

Lúcio Rangel Eating “Soft-Boiled Eggs with Noel Rosa”: The Invention of a Historiography of Popular Music

*Lúcio Rangel comendo “ovos quentes com Noel Rosa”:
a invenção de uma historiografia da música popular*

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RESUMO

Durante as décadas de 1950 e 1960 uma geração de jornalistas que vivia na cidade do Rio de Janeiro se preocupou em comentar e analisar de maneira sistemática diversos aspectos da formação da música popular urbana no Brasil. Profundamente interessados no assunto que fazia parte também de suas próprias experiências de vida, eles ultrapassaram os limites da crônica jornalística e trataram de realizar exaustivos inventários, organizaram admiráveis coleções privadas e reuniram bibliografia sobre o assunto. O jornalista Lúcio Rangel (1914-1979) estava no centro desse processo. Sua trajetória de vida carioca foi importante na constituição de certa memória em torno do fenômeno, e seu trabalho jornalístico ocupou lugar de destaque na formação da crítica especializada sobre música popular. Este artigo tem como objetivo examinar de modo crítico

ABSTRACT

During the 1950s and 60s, a generation of journalists living in the city of Rio de Janeiro became engaged in systematically commenting on and analysing various aspects of the origins of Brazil's urban popular music. Deeply interested in the subject, which also formed part of their own life experiences, they pushed beyond the limits of newspaper columns and produced exhaustive inventories, organized remarkable private collections and compiled bibliographies on the subject. Journalist Lúcio Rangel (1914-1979) was at the heart of this process. His life experience in Rio de Janeiro was important in building a memory around the phenomenon and his journalistic work had a major role in the development of specialized reviews of popular music. This article aims to critically examine aspects of this process so as to

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aspectos desse conjunto para compreender melhor o papel de Lúcio Rangel na construção de certa narrativa historiográfica sobre a música popular. Palavras-chave: Lúcio Rangel; historiografia; música popular; narrativas; historiadores.

better understand Lúcio Rangel's role in building a historiographic narrative on popular music.

Keywords: Lúcio Rangel; historiography; popular music; narratives; historians.

SEEN AND HEARD

In 1954, the journalist Lúcio Rangel (1914-1979) published a curious column in the magazine *Manchete* in which he comments on his long and rich activity as a popular music critic. He begins the text stating the following: “after all, over these 40 years, the columnist has seen and heard many things worth remembering” (Rangel, 2007, p. 60). And he proceeds to recollect the small events lived by himself. To an extraordinary degree the text echoes the conceptions present in a group of columnists who shared very similar worldviews, everyday experiences and intellectual practices (Moraes, 2007). The initial phase of the column contains some interesting aspects. Firstly his biological life merges with his column writing and his interest in popular music: for someone born in 1914, looking back and recollecting the past from 1954, the ‘40 years’ elapsed represent precisely his entire life! What matters is not the numerical extravagance of the claim, but the rhetoric used by the author: what he really wishes to emphasize is his involvement from the outset in popular music, and the fact that his life merges completely with it. As a consequence, he saw and heard many of the events that took place, qualifying him to describe them with the authority of an eye witness. Remembering them is an important social task, but it also means describing the intimacy that accompanied Noel Rosa eating “soft-boiled eggs in the Chave de Ouro” (Rangel, 2007, p. 60). Fully integrated into the musical scene, Rangel spent his time “studying the subject, developing my passion for musicians like Mário Reis, Pixinguinha and Cartola, among others, to whom I became close and with whom I developed a strong friendship.” The journalist Sérgio Augusto, Lúcio’s son-in-law, relates other examples of the camaraderie of someone who “frequented the house of Pixinguinha and Cartola, had sex with countless *mulatas* in the bed of Paulo da Portela, in the suburb of Osvaldo Cruz... and pissed copiously in the garden of Jacob do Bandolim” (Augusto, 2007, p. 12 and 18). This affective proximity to artists was a matter of pride for the columnists in question and, from a professional

viewpoint, was a way to become qualified to discuss the subject. Two decades later Sérgio Cabral would stress this condition when he said in conversation with Lúcio that he had “that temperament... that involves you becoming friends with people who like popular music. I mean, you became friends with Pixinguinha, João da Baiana” (Eu beije..., 1974, p. 10).

