described as *tropicália*'s more "aggressive" and "engaged kind of nationalism," which turned the colonial relationship with Europe on its head ("Tropicalista Rebellion" 123).

Despite the efforts of *MPB*, by the 1980s, in the context of ascendant neoliberalism and embrace of international capitalism, middle-class urban youth were infatuated with international rock trends that, unlike *tropicália*, dialogued little with local tradition. They sought to "go beyond nationalism, cultural or biological heritage, and sought to create a dialogue with the world,

particularly with other young people from other countries who spoke the international language of rock” (Madeira 97–98). The *mangue beat* movement of the 1990s, a musical movement that challenged the marginalized status of the city of Recife within the landscape of cultural production in Brazil, would critique 1980s Brazilian rock as overly imitative through invoking *antropofagia* and the *tropicália* movement. These musicians mixed local traditions in Recife and the state of Pernambuco, as well as rock, hip-hop, and electronic music. John Harvey notes that *antropofagia* has become a productive metaphor for hipsters, whom he calls “culture miners” who deal in “counter-cultural capital” (117). Invocations of nationalist *resgate* and internationalist *antropofagia* have occurred then almost cyclically in a dialectical relationship for almost a century. Brazilian artists have found dominant attitudes at times overly nationalist and at others too focused on international trends.

The brass *blocos* of street carnival reenact these longer conversations between *resgate* and *antropofagia* showing the enduring legacy of this debate. Christopher Dunn has argued that “with the Tropicalist insurgency of 1967–68, these divisions [between cultural nationalism and musical imperialism] were largely overcome” (*Contracultura* 153). Frederick Moehn shows that cannibalist discourse is a predominant metaphor for Rio’s popular musicians in their musical experiments with Brazilian and international music. I suggest, however, that while *antropofagia* may have overtaken aspects of mediated popular music, these debates are far from over in other cultural spheres. In street carnival, familiar arguments regarding cultural authenticity and the appropriateness of international engagement continue to rage. The two stages of Rio’s brass movement, and the broader street carnival revival that has grown in the past two decades, mediate these two discourses and their aesthetic lineages. While the brass *bloco* revival of the first stage of the brass movement (1996–) calls on the “anxious” heritage of Mário de Andrade, Vargas-era cultural nationalism, and *MPB*, *neofanfarrismo* (2005– ) mediates an alternative, “celebratory” lineage of Oswald de Andrade, *tropicália*, and *mangue beat*.

### Diversified Cultural Nationalism and the Brass *Bloco* Revival

Under the encroaching but still blistering 7 AM sun in the hilly Santa Teresa neighborhood, I walk with my trumpet into the growing “concentration” of the *Bloco do Céu na Terra* (the “Heaven on Earth” *bloco*) for the *bloco*’s carnival procession. The musical director is dressed as a strange bird, and he mingles among the other musicians dressed as pirates, flowers, and men in drag, all liberally dowsed in glitter. More musicians slip under the cord held by strong men that separates them from the public growing larger by the minute and packing the street with bodies. The horn players warm up as



Figure 1. The pre-carnival parade of Cêu na Terra. Photo by author on January 30, 2016.

they begin consuming free, flavored *cachaça* (Brazilian sugar liquor), *cachaça* popsicles, and watery but cold Antarctica beer. The music of Cêu na Terra is a kaleidoscope of Brazilian musical genres. A 12/8 beat from the Afro-Brazilian *candomblé* religion sparks the beginning of the *bloco*. Next, we launch into the technically challenging *maxixe* genre, Rio's popular music of the turn of the twentieth century. The heart of Cêu na Terra's repertoire, however, is the *marchinha*, or the satirical carnival march genre. All the audience members can, and do, sing along with the comical lyrics that celebrate, among other subjects, drinking, gender queerness, demands for money, and more drinking. After playing a few "classic" *sambas*, the *bloco* goes into the "regional" northeastern genres of *afoxé*, *maracatú*, and *ciranda*. We conclude with some beloved *frevos*, the fast-paced syncopated brass genre from Recife, before playing the final *marchinha*, "Cidade Maravilhosa," the famous anthem that celebrates the "marvelous city" of Rio.

