Brazilian soul and DJ culture's lost chapter

By Allen Thayer • illustration by Alberto Forero

> The Black Rio movement was born there in Astoria, in Catumbi. The parties were 100% soul. Before Black music, all the people had was soccer, samba, and juvenile rock and roll. Just an idiotic chorus of "la, la, la."[1] **–Mr. Funk Santos, DJ**

It took nearly thirty years, but thanks to the flood of books and documentaries celebrating the pioneering DJs and turntablist wizards, the DJ now has a spot in the history of popular music. Historians rightly point out that DJ culture's deepest and healthiest roots are located in the U.S. and the U.K., with a long offshoot planted in Jamaica. Possibly due to lack of exposure, or the obvious language barrier, these cultural historians rarely looked beyond the English-speaking world. In doing so, they overlooked a number of important Southern-hemisphere hot spots, such as West Africa and, the focus of this article, Black Rio. In the late 1960s and early '70s, Brazilian DJs started a musical and racial revolution whose funky backbeat still has heads nodding today. With its origins in Rio de Janeiro, the sound of Black Rio confronted the dictatorship's stranglehold on politics and society, while spreading the gospel of all things funky from Argentina to the Amazon. It left in its wake a new, modern Black consciousness, Afro hairstyles, and an impressive catalog of Brazilian soul and funk records.

SIR DEMA & CLUBE DO SOUL

I tried to repress the sneaking suspicion that this was all an elaborate prank on an overly enthusiastic gringo. Having spent more than an hour and a half in buses and taxis to get to Bangu, a lower-class neighborhood in the far reaches of sprawling Rio de Janeiro, I was starting to believe that the address that the leader of the Rio De Janeiro–based Clube do Soul gave me revealed nothing but an open-air diner. I asked a waitress if she knew of a *festa de soul*. She pointed towards the stairs in the back of the restaurant, which led up to a balcony.

As I rounded the stairs, a middle-aged, light-skinned Black man dressed head to toe in white linen greeted me from behind the turntables. This was Dema, or Sir Dema as he was billed this night, one of the more active members of Clube do Soul, an appreciation society dedicated to keeping the music and spirit of Black Rio alive. Heatwave's "Super Soul Sister," Tim Maia's "Que Beleza," Joss Stone's "Super Duper Love," and other known and unknown (and mostly U.S.) soul and funk nuggets filled Sir Dema's all 7-inch set.

A Lyn Collins, a Jimmy "Bo" Horne, and several absurdly cold beers later, Dema introduced me to Paulinho "Black Power," one of the guest DJs that night. Just to clarify, Paulinho "Black Power" is White. The "surname" comes from his DJ crew, or *equipe do som*. Paulinho recalled the heyday when the Black Power *equipe* played for thousands, with gigs nearly every night of the week. Later, the conversation turned to the origins of soul music in Brazil and Big Boy, who they explained was the first DJ to play soul music on the radio, the first to throw soul parties in Rio, and the first to promote twenty-four-hour radio programming. In Dema's roughly translated words, "Damn! That dude was the *shit*!"

A HEAVY PARTY

> I would like to be compared like this, to Elvis Presley. I think that for the youth of Rio I was more or less what Elvis Presley was for the United States.[2] –Big Boy

Overweight, asthmatic, White, and with the given name of Newton Duarte, Big Boy would seem an unlikely place to begin our story of the Brazilian soul revolution. Beginning in Rio in 1966, Big Boy launched a one-man crusade to turn on his fellow Brazilians to the hottest sounds from around the world, taking adventurous Brazilian listeners down both Abbey and Hot Pants Roads. Through syndication, he mounted a coordinated attack on the country's smaller cities, slowly breaking down their resistance to this new, heavy sound. When told by a radio director in Belo Horizonte that the Led Zeppelin song he played was too weird, he returned fire with a blast of Jackson 5 followed by a reassuring dose of Trini Lopez. "But you'll see," he says, "within five shows, I'll play Traffic, Steppenwolf, the Move, and the resistance will become less and less as I infiltrate them with these great songs."

Big Boy's success on air naturally translated to a happening weekly party in the chic Zona Sul area of Rio. Pop music fans of all varieties flocked to Big Boy's parties to hear his mix of rock, psych, soul, and whatever else he felt like playing. For him, it was all the same as long as it was "heavy." Given that soul music was not being played anywhere else, Big Boy's Baile da Cueca ("Underpants Dance") party became the de facto ground zero for the coming Black Rio scene.

Big Boy's parties adhered to the sonic-smorgasbord school of DJing, showcasing everything from Yes to Wilson Pickett. While across town, Ademir Lemos's weekly party, named after the venue, Le Bateau, quickly emerged as the place to be for Rio's soul and funk fanatics. Style-wise, Ademir borrowed heavily from the flower-power aesthetic of San Francisco, and he was one of the first cats in Brazil to sport an Afro, despite being racially ill-equipped for the hairstyle. Where Big Boy's sets would be all over the place, Ademir's sound was much more focused, concentrating on early funk and chunky rock tunes with heavy backbeat. With his hip style, trendsetting musical selections, and an intense love of the party, Ademir was sketching out the blueprint for a successful Black Rio *baile*, or dance.

Ademir's other major contributions were his excellent compilation LPs. Contrary to the accepted assertion that *Disco Gold* and Gloria Gaynor's *Never Can Say Goodbye* (both mixed by disco re-mixer Tom Moulton) were the first LPs to feature songs played back to back to create a non-stop, disco-like experience, Ademir released his first of four compilation albums in 1970, predating these American landmarks by five years. For Ed Motta, keeper of the Brazilian funk flame and nephew to Brazil's number-one soul brother Tim Maia, Ademir's selections still surprise. "Actually, he has some records from these sessions that are very hard to find, independently released soul and funk [45s], like the DJ Shadow compilations [*Brain Freeze* with Cut Chemist]. People don't know, for example that some DJs from these days used to travel using cheap chartered flights, flying thirty-five hours to buy records [in the U.S.], then coming back to Brazil."[3]

Le Bateau drew such a crowd that Ademir was able to move the gigs to the legendary Canecão concert hall in Rio's wealthy Zona Sul area. Recognizing Big Boy's growing popularity and potential draw, Ademir invited him to join his party. By this point, the Baile da Pesada, or "Heavy Dance," showcased a funkier sound and drew thousands of young White and Black *cariocas* to dance to the DJ duo's imported records. Ademir summarized his influence in a 1977 interview:

> It all started with my love. I was passionate about "funky" and decided to spread it. But the thing really started when the soul began to be played and the people started to dig Kool and the Gang, James Brown, and Wilson Pickett. Then it broke at the Baile da Pesada at Canecão. It was a party that brought people from the north and south zones [of Rio de Janeiro]. There wasn't discrimination between Black and White; it was the real deal, with real soul.[4]

In the opening years of the '70s, the Baile da Pesada dominated the "funky" world of Rio de Janeiro; that is, until the club got an offer to host Roberto Carlos, Brazil's

Big Boy.

equivalent to Elvis, for an extended engagement, leaving the party homeless. Ademir went against conventional wisdom and relocated the party to the considerably poorer and Blacker northern suburbs of Rio, known as Zona Norte. Zona Norte proved to be a perfect choice for several reasons: it was predominantly Black, and it also had dozens of large venues, regularly used for samba school rehearsals and ideal for hosting parties for up to five thousand people. Having heard some of these new soul tunes on Big Boy's radio shows, the poor, Black kids from Zona Norte were now getting their chance to dance to these sounds every weekend.