Lúcio Rangel was the son of a bourgeois family, as revealed even in the lengthy name: Lúcio Cardoso do Nascimento Silva Goulart de Ataíde Arruda Câmara do Rego Rangel. He had a school and university education of which he was proud, sometimes even somewhat boastful, saying, for example, that “by the age of 14 I had already read Machado [de Assis], Flaubert in French” and that he was one of the “biggest connoisseurs of eighteenth-century French literature.” He took a law course at the former Universidade do Brasil and presented a monograph on the influence of German philosophy on the Italian criminal law schools.¹ Despite this schooling, Lúcio decided to immerse himself in Bohemian life, the artistic world and popular music reviews during a period when the latter “possessed not the slightest prestige... it was outside the purview of anyone with a university education.” This was not, therefore, a life “worthy of a grandson of Dr. Nascimento e Silva” (Eu beije..., 1974, p. 10).² Nonetheless, he never stopped frequenting literary circles and remained in contact with dozens of renowned intellectuals, like Mário de Andrade, Rubem Braga, Paulo Mendes Campos and Vinícius de Moraes, among many others. It was for this very reason, indeed, that the musicologist Brasília Itiberê called Lúcio “a curious case of *doublage*, functioning as both popular and erudite” (Itiberê, 1962, p. 8). Journalism and popular music were, in fact, cultural and social universes in which the rigid boundaries between the elite and popular cultures were broken down and traversed continuously.

Although he had been in contact with music since childhood through the bands playing on Afonso Pena Square and had ventured to be a singer as a youth,³ like the peers of his generation, it was through journalism and Bohemian life that Lúcio Rangel entered the world of the popular music of Rio de Janeiro and its musicians. He worked in the editorial offices of dozens of newspapers and magazines, writing hundreds of articles, building his influence and acquiring importance as a music critic. Lúcio was also a tireless reader and writer, as well as an inveterate Bohemian. This made him a mixture of worker, intellectual and Bohemian, a profile that to some extent converged with the world of popular musicians. All the signs are that this triple condition caused problems for him when it came to concentrating on writing a rigorous work on the theme that so absorbed him. Despite his huge interest in literature and music, Lúcio was

unconcerned about writing books and perhaps his evidently self-critical and irreverent posture only compounded the issue. The need to write incessantly in the press for his survival, his compulsive reading and the many whisky-soaked nights certainly absorbed much of his time and attention (Augusto, 2014).

His only work appeared in 1962 and, even so, amounted to a small collection of texts already written and published in the press. It gained the suggestive name of *Sambistas e chorões* [Players of Samba and Choro], the two core genres placed by the critics of the period at the origin of urban popular music (Rangel, 1962). The other book would appear posthumously in 2007, thanks to the efforts of his son-in-law, journalist and critic Sérgio Augusto. This work, called *Samba, jazz & outras notas* [Samba, jazz & other notes] (Rangel, 2007), was a new collection of texts published in newspapers and magazines, selected by his son-in-law. His introduction provides an insight into the profile of the former journalist, someone who always seems highly resistant to this type of reverence. The tone of the book is the same as the previous one: much remembering of the good times, memories of musician friends, recollections of interesting facts, personal reminiscences, chronicles of the everyday and the odd polemic. As a novelty, one section contains nine texts on jazz, another perennial interest of the critic. According to Sérgio Augusto and Hermínio Bello de Carvalho, in this universe he was also a 'purist' and only liked traditional jazz made by black musicians.⁴

Both collections are in reality an extension of his journalistic work, since they comprise a selection of articles published in the Rio press between the end of the 1950s and the start of the 1960s. *Sambistas e Chorões* contains more interesting and substantial articles, so much so that the later *Samba, jazz* included more than half (eight) of the 14 columns originally present in *Sambistas e Chorões*. Presented right at the outset of his main work are some of the intellectual traits shared by the group of music critics that was forming as a cultural and intellectual novelty (Moraes, 2007). First he reiterates the argument of the authority of someone who is writing about musicians that "I knew or know at close hand." But he also emphasizes that those "who I was unable to reach are discussed here through what I could learn about them." Furthermore, he repeats the explanation found in the books of colleagues of his generation, namely that he had not written a book on the "history of our popular music, only a contribution that may prove useful to those who wish to produce such a history in the future" (Rangel, 1962, p. 9). In other words, apparently the work aims to be one more record of memories and eyewitness testimony for future historians to be able to use as a critical reference point. Soon after, though, it becomes

clear that the work goes a little beyond this modest status of a memoir. Finally, the introduction to the work is written by a renowned academic authority from the area: a professor from the Rio de Janeiro School of Music and folklorist, Brasília Itiberê. Curiously, at the end of the introduction the musicologist lets slip that he had not read the book, but immediately acknowledges that, at any rate, it “will be a valuable contribution to the study of our popular music.” He goes further, emphasizing that “Lúcio is undoubtedly one of the best connoisseurs of Rio’s popular music” (Rangel, 1962, p. 8).