The music of Cêu na Terra is a kaleidoscope of Brazilian musical genres. Cêu na Terra (2001) and Cordão do Boitatá (1996) revived Rio's carnival tradition of acoustic, participatory brass *blocos*. This phase of repopularization of brass *blocos* and the *resgate* of certain street carnival traditions imagined as part of an authentic *Carioca* carnival of the past constituted a "music revival,"

what Tamara Livingston defines as “social movements which strive to ‘restore’ a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society” (66). Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill argue that music revivals, “motivated by dissatisfaction with the present” (4) are often framed as activist movements, as they express opposition to the status quo, sometimes mobilizing people through participatory music-making and community building. In valorizing the past, revivalists frame themselves as tradition-bearers and rescuers of “authentic” lost culture, recontextualizing it for the present.

Since the turn of the millennium in Brazil and Latin America more widely, popular movements of cultural *resgate* and revival coincided with the leftist cultural nationalism of the “Pink Tide.” This refers to the rise of anti-neoliberal center-left governments in Latin America, such as Brazil’s Workers’ Party (2003 to 2016). In Rio de Janeiro, this political shift was culturally expressed through the revival of classic genres of the city, the diffusion of regional genres that had never before been popular, and the revival of street carnival and brass *blocos* with an orientation towards cultural nationalism. Responding to the cultural politics of the 1980s, which they viewed as overly preoccupied with American music, these *blocos* aimed to defend, interpret, and disseminate the urban and folkloric musical traditions of Brazil. Ethnomusicologist and Céu na Terra musical director, Rafael Velloso, explains,

The idea of the popular was very important and native to the group. They would say, we play popular music. We are a part of popular culture . . . We brought different kinds of music to the carnival, like *samba*, *maracatú*, and *frevo* to have a diverse show. We thought we should play all the kinds of rhythms of music of Brazil, and we pushed an idea of folk authenticity . . . It was an engagement with Brazilian traditions and a diversification of carnival music. (Personal interview)

Such a notion of the “popular,” not as mass mediated culture, but referencing folkloric traditions of the Brazilian “people” owes to a longer conception of the term embraced by *música popular brasileira* (MPB). These *blocos* were indebted to the tradition of cultural nationalism established by the Vargas regime, which articulated a twofold distinction through which Brazilian subjects could culturally “belong” to the nation, through the nationalist expressions of the cultural capital and conduit of Rio de Janeiro as well as through regional musical expressions (McCann). These *blocos* drew on this heritage by “rescuing” and constructing a repertoire that reflected a preoccupation with diversified cultural nationalism beyond the unified *samba* paradigm, mixing what I call *Carioca* classicism and Brazilian regionalism. What, then, was “rescued?”

Early in Boitata’s pre-carnival parade, this *bloco* launches into Pixinguinha’s technically challenging *maxixe* “Cheguei” (“I’ve arrived”), declaring

the arrival of the *bloco* itself. *Maxixe* is one of many genres that is today part of the broader umbrella of *choro* which references the diverse instrumental music popular in Rio in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before *samba* was declared the primary national expression. Indeed, the first song marketed as a carnival *samba*, “Pelo telefone” (1916), uses the *maxixe* rhythm rather than the more complex *Estácio* rhythms that would become known as *samba* in the 1930s, and there was slippage in terminology between the two genres as *samba* was consolidated as a national genre. At the turn of the twentieth century, *maxixe* and *choro* were often played by wind ensembles and brass bands with the various complex counterpoints played by different horns, as can be heard on the recordings of Pixinguinha. The revival of interest in these genres, or the “*choro* revival” in Rio de Janeiro, is part of a much larger revival of interest in “classic” *Carioca* genres that were commonly played in carnival, and throughout the year, before the *samba* schools’ *samba-enredo* became the primary expression of the festival.