Like most pioneers, Ademir's success was quickly eclipsed by the next generation, eager to improve on the prototype. Competition sprung up all over Zona Norte, now organized as DJ crews, or equipes de som. Like Jamaica's mobile DJ sound systems that originated in the early '60s, these homemade sound systems were generally owned by a local businessman, and operated by an underpaid and anonymous team of DJs. Ed Motta might have still been in diapers then, but his research revealed that "they used to listen to loads of American soul and funk and some things that were playing in the northern-soul scene, like some hard-to-find [releases] by Reality, Cane and Able, and Mickey Murray." Ademir's monopoly on the funk came to an end. By the late '70s, the market now flooded with equipes, such as: Soul Grand Prix, Black Power, Mr. Funk Santos, A Cova, Petru's, Dynamic Soul, Um Mente Numa Boa, Tropa Bagunça, Cashbox, Soul Layzer, Furacão 2000, Mind Power, complimented by celebrity bailes hosted by Ademir, Big Boy, or the famous DJ and TV host, Messiê Limá. Some of these equipes, most notably Furacão 2000, are still active and successful today.

BRAZILIAN SOUL VACCINATION

Whether young Brazilians were buying import soul and funk albums, going to the bailes in Zona Sul or Norte, or tuning in to Big Boy's show, the sound was infectious, and it was only a matter of time before local musicians integrated these new sounds into their repertoire.

A discussion of modern Brazilian Black music isn't complete without mentioning Jorge Ben. Ben emerged at the tail end of the bossa nova wave with his anthemic "Mas Que Nada," almost single-handedly paving the way for a harder, rootsier sound that was as indebted to bossa nova as it was to pop. By the end of the decade, he had recorded with the tropicalia producer Rogerio Duprat, tropicalists Caetano Veloso, Maria Bethânia, and Gal Costa, as well as rocker Erasmo Carlos. Ben was also forging an exciting new sound with the stripped-down and funky Trio Mocotó.

Despite his funky tendencies, and being from Rio himself, Jorge Ben is rarely associated with the Brazilian soul scene. Black Rio, as the Brazilian soul style and movement would later be dubbed, was always extremely influenced by the trends and styles of the U.S. Weighing in on the originator of funky samba, Ed Motta adds, "I don't think Jorge Ben has a soul-funk influence—he has, like, three percent blues [influence], but it's something unique, it's something really Brazilian." Samba-rock, whose creation is credited to

Jorge Ben, Trio Mocotó, and Erasmo Carlos, took the pop song-structure and injected it with some additional percussion and samba swing. Whereas the Black Rio phenomenon originated from Rio, samba-rock's roots were in São Paulo. João Parahyba, drummer of Trio Mocotó and session man on many a classic Jorge Ben side, recalls the days in São Paulo when all these new sounds were merging together:

> It was the beginning of the Black influence in rock with Jorge Ben, Trio Mocotó, Tim Maia, and Dom Salvador. The leader of Banda Black Rio, Oberdan Magalhães, a sax player, got his start playing in Dom Salvador's band with Jorge Ben and us in '69. When we started playing the big music festivals, Black music grew up. But we were all friends. Everyone at that time used to hang out at [popular São Paulo nightclub] Jogral together—the Mutantes, Rita Lee, Tim Maia, Clementina de Jesus. Rock people, together with samba people, together with jazz people.[5]

The cross-pollination during this period meant that some of the earliest Brazilian soul records were created by a diverse set of performers, coming from the rock, jazz, and pop idioms. Rocker Eduardo Araújo released "A Onda é Boogaloo" (1969), which featured Brazilian versions of U.S. soul hits, translated and masterminded by Tim Maia. Raulzinho (Raul de Souza) and Impacto 8's "International Hot" (1969) was a soul-oriented detour from Raul's bossa-jazz roots. Brazil's first modern Black-pride message song came from pop-jazz crooner, Wilson Simonal, with his "Tributo a Martin Luther King," released pre-assassination in 1967.

THE 1970 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SONG

Soul music was gaining converts over the radio and at weekend dances, but Brazil's elites were not ready to hear this kind of music at one of the most respected cultural forums. In the '60s, the major record companies picked up on a European trend of sponsoring song contests, which in Brazil mutated into multimedia extravaganzas with live concerts, TV broadcasts, and accompanying albums. The festivals consistently featured the finest composers and musicians the country had to offer, introducing many songs that have since become standards and performers that are now stars. Despite the government and critics' objections, the Fifth International Festival of Song in 1970 poved to be a breakthrough year for a number of soul-styled Brazilian artists. The Dom Salvador group backed Maria Alcina and Luiz Antonio on Salvador's composition, "Abolição 1860–1980." Erlon Chaves and Banda Veneno showcased the Jorge Ben dance-floor scorcher, "Eu Também Quero Mocotó," with a controversial performance where two blonde dancers lavished kisses on the Black bandleader in a choreographed routine. This bold stunt offended the dictatorship's social and racial sensibilities and resulted in a short jail sentence for Mr. Chaves, replete with interrogation and torture.

Toni Tornado, backed by the Black vocal group Trio Ternura, made his debut with a powerful Solomon Burke-ified ballad, "B.R. 3," written by Antonio Adolfo. Standing at over six feet tall, dressed in the latest Harlem fashions, and sporting an Afro, Adolfo and his performance made a larger-than-life impression on the Brazilian public. With a powerful soul-inspired vocal style and the image to match, he challenged the traditional image of a Black Brazilian

performer. Toni had only recently returned from living in New York City, where he soaked up the radical culture and politics of late-'60s Harlem. His appearance at the festival resulted in two LPs, a bunch of singles, and persistent attention from the military police for wearing his modern Black identity on his brightly colored, polyester sleeve. He was falsely accused of starting a Brazilian chapter of the Black Panthers and routinely harassed for his romantic relationship with a popular, White actress.