The genre, however, that is at the heart of brass *blocos* is the *marchinha*, or “little carnival march.” Before the rise of the *marchinha* at the beginning of the twentieth century, carnival music in Rio was indistinguishable from music played in the rest of the year, and the *marchinha* became the first uniquely carnivalesque genre of Rio de Janeiro (*Tinhorão*). The diminutive “-inha” suffix satirizes the military march genre and the “official culture” that the military emblemizes, and brass features prominently in these songs. The lyrical focus of *marchinhas* is diverse, from satirizing contemporary politics to lambasting particular popular carnival characters. Some compositions, such as “Pierrô apaixonado,” reference the Italian *commedia dell’arte* that continues to have a hold on popular imagination in Rio’s carnival and carnivals elsewhere. Others take an irreverent populist tone, such as “Me dá um dinheiro aí,” which consists mostly of the narrator demanding, “you there, give me some money.” In *Céu na Terra* and *Boitatá*, the order of *marchinhas* is somewhat set, and the musicians move through them as though they are suites of a larger piece. *Céu na Terra*’s producer, Jean de Beysac, describes playing *marchinhas* as an activation of Brazilian collective consciousness and a kind of ritual:

It was a genre that a grandfather sang to a father, a father to a son, a son to a grandson. There is an element of unconsciousness that is very strong. It is a genre easy to sing in the street. People know them; even if they don’t know all the words, they know the refrains. It’s something that is very much in the consciousness of people in Rio de Janeiro, and of all Brazilians . . . Singing *marchinhas* is a ritual. (Personal interview)

Despite the prominence of *marchinhas* in Rio’s carnival, no genre is more associated with Rio de Janeiro or Brazil than the *samba*, and the brass *bloco*

revival has not ignored this heritage. Rafael Velloso suggests that the reduction of European horns in *samba* schools in 1934 was part of the nationalist campaign to frame Brazilian identity around Afro-Brazilian practices, emblemized by percussion (see also McCann 59). The choice to play *samba* in a brass and percussion format resounds within the memory, therefore, of what some *samba* sounded like before a particular form of the genre that excluded brass was normalized. Unlike the *samba* schools, which produce new *sambas* every year, the range of *sambas* for Boitatá and Céu na Terra includes primarily older, “classic” *sambas* and *samba-enredos* of the 1930s to the 1970s.

The brass *bloco* world of the street carnival often contrasts itself with the contemporary *samba* schools, but it is clear, then, that this relationship is not any kind of dismissal of the genre itself. Unlike the *samba* schools, composing an original yearly *samba* is not part of the brass *blocos*’ project. Rather, their relationship to *samba* represents an aesthetic positioning of the Carioca middle class within the genre that prizes “classic” *sambas* of “quality” and historical resonance. New *samba-enredos*, as well as plenty of other forms of Carioca music, are not part of their hit parades. Like *MPB*, the aesthetics of these *blocos* reveal middle-class anxieties over quality and rescuing particular genres thought to represent Rio’s “authentic” carnival, rather than related genres they view as commercialized or corrupted.

The brass *bloco* revival at the turn of the millennium was not limited to *Carioca* classicism but drew on a diversity of regional genres as well. Given the vast territory of Brazil, regional identity has been important in any part of the country, often in contrast to the hegemonic cultural weight of Rio and São Paulo in the southeast. For McCann, regionalism militates

not for opposition to a larger Brazilian national character, but for a special place . . . within that character . . . [Regionalism] communicated a part—a crucial part—to the whole. The implication was that only the chosen could live these cultures, but that all Brazilians could and inevitably did benefit from them, because they kept essential elements of the national soul. (120)

McCann quips, however, that “not all regions were created equal . . . and in the process of national consolidation some regions would inevitably appear more ‘Brazilian’ than others” (101). Indeed, while the Amazonian serpent creature used in Boitatá’s parade in some ways represents the *bloco*’s regionalist aesthetic, Amazonian music is not part of the *bloco*’s repertoire. It is the northeast, and in particular Pernambuco and Bahia, that figures as the primary reference for regional music. In the post-Vargas Brazilian imagination, the northeast represents a kind of a national cultural heartland and the birth place of “authentic” forms of popular music and culture in contrast to the industrialized southeast. The region is the oldest colonized area

of Brazil—Salvador da Bahia was the first capital of Brazil beginning in 1549 and remained so until the capital was ceded to Rio de Janeiro in 1763. As the two other cities most associated with Brazilian carnival, Salvador and Recife have produced well-known genres of carnival music and are, therefore, primary carnival references for other parts of Brazil. Recife's carnival, in particular, is known for its diversity of folkloric genres and has been a primary influence on the brass *bloco* revival. Céu na Terra's producer explains that the carnival of Recife

is very rich with diverse rhythms. Here it's *samba, samba, samba, marchinha, marchinha*. There you have *frevo, ciranda, maracatú, marcatú solto*. It's much richer than here. Here carnival was appropriated to sell the image of the city as the greatest carnival. For me the greatest carnival is the carnival that has the most possible diversity. And that is the carnival of Recife. (Personal interview)