TIM MAIA AND THE FIRST GENERATION OF BRAZILIAN SOUL

To anyone but a record collector or historian, Brazilian soul starts with Tim Maia. Maia's slow rise to stardom starts when he was forcibly repatriated from the U.S. for marijuana possession in 1963. After recording two singles in 1968 with little success, some of his songs found their way onto albums by some of Brazil's biggest stars, including Roberto Carlos, Erasmo Carlos, and, most importantly, Elis Regina on her 1970 album *Em Pleno Verão* where he joined her in a duet for his song "These Are the Songs." His first self-titled LP was released on Polydor that same year with no less than three hit singles, remaining on the Rio pop charts for twenty-four weeks. His next three LPs (1971–73), all self-titled, contain the majority of his best-known hits and stand as the most consistently excellent run by any Brazilian soul act. These albums single-handedly established Brazilian soul as more than a passing fad.

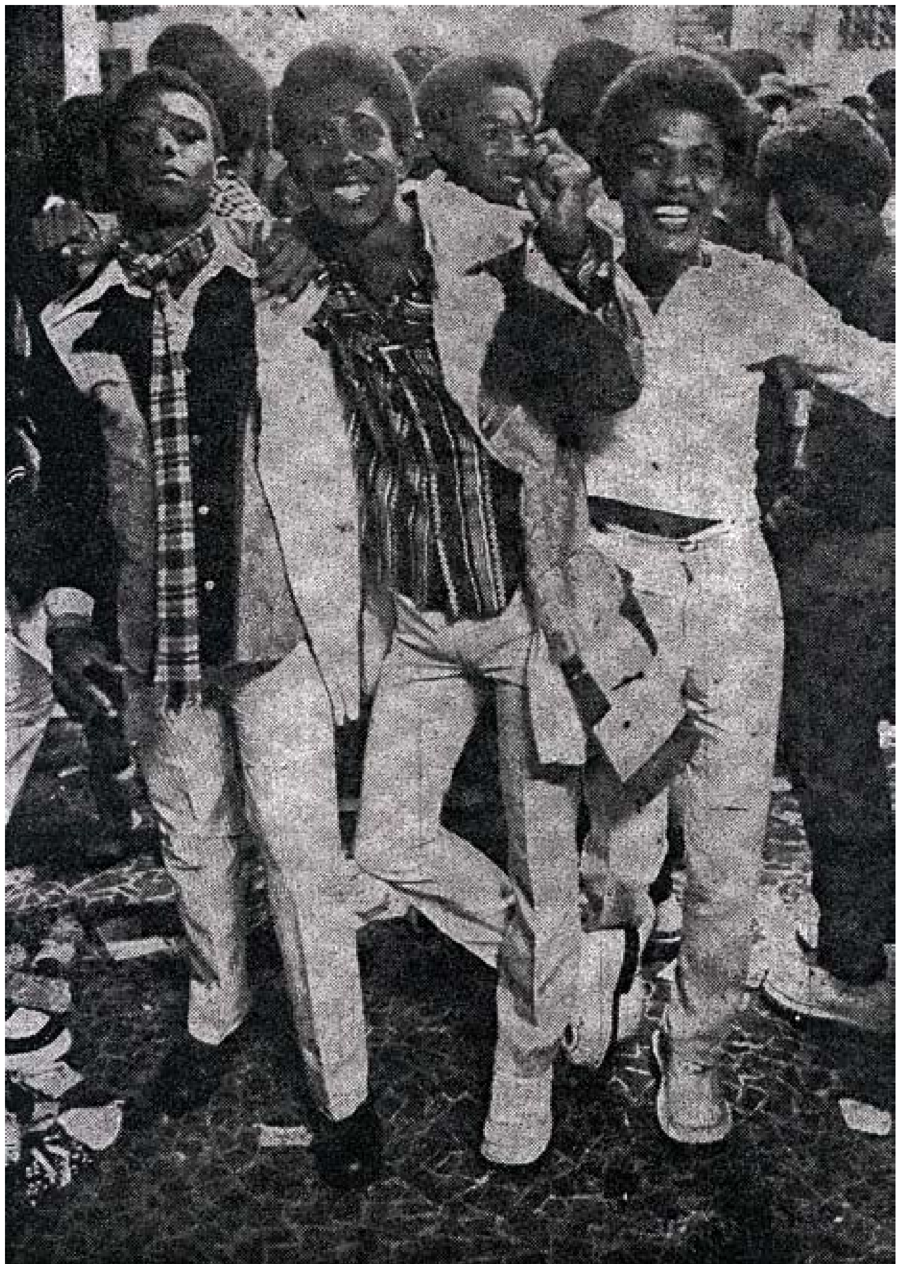
Tim Maia may have been the style's first superstar, but he was far from the only purveyor of Brazilian soul. Some of the lesser-known acts that received nominal chart attention were: Trio Ternura, Os Diagonais, Cassiano, Dom Salvador e Abolição, Gerson Côrtes (aka Gerson "King" Combo), Paulo Diniz, Toni Tornado, Tony and Frankye, and Hyldon. None of these artists managed to move many records outside of Rio and São Paulo. Some of these acts, like Cassiano and Gerson Côrtes specialized in straight covers of American soul styles, making Portuguese-language facsimiles of uptown soul and James Brown–styled funk, respectively. With the exception of Dom Salvador e Abolição's innovative fusion of jazz, soul, and traditional Brazilian styles on his 1970 album, *Som, Sangue e Raça*, an original Brazilian soul sound remained elusive, with only a few artists making significant strides beyond derivative, but admirable, mimicry.

Veteran Tim Maia guitarist, Paulinho Guitarra, remembers a couple of impromptu jam sessions at Tim Maia's house near Rio in Barra de Tijuca around 1974 as the birth of a new type of Brazilian soul. This new sound acknowledged its debts to Messrs. Brown, Isley, and Mayfield, but also paid respect to the Brazilian masters, such as Pixinguinha and Ary Barroso. The group gathered only a few times, but Paulinho recalls that the lineup included future Banda Black Rio founder, Oberdan, and Robson Jorge from Cassiano's band, alongside the usual Tim Maia players. He recalled that Tim recorded these sessions, but we can only assume that the tapes were lost, or, perhaps more likely, erased during Tim's adventure joining an extraterrestrial cult a few years later. It wasn't until years later, after hearing Banda Black Rio's debut album in 1977, that Paulinho recognized the significance of the trailblazing sound they were messing around with during the gatherings of "A Banda das Bandas" ("The Band of the Bands").[6]

Around the same time as these mythic jam sessions, promoters began incorporating live bands into the baile lineup. In a bizarre reversal of the typical logic for using DJs, the baile bands (*bandas dos bailes*) kept the party jumping in between DJ sets. These bands were versed in all the newest American hits as well as sambas, and, if they were adventurous, maybe even some originals. Many of the later stars of the recorded Black Rio scene got their start playing James Brown and Kool and the Gang covers at these weekend dances, namely União Black, Copa 7, Os Devaneios, and Ed Lincoln's classic lineup including Toni Tornado and Orlandivo.