One of the first pieces played by Céu na Terra and Boitatá in their pre-carnival parade is Moacir Santos's "Coisa Número 4," based on a 12/8 *candomblé* rhythm. *Candomblé* is an Afro-Brazilian syncretic religion comparable to *santería* in Cuba and other Afro-diasporic religions. The genre acts as an important regional reference for the northeast because of the importance of Afro-Brazilian religious expression in both Pernambuco and Bahia, particularly in Salvador. The use of *candomblé* by these *blocos*, therefore, is a reference to a regionalism that is at the heart of the Brazilian nation within the post-Vargas narrative that locates Afro-Brazilian culture as the authentic root of Brazilian culture. The brass *bloco* revival also drew on *afoxé* and *maracatú*, musical traditions from Salvador and Recife respectively that are based in *candomblé* practices and made their way into carnival in the late nineteenth century. *Afoxé* emerged in Salvador with the rise of black parading groups that celebrated African themes and cultural expressions in the 1890s after the abolition of slavery. *Maracatú* is a highly polyrhythmic percussion and vocal tradition from Recife that reconstructs lineage to the "nations" of African descent.

These *blocos* also draw on the *frevo* tradition, the principal brass reference for all of Brazil and the "official" carnival music of Recife. In Rio's brass *blocos*, Recife is worshipped for the high-quality performance level of *frevo*, a fast, technically demanding, and highly syncopated genre. Brass bands in Recife's carnival bring mass crowds to the street with loud renditions of street *frevo* standards. Many of the carnival groups in Recife were historically associated with working class guilds, and both Céu na Terra and Boitatá usually conclude their parades with the well-known *frevo* "Vassourinhas" in reference to this origin. In this ode to the street sweepers, the song inverts the status of the worker as the one who benefits from the product of his labor and is glorified in carnival.

The brass *bloco* revival was, therefore, not all encompassing in what it “rescued” through its stated diversified cultural nationalism. These regional references constitute a particular imagined national community (Anderson) that privileges certain styles, regions, and populations as more Brazilian than others. It prioritized particular Brazilian genres over others based on notions of quality and folkloric authenticity, as opposed to other regional expressions as well as what they perceived as low-brow and inauthentic contemporary manifestations, such as *forró estilizado*, *pagode*, contemporary *samba-enredo*, and Salvador’s commercial *axé* carnival music. The repertoire canonized by Boitatá and Céu na Terra illustrates aesthetic preferences that represent a particular understanding of traditional Brazilian music taken to the streets by carnival brass and percussion ensembles at the turn of the millennium. Their strategies, aesthetics, and discourses can be understood within longer histories of leftist cultural nationalism and in particular *MPB*, a genre through which artists of the southeastern middle class have historically policed the “authenticity” and “quality” of Brazilian popular music.

### Neofanfarrismo and Internationalist Antropofagia

After the organized rehearsal of Orquestra Voadora’s *bloco* in the park around the Museum of Modern Art, the hierarchy of the band’s leadership dissolves. Musicians from the *bloco* push around three hundred brass musicians into an extended, chaotic jam. Musical sources vary widely from the Romanian band Fanfare Ciocarlia to Rebirth Brass Band from New Orleans, Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti, Mario Brothers video games, Rage Against the Machine, and songs from Brazil’s *tropicália* and *mangue beat* movements. I play through some songs that I have played with brass bands in the United States. The rehearsal itself is a free performance and a mass event—sometimes up to two thousand people come for just the rehearsal, commonly referred to as “Woodstock carioca.” After a couple hours, a trumpet player begins the opening of the *marchinha* “Ó abre alas” (“Open the Wings”), and the musicians begin to move, launching an unpermitted parade to the nearby Lapa entertainment district that will last for two hours. The musicians start to scatter in the crowd and separate bands develop, as Brazilian *marchinhas* mix with brass repertoires from around the world.