A PARTY BECOMES A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

For kids in the Zona Norte, the soul parties opened a new world of sound, style, and understanding of what it meant to be Black. As the music, fashions, and politics of North American Blacks filtered down to Brazil through these weekly parties, thousands devoured the imported culture provided by the dozens of equipes populating the area. Equipes like Soul Grand Prix incorporated projections of American films like *Shaft*, *Superfly*, and *Wattstax* into their performances. Images of Black stars like the Jackson 5 and James Brown, and international and national Black sports heroes like Muhammad Ali and Pelé were regularly displayed as well. Jim Lee, an American who came to Rio to play for a local basketball team, began an import business bringing in popular Black hair products from the U.S.—



and even American whiskey.

The young, Black intellectuals that later formed the most influential Black political organization, Movimento Negro Unificado, saw an opportunity in these weekly Black Rio parties. According to Livio Sansone, a historian of the African diaspora, "especially in the beginning, Black activists identified soul dance nights as the place to be for canvassing against the dictatorship and its cultural censorship. Educated and less-educated Blacks met there to listen to soul music and to be inspired by U.S. Black political achievements and stylistic exploits."[7]

It wasn't long before this local phenomenon went national with help from Big Boy's radio shows and the Baile da Pesada tours. Black Rio's music and fashions found open ears and aspiring Afros in the ghettos of São Paulo, Salvador da Bahia, Porto Alegre, Brasília, and Belo Horizonte. Historian Michael Turner says that in the years preceding the growth of a full-fledged civil rights movement, "the influence of the 'soul' identification also spread within their Afro-Brazilian university student populations."[8] Around this same time period, 1976–79, there was a tremendous growth in the number of Afro-Brazilian student organizations and cultural groups connected with institutions of higher learning.

MOVING MAINSTREAM

Despite the success of soul-influenced stars like Tim Maia, Jorge Ben, and Erlon Chaves, it wasn't until 1974 that

O SOUL DO BLACK RIO

SOUL BRASILEIRO
HOME GROWN SOUL SCENE

M.P.B.
POPULAR BRASILIAN MUSIC INCLUDES ROCK, JAZZ, FOLK, ETC

JOVEM GUARDA
THE YOUNG GUARD [1960S POP-ROCKERS, A LA THE BEATLES]

THE BAILE SCENE
THE LIVE DANCE SCENE [DJS, DANCE BANDS, LABELS]

PAULO DINIZ
ERLON CHAVES E SUA BANDA VENENO
RAUL DE SOUZA
HELIO MATHEUS
MARCOS VALLE
BEBETO
HYLDON
AZIMUTH
SOM 3
JORGE BEN (JOR)
WILSON SIMONAL
GILBERTO GIL
OS DIAGONAIS
ROSA MARIA
SANDRA SÁ
BANDA BLACK RIO
DOM SALVADOR E ABOLIÇÃO
CAETANO VELOSO
TIM MAIA
CASSIANO
GERSON KING COMBO
TRIO MOCOTÓ
MARKU RIBAS
ANTONIO ADOLFO (E A BRAZUCA)
TONY & FRANKYE
DI MELO
UNIÃO BLACK
MIGUEL DE DEUS
CARLOS DAFÉ
LINCOLN OLIVETTI & ROBSON JORGE
LUIZ MELODIA
JOÃO DONATO
TONY BIZARRO
EDUARDO ARAÚJO
TONI TORNADO
ED LINCOLN
ORLANDIVO
GOLDEN BOYS
COPA 7
SERGINHO MERITI
WILSON DAS NEVES
TRIO ESPERANÇA
TRIO/QUINTETO TERNURA
ALMIR RICARDI
OS DEVANEIOS
SOUL GRAND PRIX
ADEMIR
GETÚLIO CÔRTES
EVINHA
ALMA BRASILEIRA
WEA LABEL
BRASIL SHOW
BIG BOY

ARTIST/ ARTISTA
GROUPS/ GRUPOS
DJ/ DJ
PRODUCER/ PRODUTOR
SONG WRITER/ COMPOSITOR
LABEL/ GRAVADORA
MEMBER OF BAND/ MEMBRO DO GRUPO
CLOSE AFFINITY/ AFINIDADE PROXIMA

there was a record released in Brazil explicitly targeted at the teens and young adults attending these weekly parties. Andre Midani, president of the newly launched WEA (Brazil's wing of Warner Brothers Records), tapped the popular DJ equipe Soul Grand Prix to put together a set from their weekly parties for a compilation LP. Still in the depths of the military dictatorship, the aggressive police presence at the record-release party signaled their disapproval of the migration of the soul scene aboveground. Soul Grand Prix founder and DJ, Don Filó, retells the incident that went down at the Guadalupe Country Club that night: "I grabbed the microphone and acknowledged the presence of the police chief, saying that he was here to keep order. It was all I could do. He told me that I was determined to make trouble and that their orders were to put an end to it. They put a hood over my head and took me away to be interrogated."[9]

Thankfully, the military police were not the target audience for Soul Grand Prix's compilation, which featured the full version of Donny Hathaway's "The Ghetto," as well as Aretha's "Respect," and an original song recorded in Brazil, an Azymuth-led cover of Passport's "Ju Ju Man." The record was a hit for WEA, and Midani began looking for a Brazilian band to record the kind of music the kids were dancing to every weekend at the bailes.

THE BIRTH OF BANDA BLACK RIO

Banda Black Rio arrived late to the movement, but in a

way they were always there. Members of Banda Black Rio played on nearly all of the major Brazilian soul and funk hits, including albums by Tim Maia, Paulo Diniz, Dom Salvador e Abolição, Luiz Melodia, and Helio Matheus. According to Ed Motta, Banda Black Rio were special, because they were to the Black Rio movement as "Antonio Carlos Jobim was to the bossa nova movement. They were bigger artistically, and, technically speaking, they were more sophisticated and more musically trained [than others in their respective movements]. And [Banda Black Rio] had Oberdan."[10]

Banda Black Rio, more than any other single artist, represents the heights of the Black Rio movement. Prior to being approached by WEA's Andre Midani to create an album that would capitalize on the huge, and largely untapped, domestic soul and funk market, Oberdan and his band mates were a group of session musicians loosely organized as Senzala (translation: slave quarters). Many of these players appeared on Luiz Melodia's 1976 album, *Maravilhas Contemporaneas*. Within months of Banda Black Rio's debut, they were one the biggest breakthroughs of the year, with countless bands following in their blend of samba, funk, and jazz, among them Alma Brasileira, Copa 7, Os Devaneios, Brasil Show, Dom Mita, and Banda Black Rio's extended family of Carlos Dafé and Sandra Sá.

TROPICALIA MEETS BLACK RIO

Banda Black Rio may have been the hottest new band, but to the music critics they were nothing more than a derivative party band and a passing fad. Also in 1977, the darlings of the Brazilian music industry, Gilberto Gil (a Black Brazilian) and Caetano Veloso (a light-skinned mulatto by Brazilian standards, but White to most Americans), made a trip to the Negro Festival of Art and Culture, hosted in Lagos, Nigeria. Reinvigorated and loaded with fresh ideas and material, they set to work on their upcoming albums. Caetano's album, *Bicho,* traded in the subtle simplicity of his previous albums for a set of slinky funk grooves that drew equally from his experiences in Nigeria and exposure to the Black Rio scene. Brazil was still very much a dictatorship, and, to the disappointment of leftist critics and radicals, Caetano's new album lacked the covert political commentaries he was known for. To make matters worse, the program for the two supporting shows in Rio and São Paulo featured Banda Black Rio as his backing band, and critics pointed out that the programs for the shows "irresponsibly" announced that the music was "made for dancing."[11]

While Gilberto Gil's music never made secret his Bahian heritage, he rarely addressed race more universally. On *Refavela*, he enthusiastically embraced his Blackness, adopting the pan-Africanism of reggae's dreadlocks and the funky, syncopated groove of Stevie Wonder and Earth, Wind and Fire. Critics saw it as a cheap ploy to sell more records, as this was his most commercial and accessible record to date. But the lyrical content reveals an exploration of his Bahian heritage from a new vantage point. The song "Ilê Aiyê," named after Salvador da Bahia's recently founded all-Black carnival percussion ensemble (bloco) is the most explicit in its reference to modern Black empowerment:

Somo criolo doido — We're crazy creoles
Somo bem legal — We're pretty cool
Temo cabelo duro — We got kinky hair
Somo bleque pau — We're Black power

Branco, se você soubesse — White man, if you only knew
O valor que preto tem — The value of Blackness
Tu tomava banho de piche — If you took a bath in sap
Ficava preto também — You'd be Black too

LE BATEAU
AO VIVO

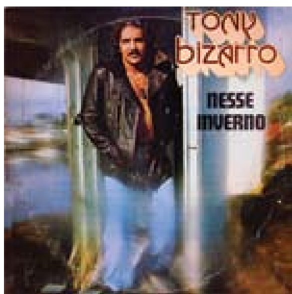
le bateau ao vivo 1½
or ademir's selections

BANDA BLACK RIO
Gafieira Universal

MARIA FUMAÇA
Banda Black Rio

BANDA BLACK RIO
SACI PERERÊ

ÁFRICA BRASIL
JORGE BEN

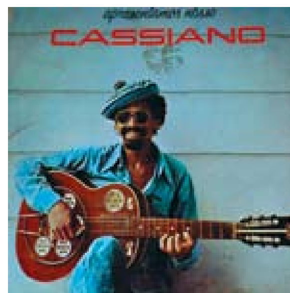
BIG-BOY & ADEMIR
BAILE DA PESADA

Tony bizarro
NESSE INVERNO

a onda é BOOGALOO
EDUARDO ARAUJO

BS
Brasil Show

ALMA BRASILEIRA

SOUL

CASSIANO
IMAGEM E SOM

CASSIANO

O SOM DO
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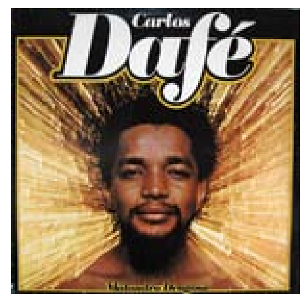
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Dafé

Dafé
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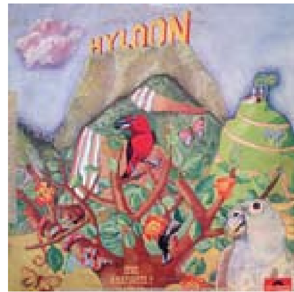
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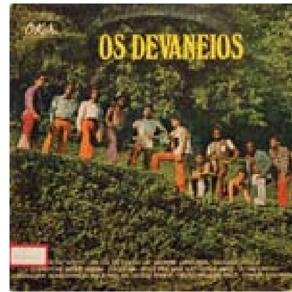
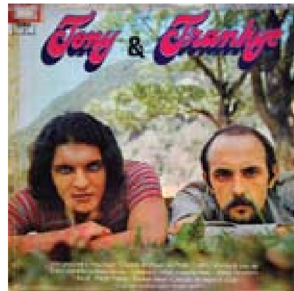

OS DEVANEIOS

RCA
VICTOR
OS DIAGONAIS


Tony & Franky

GERSON King COMBO

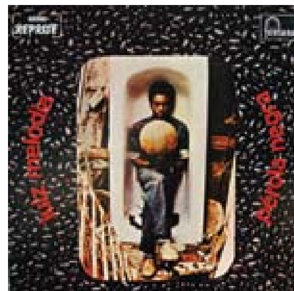
GERSON King COMBO

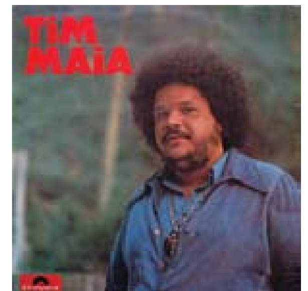
HELIO MATHEUS

NOVA HISTÓRIA DE AMOR
HYLDON

Hyldon

Ivan Lins, AGORA...