Many of the repertoires the Voadora *bloco* plays are relatively obscure except to those listening to brass repertoires throughout the world. Trombonist Gustavo Machado describes *neofanfarrismo*, the movement sparked by Voadora, as part of an “international subculture. These are people who have various affinities only separated by geography, such that you arrived and heard the same music [as in the United States]” (personal interview). While Orquestra Voadora’s name (the Flying Orchestra) implies that because



Figure 2. Orquestra Voadora performing in Circo Voador. Photo by author on September 6, 2014.

of its mobile format it could play anywhere, the band also proposed it could play any repertoire. Orquestra Voadora and the bands spawned by it have been hugely influential in presiding over this shift from nationalism to internationalism. Winning best *bloco* of 2016 from media giant *Globo*, Voadora popularized the idea that any music could be carnivalesque and inspired a huge wave of experimentation. By providing a space for amateurs to play in carnival, the *bloco* opened the door to anyone who wanted to learn a brass instrument, thereby doubling and redoubling the number of brass bands and *blocos* with a voracious, cannibalistic appetite for new musical references. These ensembles have not restricted themselves to playing only during the carnival season, making *neofanfarrismo* a year-long movement that has a particular high point during carnival.

By the mid-2000s, the brass *bloco* revival had entered a phase of “post-revival,” the point at which “the motivation behind the original revival impulse may in any case have lost much of its potency as the core revivalists have either achieved their objectives or moved on . . . Post-revival sows the seeds for new beginnings” (Bithell and Hill 28). The political campaign to raise Rio de Janeiro to the status of a “global city” with the hosting of the World Cup and Olympics had entailed situating the metropolis not only as

a cultural mediator of the nation, as the brass *bloco* revival may have viewed it, but also as a mediation point of “global culture.” Professional saxophonist Thiago Queiroz, director of Boitató, explains, “Rio has become much more cosmopolitan. There were more foreigners here. We started to travel much more. Ten years ago, it was much more difficult. It became much more international on account of the phenomenon of capitalism.” *Neofanfarrista* bands also started touring to international festivals, including in Serbia, Colombia, France, and the Honk festivals in the United States. Pedro Pamplona, a founder of Boitató and Fanfarrada, suggests that the role of the internet in this diversification cannot be underestimated: “We started to hear whatever kind of music from anywhere in the world with much more ease. Balkan music became closer. The universe of music of Latin America became closer. And I heard some things, and damn, I thought this music would be great in carnival!” (personal interview).

Such an open aesthetic attitude towards repertoire that has emerged in Rio de Janeiro constitutes a voracious musical eclecticism, the hunger for diverse sources of music and the explicit belief that one can “play anything” with a brass ensemble. These musicians call attention to the ascendance of new forms of mediation and circulation that have provided conditions of possibility for a new musical eclecticism beyond the diversified cultural nationalism of Boitató and Céu na Terra. Daniel Paiva, a trumpeter in Orquestra Voadora, recounts how alternative brass musicians began to experiment with new repertoires in the middle of the 2000s:

We came from Céu na Terra and Boitató. We met each other in these *blocos* in the beginning of the band. We played *marchinhas* in various *blocos*, but we were also listening to American and European brass bands—Youngblood Brass Band, and Fanfare Ciocarlia. Everyone loves the New Orleans bands—Rebirth, Dirty Dozen. Carnival links us with carnivals in other places. We have our carnival but we hear the carnival of New Orleans, of Colombia. We went looking for these kinds of sounds as much through carnival as through the [instrumental] formation of the brass band. (Personal interview)

*Neofanfarrista* bands, therefore, designated new “sites” of reference, both geographic and thematic, beyond the local and national frames of the earlier brass *bloco* revival.

In these diverse musical engagements, both discursively and through musical reference, *neofanfarristas* have drawn on the Brazilian heritage of *antropofagia* that has long advocated active engagement with and transformation of international styles. Voadora’s trombonist and cofounder, Juliano Pires, frequently situates *neofanfarrismo* explicitly in the heritage of *antropofagia* and the *tropicália* movement. Here he makes the parallel between *tropicália*’s critique of MPB and *neofanfarrismo*’s critique of *blocos* like Boitató explicit:

*Tropicália* is my biggest influence . . . The *tropicalistas* would put rock n' roll guitar in Brazilian music and mix traditional folklore, *MPB*, and other genres from various places in the world—mambo, jazz, psychedelic rock, several different genres in the same song. They created this movement when many people in *MPB* held marches against the electric guitar that was “polluting” Brazilian music . . . They used *antropofagia* because they created something new with Brazilian and global music. I think that musically this is also *neofanfarrismo*, an *antropofagia* of the format of horns and percussion . . . because of what we knew before of *fanfarras* that played only one type of genre, only *frevo*, only *samba*. You can create all kinds of sounds [with a *fanfarra*]. (Personal interview)

With Brazil having been named as host of the World Cup and Rio as host of the Olympics, Rio's musicians felt in a more comfortable position regarding Brazil's economic and political prowess in relation to the rest of the world. An aesthetic of cultural nationalism no longer seemed to be a necessary position but now appeared to be a somewhat restrictive, established tradition that could be challenged and diversified. New channels of mediation—including immigration, an economic boom in the 2000s, and increased access to the internet—allowed for these new forms of engagement. Rather than simply responding to the possibilities of the new media, shifting priorities in the brass community that no longer viewed cultural nationalism to be the foremost concern framed the ways that these musicians used these new mediations. They also embraced Brazilian popular genres that had not qualified for the middle-class standards of the earlier phase. Here I discuss only a few of these engagements in order to show how *neofanfarrismo*, advancing the “alternative carnivalesque,” has critiqued and expanded the frame of the earlier movement.

In contrast to Brazil's sense of cultural distinction from the rest of Latin America due to language and sheer size, *neofanfarrismo* has incorporated a variety of Latin American musical genres into its repertoire. In Rio, the term *música latina* generally refers to Hispanic-American music and does not necessarily include any reference to *música brasileira*; rather these are two separate categories. In Brazil, “gringo” refers to any non-Brazilian, including Hispanic Latin-Americans, much to the chagrin of Hispanic-Americans who have made Rio their home. Despite some well-known examples of cultural collaboration with the rest of Latin America—including Caetano Veloso, Chico Buarque, Milton Nascimento, and others—I found a prominent critique among my informants of Brazilian musicians as disassociating themselves from a larger sense of pan-Latin American identity, which they blamed on the legacies of imperialist strategies of dividing Latin America.

The economic boom of the 2000s, however, set the conditions for heightened immigration to Rio, particularly from other parts of Latin America.

Bringing together musicians from Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil, the *bloco* Songoro Cosongo (2005) resolved to play *cumbia*, *merengue*, *mambo*, and other Latin genres and represented the first engagement in street carnival with eclectic international repertoires. Trumpeter Bruno de Nicola suggests:

The influence came from abroad, Latin American inspiration from outside Brazil. I think that change never comes from the center. It comes always from the periphery, always from outside. In terms of the *fanfarras* of Rio, it came from outside, from people who came together and resolved that in carnival you could play other things. (Personal interview)

In the carnival of 2015, I sat in with Songoro Cosongo playing songs based on what they called a “Bolivarian repertoire” (*seleção bolivariana*). In Hispanic America, *bolivarianismo* refers to a political ideology of anti-imperialism and cultural solidarity with the rest of Latin America. The director explains, “It’s a joke because the local right wing is very worried about the leftist leaders, like Chavez . . . Brazilians are very ignorant of the neighboring culture of South America. People find it exotic. The repertoire is already political without playing music of the left” (personal interview). *Neofanfarrismo*’s promotion of Hispanic Latin American music pushes against Brazilian provincialism and disintegration from the rest of Latin America. The movement articulates Rio, therefore, not only as a more multicultural city, not only as a global city, but also as a Latin American one.

*Neofanfarristas* have been especially drawn to the city of New Orleans for its famed brass and carnival traditions. Both Rio and New Orleans assume foundational narratives of national musical origins as the birth places of jazz and *samba* in their respective countries, and the imagined similarities have created mutual affinities. The city’s second line brass parade tradition has become a primary reference for *neofanfarrismo*. Orquestra Voadora’s original tuba player, Tim Malik, an American musician who had lived in New Orleans and moved to Rio with his Brazilian wife, became a mediator of New Orleans music in Rio de Janeiro. As a tubist, Malik is credited with bringing a strong sense of the harmonic function of an improvisatory and independent low bass line to Rio’s brass bands. Orquestra Voadora’s saxophonist André Ramos explains that in Rio’s traditional brass *blocos*, “we often play the bass without tuba, but with trombone or saxophone . . . *Samba* schools don’t have any bass. The bass is all percussive. [Due to Tim’s influence] in Orquestra Voadora, we always were based in the tuba” (personal interview). New Orleans influence, therefore, brought not only new repertoires to the streets of Rio de Janeiro but new conventions in the instrumental formation of the brass band.