A BANDA DO ZÉ PRETINHO
JORGE
BEN

REPRISE

tim
maia

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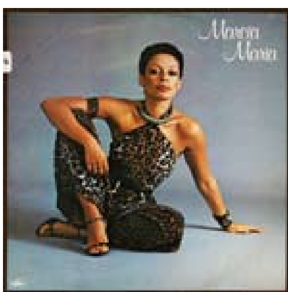

MARKU

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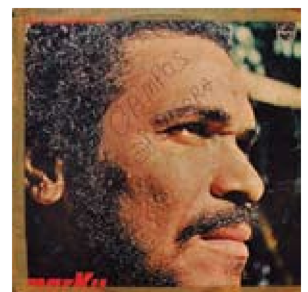

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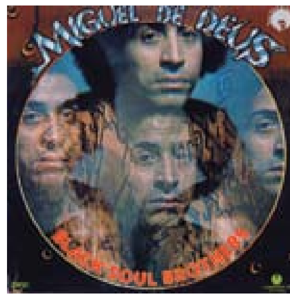
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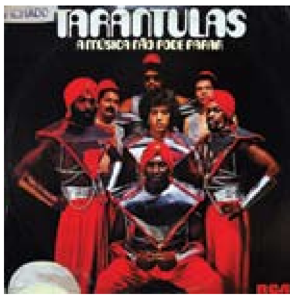
BLACK SOUL BROTHERS

OS DEVANEIOS
RAÇA SUOR e SUINGUE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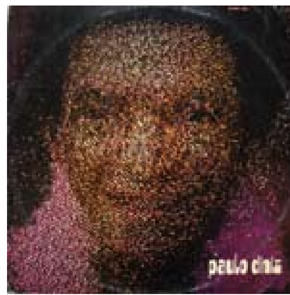
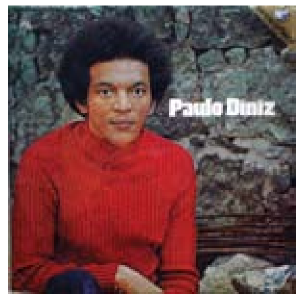
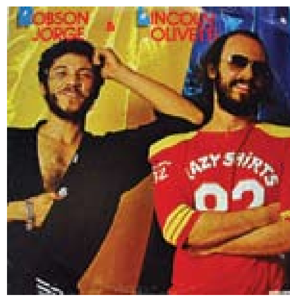
A MÚSICA NÃO PODE PARAR


paulo diniz


Paulo Diniz

RAULZINHO
IMPACTO 8
INTERNATIONAL HOT

gilbertogil

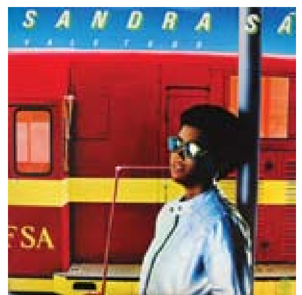


Dom Salvador

SOM, SANGUE E RAÇA
dom salvador
e abolição

SANDRA SÁ

SANDRA SÁ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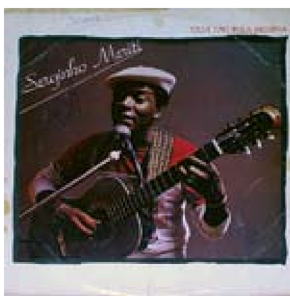
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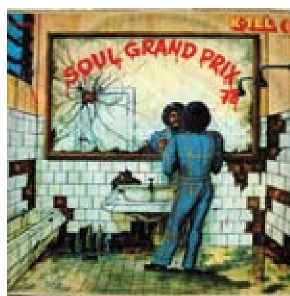
SERGINHO MERITI
Bons Momentos


SOUL GRAND PRIX 78

SOUL GRAND PRIX

SOM NOSSO

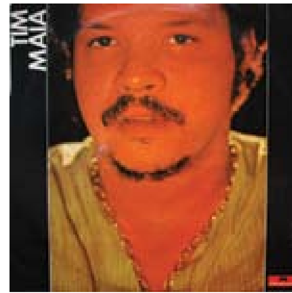
S.O.S.
BAND IT

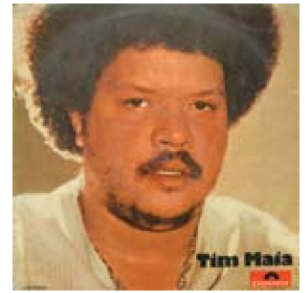
Soul Layzer

Taxi
TAXA
livre

Quinteto Ternura

Tim Maia
Disco Club


TIM MAIA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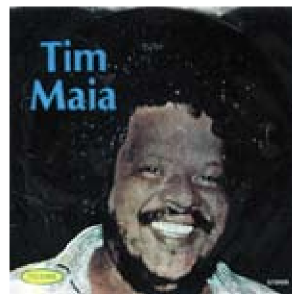
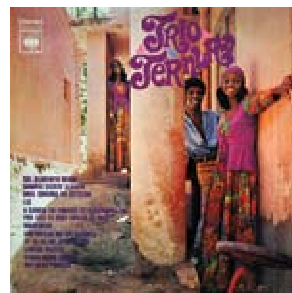
Tim Maia


Tim Maia

TIM MAIA RACIONAL

Toni Tornado

TONI TORNADO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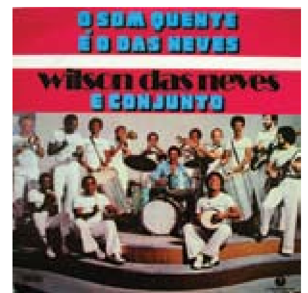
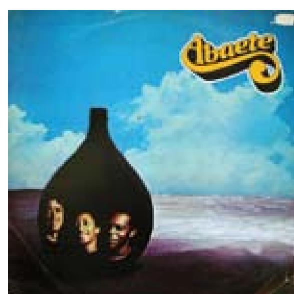
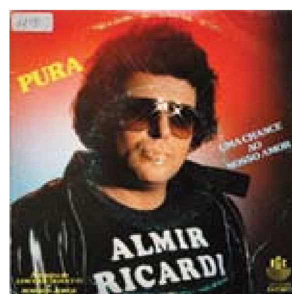
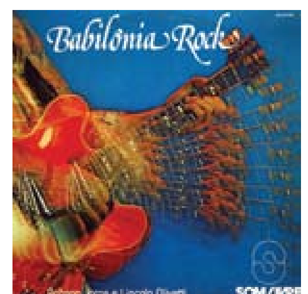