The brass *bloco* revival had articulated a preoccupation with “popular culture,” but this formulation had been primarily based around a conception of

the popular as folkloric. *Neofanfarristas*, like *tropicalistas*, also celebrate the term “popular” but including mass culture. Orquestra Voadora and other *neofanfarrista* bands have adapted a variety of American, Brazilian, and European pop songs to brass bands and mixed them with Brazilian rhythms. For example, *neofanfarristas* reach into Brazilian youth culture’s history of infatuation with American rock, long off limits within *MPB*’s aesthetic boundaries. They especially identify with some of the most iconic and rebellious American and British rock bands of the 1960s to the 1990s, from Jimi Hendrix to Nirvana, and play brass covers of their songs.

*Neofanfarrismo*’s engagements with global popular music is not limited, however, to “musics of resistance” and can range towards the very “poppy” and apolitical. Since 2012, the brass band Cinebloco has adapted versions of well-known film music from mostly American movies and mixed these songs with Brazilian percussion, reaching into the nostalgic memory of Cariocas who have also been inundated by American media and films. The Super Mário Bloco (2012) has translated the affection of adults for the music of video games from their youth. Interest in well-known global pop music shows that *neofanfarrismo* has moved far beyond the preoccupation with folk authenticity and anxieties regarding the global “culture industries” of the brass *bloco* movement. While bands incorporate elements of global genres understood as “resistant,” the movement, like *tropicália* before, is not bound by an aesthetics of resistance. In *neofanfarrismo*, the global popular references and experiences of individuals who have grown up in a global city are voiced through the brass ensemble.

The affection, however, for popular culture in the sense of mass culture is not limited to international influences. *Neofanfarrismo*’s opening to international genres has also produced receptivity to Brazilian genres previously excluded by the boundaries of cultural nationalism of the earlier brass *bloco*s that prize some Brazilian genres as more “authentically” Brazilian than others. *Neofanfarrismo*’s engagements with other Brazilian popular music genres, especially *funk carioca*, 1950s Brazilian rock, *samba-reggae*, and *axé*, decenter the aesthetic boundaries around Brazilian popular music created by the brass *bloco* revival. Like *tropicália* and *mangue beat*, *neofanfarrismo* is not only a Brazilian cannibalization of what comes from outside Brazilian borders but an engagement with a much broader diversity of Brazilian genres.

The inclusion of “*black music*,” for example, shows a different relation to Afro-diasporic music making than in the brass *bloco* revival. *Black music* in Brazil refers not to the various Afro-diasporic traditions of Brazil, which are generally known as “*músicas negras*,” but rather to genres that dialogue with American black popular music genres, especially funk, soul, hip-hop, and black pop musicians like Michael Jackson. While *música negra* is foundational to the *MPB* narrative of Brazilian music and the leftist cultural nationalism of

the brass *bloco* revival, *black music* is a primary reference in *neofanfarrismo*. *Black music* is itself a kind of cannibalization of black American popular music. Though the black American genres that influenced *black music* were in some cases, like funk and soul, explicitly political, Christopher Dunn argues that the dismissal of *black music* “is remarkably similar to ways in which [Brazilian nationalist] leftist critics regarded the hippie counterculture [and *tropicália*] of the early 1970s, which they regarded as alienated, inconsequential, and beholden to cultural products and styles from the United States” (*Contracultura* 151).

*Neofanfarrismo* has in the past several years also contributed to a growing movement of original composition in Rio’s street carnival. While composition has long been a part of Rio’s carnival, it has mostly been limited to composing within a particular genre and often as part of a competition for the best song of that genre, such as the competitions of *marchinhas* and *samba-enredo*, within strict generic and formulaic guidelines. The brass *bloco* revival, seeking to rescue tradition, had little use for composition. Along with Voadora, the *neofanfarrista* band that has recently led the movement towards promoting a repertoire of original music is the Franco-Brazilian band Bagunço, which cannibalistically plays on a French band member’s mispronunciation of the word *bagunça* (mess). The band creates sophisticated original compositions that draw on many of the musical influences of *neofanfarrismo*, including *fórró*, *samba*, *maracatú*, American funk, Afrobeat, second line, and progressive jazz. Original music composed by *neofanfarrista* bands, therefore, draws on many of the musical references examined throughout this article, as well as those of the brass *bloco* revival, freely mixed, juxtaposed, and fused into new musical experiments. The emerging interest in composing original music could further revolutionize Rio’s famous street carnival towards becoming a space in which adventurous and original composition not bounded by generic requirements becomes a primary element of this gigantic musical festival.

## Conclusions

In 2015, Rio de Janeiro hosted the first edition of a now annual international brass band festival outside of carnival which *neofanfarristas* called the Honk Rio! Festival of Activist Brass Bands. The name was changed from its initial title, the Honk Rio! Festival of Cannibalist Brass Bands (“Honk Rio! Festival de Fanfarras Antropofágicas”). Despite the name change, the festival enshrined the cannibalist approach to cultural production as a primary element of the transformation of a movement that originated as a *resgate* of cultural nationalism into a movement theoretically hungry for anything. In its fourth edition in 2018, it would choose the *tropicália* movement itself as its theme.



Figure 3. Mission Delirium from San Francisco, CA at Honk Rio! August 6, 2015. Photo by Carolina Galeazzi.

While the festival has showcased international brass bands, such as my own band Mission Delirium from San Francisco which came for the first festivities, it also featured *blocos* like Céu na Terra as an homage to the origins of the city's brass movement. Boitatá, Céu na Terra, Voadora, and the *neofanfarrista* bands are, therefore, part of a shared musical world of the larger alternative brass movement, even if they manifest different aesthetic priorities. They share many of the same musicians, and Voadora's *bloco* frequently reverts to *marchinhas* when it has exhausted its own eclectic repertoire. Similarly, while *tropicália* was at first decried by *MPB* musicians, it was not fundamentally opposed to *MPB*, but rather in dialogue with it. Through embracing the alternative carnivalesque, *neofanfarristas* have radically expanded the repertoires of carnival and pushed the popularity of the brass band beyond the festive season itself into a year-round movement.

I agree, therefore, with Thomas Turino's suggestion that "nationalism is neither increasingly irrelevant for cultural analysis nor at odds with cosmopolitanism and globalization" (12), but I have argued that these frames are best understood through the theoretical languages musicians themselves use. The fantastic diversity of Rio's contemporary street carnival may seem, and is, new, but these *blocos* are not only expressing their contemporary "glocalized" existence. In using terms like "*resgate*" and "*antropofagia*," they call attention to longer histories and they aim for cultural exchange and dialogue to take

place on their own terms and values, an imperative not captured by generic terms like nationalism, globalization, or cosmopolitanism. For these veterans of carnival, *brasilidade*—what it is to be Brazilian—remains connected to a strong sense of local and national roots while they voraciously explore, consume, and transform the musical diversity of the world.

Soon after the carnival of 2017, a brass *bloco* called Technobloco invades the *sambódromo* late at night, filling it with thousands of bodies lit up with LEDs. A huge crowd crouches in the *sambódromo* shouting “Fora Crivella” (“Down with Crivella,” referring to the conservative mayor of Rio since 2016) over the melodic backdrop of Robert Miles’s “Children” (1996). As the snare roll crescendos, they ready themselves to jump up at the “beat drop” when the drum section will enter. When it does, mass euphoria ensues—thousands of people run through the *sambódromo* as acoustic “boom-kat” beats resound through the structure. The invasion of the *sambódromo* with acoustic techno music represents the appropriation of the most symbolic site of Brazil’s carnival, one that has been much critiqued as the primary symbol of the commodification and homogenization of Rio’s carnival. “Cannibalizing” the space with contemporary, international pop music and “rescuing” it from commercialism and the political status quo, the unruly street carnival *bloco* strikes a clear contrast with the disciplined parades of the *samba* schools. In taking over the parade route with this sonic vandalism, the alternative carnivalesque performs the triumph of street carnival over the state’s official carnival.

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