O SOM QUENTE
É O DAS NEVES
wilson das neves
E CONJUNTO

O SOM DOS BLACKS

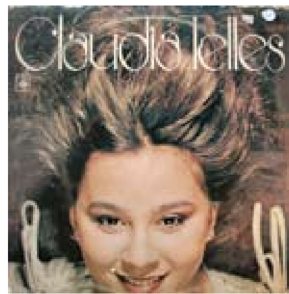


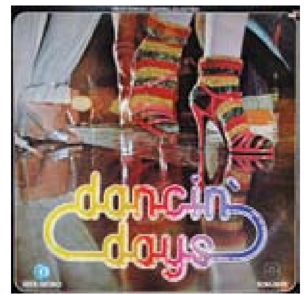

PURA
UMA CHANCE AO NOSSO AMOR
ALMIR RICARDI


Babilônia Rock
SOM LIVRE

CASSIANO
CU BAN SOUL
COLEÇÃO
DE HARLEM BAR
SALVE ESSA FLOR
CENTRAL DO BRASIL
18 KILATES

CHICO
BATERA
RITMO


Claudia Telles

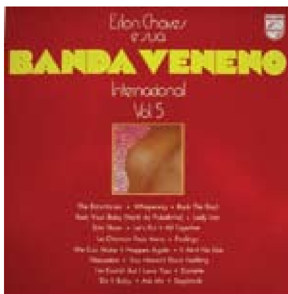

dancin' days

erlon chaves
banda veneno - vol. 1
PREÇO ECONÔMICO

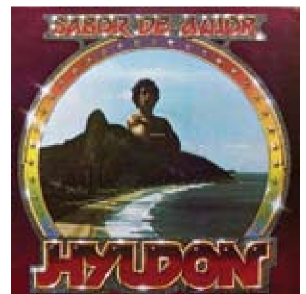
BANDA VENENO
internacional
ERLON CHAVES

BANDA VENENO

BANDA VENENO
Erlon Chaves
Internacional Vol. 4


Erlon Chaves e sua
BANDA VENENO
Internacional
Vol. 5

GERSON King COMBO
MANDAMENTOS BLACK
FOI UM SONHO SÓ
UMA CHANCE
GOD SAVE THE KING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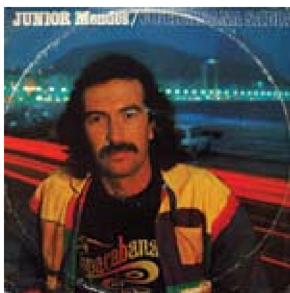
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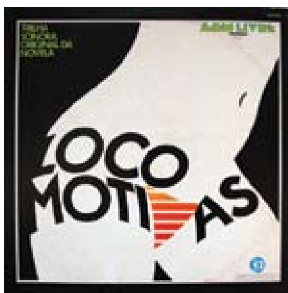
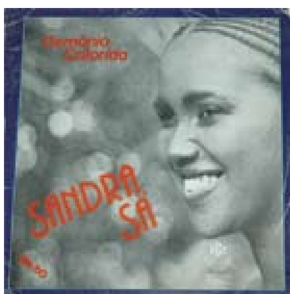
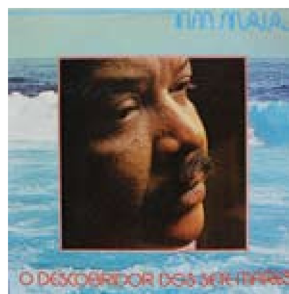

TRILHA SONORA ORIGINAL DA NOVELA
LOCOMOTIVAS

MÚSICAS DO FILME
SÁBADO
ALUCINANTE
RCA

SAMBA 6


SANDRA SÁ

tim maia


TIM MAIA
O DESCOBRIDOR DOS SETE MARES

TIM MAIA
E CONVIDADOS

Tim Maia

TRIO
ESPERANÇA

TRIO SAN
UNIDOS DO DIA-A-DIA
MPB

WALTEL
BRANCO
MEU BALANÇO

sambatropi

AMOR IMENSO
TÁ DANDO MOLE, ZÉ

COPA 7

GERSON
CORTES

Jingle
Black
Gerson
King
Combo

Hélio
Matheus
Eu, réu, me condeno

Melô do
Mão
Branca

TRIBUTO A MARTIN LUTHER KING
DEIXA QUEM QUIZER FALAR
ESTA CHEGANDO A HORA
ELA E DEMAIS
WILSON SIMONAL

BRAZIL
BANDA
UNIÃO
BLACK

SOM LIVRE
LUIZ MELODIA
DISCO
Invendável
ÉBANO

JORGE ALFREDO E
CHICO EVANGELISTA

DISCOS CBS
33 1/3

SEROMA
TIM MAIA
LADO B
DO LEME AO PONTAL

CLACK
RUBÃO SABINO
VELHO GUERREIRO

Polydor
TAMANQUEIRO

THE FUNK'S A FLAMIN'

For a brief, shining moment, Black Rio reached unprecedented heights, where pop stars like Caetano and Gil got down to the funky sound, and every night Banda Black Rio was heard performing the intro theme to the country's most popular soap opera. In 1976 and 1977, three monster albums cemented the legacy of Brazilian soul and funk: Cassiano's *Cuban Soul*, Tim Maia's *Disco Club*, and Banda Black Rio's debut, *Maria Fumaça*. All three records had multiple chart hits and, even more importantly, placed songs on major Brazilian soap-opera soundtracks.

Also in 1976, the cover story in the nationally distributed magazine, *Jornal do Brasil*, profiled the phenomenon, coining the term "Black Rio." Lena Frias's article spanned five full pages, filled with pictures and interviews detailing the peculiarities of this "foreign" phenomenon.[12] While this article announced the movement to the wider Brazilian public, individuals within the movement bridled at its condescension towards the "(imported) pride of being Black in Brazil." An article about Black Rio in such a high-profile publication (Brazil's equivalent to *Time* magazine) also attracted heightened attention to the movement from the government. Evidently, the military police also read the article, paying close attention to the suggested connection between leftist Black power groups and the DJ equipes. Shortly after the article appeared, a founding member of the Black Power equipe, among many others, was taken into police custody for interrogation.

WHEN THE PARTY'S OVER

It's easy to blame disco for Black Rio's demise. Naturally, the arrival of the film *Saturday Night Fever* to Brazil was the most visible culprit, but other factors contributed to the near-sudden collapse of the Black Rio movement. Disco's arrival in Brazil momentarily found partygoers in both

Zona Norte and Zona Sul hustling to the same funky backbeat. Black Rio bailes had been playing "disco music" since before it was called disco, but only now with Hollywood's stamp of approval was it alright for rich, White Brazilians to do it. Black Rio performers could still animate the crowd with their usual blend of funk, soul, and samba, but it was as if the popular support behind their movement jumped overboard, clamoring onto the good ship disco, helmed by Nelson Motta and his luscious crew of disco divas, As Freneticas. The disco boom unfortunately coincided with the record labels' push for Black Rio, resulting in surprisingly poor sales. The young, Black partygoers that the record labels were targeting kept showing up to dance, but they weren't buying the albums, says Hermano Vianna:

> The majority of records released as "Brazilian soul" were a disaster in the market. The sound of these domestic arrangements, with the exception of Tim Maia, failed to please the dancing cariocas. The record labels slowly started to back away from the Black Rio sound, arguing that if there existed a block of Brazilian funkateers, they didn't have the sufficient "acquisition power" to buy records.[13]

With disco appealing to both White and Black consumers, Black Rio artists found their support disappear almost overnight. Attempts to break the scene into the mainstream smoldered. A Soul Grand Prix–sponsored tour for Archie Bell and the Drells in 1976 ended in financial disaster, leaving the equipe to pay the tour's debts by selling off some of their equipment.

The DJ equipes, by this point major businesses, some with franchises across the country, chose sides as the loosely allied funk forces divided into two camps: funk (pronounced: "funk-E") and *charme* (pronounced: "sharm-E"). Funk drew on the two newest imports from up north, hip-hop and Miami bass, fusing them together to create a uniquely Brazilian concoction with all the funk of Black Rio but none of the social consciousness. During the early '80s, most of the Black Rio loyalists found more in common with the charme trend, as it "continued to be faithful to Black American music" and was "a more 'mature' funk, melodic, and not as heavy as hip-hop. The parties were once again packed," according to Hermano Vianna. But by the mid-'80s, funk and hip-hop (pronounced "hippy-hoppy") dominated a majority of the bailes and the radio stations.

THE BLACK RIO LEGACY

The modern Black sounds drifting south from North America with their matching fashions and politics of "Black

and proud" had no place in elite Brazil's idea of what Black Brazilians were supposed to listen to, dance to, and represent. But they danced anyway, and at the peak of the movement, tens of thousands of Black youth participated each weekend in dances in the northern and southern zones of Rio de Janeiro.[14] The prominent Brazilian sociologist and the brain behind the Brazilian ideology of "racial democracy," Gilberto Freyre, voiced his disapproval of Black Rio in an op-ed in 1977:

> Perhaps my eyes are deceiving me? Or did I really read that the United States will be arriving in Brazil...Americans of color to convince Brazilians, also of color, that their dances and their Afro-Brazilian songs need to be melancholy and rebellious? And not, as it is today, sambas, which are almost all happy and fraternal.[15]

Behind Freyre's desperate attempt to salvage a racial utopia lies a sincere fear by many White elites that "Black soul was the harbinger of a protest movement by Afro-Brazilians." This realization implied that "Afro-Brazilians would have to develop forms of critical consciousness and organization that were specific to them, and therefore not national." The racially harmonious Brazilian identity crafted in the previous decades appeared to be on the verge of collapse, and "to allow such a process to occur would be to admit, nationally, to both racial discrimination and racial identification."[16]

Just as jazz and soul became intertwined with the movement for racial equality in the U.S., the Black Rio movement pushed Brazilians to challenge the country's racial stereotypes. James Brown's anthemic "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud" helped open Black Brazilians' minds to a world of possibilities for them, while making visible the myriad invisible ceilings built so low they couldn't even "stand up" to "be counted." In the '70s, Brazil was a country where foreign movies portraying interracial relationships were banned and popular romantic singer, Carmen Silva, asked her producers: "Does being Black mean that I have to sing samba?"[17]

The Black Rio legacy lives on today in Brazil's burgeoning hip-hop scene and with the pop stars that grew up during the movement's heyday. Megastar Fernanda Abreu's 2000 hit, "Baile da Pesada," name-dropped Big Boy, Ademir, and Messiê Limá, while reminding Brazilians of the kinds of suburban throw-downs that existed before the bass-heavy "baile funk" parties dominated Rio's suburban nightlife. The Black Rio sound lives a new life in the samples and references dropped by Brazilian DJs and MCs like Marcelo D2, Racionais MCs, and others. Thanks to this younger generation, Brazilians are reevaluating the contribution of Banda Black Rio, Tim Maia, and Toni Tornado, among others, to the expansion of Brazil's musical palette.

In the last decade, this resurgence resulted in new recordings from Banda Black Rio (now fronted by Oberdan's son, William Magalhães), Trio Mocotó, Gerson King Combo, and União Black, not to mention an all-star tribute to Tim Maia, who died in 1998. Brazilian and international record companies steadily release reissues of classic '70s recordings by Copa 7, Banda Black Rio, Cassiano, Tony Bizarro, not to mention at least a half dozen Brazilian funk compilations.

In my own attempt to build my collection, I emailed Sir Dema after my trip, suggesting we swap records. I sent him a short list, not convinced he would have any of them. He wrote back saying he had a majority of them and would part with them for a couple items off of his list. Not a soul or funk novice, I was sure I could handle whatever he was looking for, but upon receiving his list, I was floored. An obscure Maceo Parker single was the most recognizable item. This was no elaborate prank on an enthusiastic gringo: This is Black Rio; it's the real deal with real soul.

Allen Thayer *interviewed Deodato for Issue 7.*

Notes

1. Mr. Funk Santos in Claudia Assef's *Todo DJ Já Sambou*, pg. 47, São Paulo, 2003.
2. Translated from Portuguese, "Big Boy: 'Por Que Me Chamam de Careta?'" *Rolling Stone* (Brazil) 2/1/1972.
3. Interview with Ed Motta, Rio de Janiero, August 2004.
4. Translated from Portuguese, "O Que é Black Rio, Segundo Ademir," *Jornal da Musica* 2/17/1977.
5. Taken from interview with Bruce Gilman in "Unerring Light," *Brazzil Magazine*, (www.brazzil.com), April 2002.
6. Interview with Paulinho Guitarra, Rio de Janeiro, August 2004.
7. Livio Sansone, *Blackness Without Ethnicity*, New York, 2003, pg. 116.
8. J. Michael Turner, "Brown into Black: Changing Racial Attitudes," pg. 74, from Fontaine, Pierre-Michel, *Race, Class and Power in Brazil*.
9. Adilson Pereira, "Cultura Black na Ativa," *Jornal do Brasil*, July 26, 2000.
10. Interview with Ed Motta, Rio de Janiero, August 2004.
11. Paulo Cesar de Araúju, *Eu Não Sou Cachorro, Não!: Musica Popular Cafona e Ditadura Militar*, Rio de Janeiro, 2002, pg. 272.
12. Lena Frias, "Black Rio – O Orgulho (Importado) de Ser Negro No Brasil" in *Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, 1976.
13. Hermano Vianna, *O Mundo Funk Carioca*, Rio de Janeiro, 1988, pg. 30–31.
14. Ibid, pg. 24.
15. Gilberto Freyre, "Atenção Brasileiros" in *Diario de Pernambuco* (Recife), "Opiniao" section, A-13, 15 May 1977, cited from Michael George Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power*, Princeton, NJ, 1994, pg. 115.
16. Ibid, pg. 115.
17. Paulo Cesar de Araújo, *Eu Não Sou Cachorro, Não!: Musica Popular Cafona e Ditadura Militar*, Brazil, 2002, pg. 320.