The themes presented in the book are varied and reveal the vast field of interest of the *carioca* journalist. Present, of course, are the small and inevitable biographies and analyses of the trajectory and work of his favourite musicians like Pixinguinha, Vadico and Noel. He discusses disparate topics such as the relations between cordel literature and music, or the first ‘phonographic records,’ where he explores aspects of the phonographic industry in Brazil. The question of the record industry was always very important to Lúcio, who in some ways wanted to educate the reader through the vinyl record. At the end of the work he presents a text that became relatively well-known, the “minimal record collection of Brazilian popular music,” originally published in 1960 in the Sunday supplement of the *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper. In it he lists and describes the records he considers the most important for the newcomer wishing to become versed in popular music, dividing the records between composers and performers. This record collection is in some ways also related to the doomed project for an ‘Anthology of popular music,’ analysed later. The record collection is prescriptive in intent and, somewhat like an arbiter, classifies and hierarchizes the records that should be listened to, while also presupposing a kind of symbolic consumption. In this case, the overall tone of the symbolism is set by the valorisation of the ‘heroic times,’ the genuineness of the ‘old guard’ and the ‘good and authentic’ music of the past. Put otherwise, he wishes to convince the reader and especially the listener that “the past was really good, you know?” (Eu beije..., 1974, p. 10).

In the book also appears a text in which he approaches the question of Rio samba and the perspective of Mário de Andrade, which ended up attaining a degree of notability for obvious reasons: he mentions the tense and tricky relations between the São Paulo musicologist and Rio urban samba. Here Lúcio complains of the general superficiality of the works that examine the genre, sparing not even his peers when he asserts that *Samba* by Orestes Barbosa is not ‘scientific’ and that *Brasil Sonoro* by Mariza Lira has a “broad vision but lacks in depth” (Rangel, 1962, p. 32). In another text from the collection, he

returns to the subject and provides a clearer general critique in a clearer fashion: “Whenever they talk about Rio samba, music that, whether they like it or not, is the most widespread and beautiful of Brazil, many of our musicologists and folklorists lose themselves in a bewildering series of claims dug up from who knows where, drawing the most bizarre conclusions. Exceptions are rare” (Rangel, 1962, p. 54).

He claims that most of these problems and confusions could have been avoided had Mário de Andrade had not been so reluctant to study urban samba in depth. He expected the musicologist to write the “definitive study on the most popular music of Brazil.” In fact, Mário, Vinícius de Moraes and himself did make plans for a book outlining the aesthetic and social panorama of the genre, but it remained no more than “idle chat” (Rangel, 1962, p. 22). Some steps in this direction do, however, seem to have been taken after the death of the modernist, since a small and curious note can be found in the header of the page opposite to the table of contents in the first edition, informing the reader of the existence of a book in press entitled *Cancioneiro geral da música popular carioca* [General songbook of Rio popular music], written in collaboration with Vinícius de Moraes. As we know, though, the book was never published, probably due to the troubled and unruly life of the two authors (Augusto, 2014).

The relations between Lúcio and Mário de Andrade, recounted by the journalist on various occasions, still remain somewhat obscure. Everything suggests that they began indirectly in 1933 with the contact between the São Paulo scholar and the young Rio writers of *Revista Acadêmica*, founded that year by some students from the law faculty of the Universidade do Brasil. The magazine had modernist literary pretensions and was politically engaged, opposing President Getúlio Vargas and every kind of authoritarianism, adopting a non-party left-wing stance, though some of the magazine’s members, like Lacerda and his cousin Werneck de Castro, had links to the PCB (Brazilian Communist Party). Its editors were Murilo Miranda (director), Moacir Werneck de Castro, Carlos Lacerda and, of course, Lúcio Rangel, secretary for its first few issues and considered by Werneck the “least ostensibly political.” Following Mário’s move to Rio de Janeiro, this group began to meet periodically in the Taberna da Glória, located a few metres from the new residence of the São Paulo writer, “a bar-restaurant with chairs on the sidewalk, a highly unusual clientele, especially in the early hours when it was frequented by groups of *farristas* [revellers] and *mariposas da noite* [‘night moths’],* emerging from the nearby cabarets and brothels” (Castro, 1989, p. 22). Mario’s stay in Rio between 1938 and 1941 was fairly complicated from the personal and professional point

of view. Despondent and cynical, it seems that the Bohemian conviviality with the young Rio group helped reinvigorate him, despite the successive bouts of alcohol abuse. Remaining somewhat aloof from the traditional Rio intellectual circles, he was enthralled by the young group: “You are so well informed! You know about everything! You read books that I’ve never read! You discover, in the same newspapers that I read, articles and news stories that I’m unable to discover!” (Castro, 1989, p. 78). But undoubtedly a trade took place since the young men were equally attracted to the famous intellectual and had a keen desire to “absorb his flow of knowledge about literature, aesthetics, ethnography and music” (Castro, 1989, p. 69). In some ways, despite the clear hierarchy between the world of the ‘mandarins’ and ‘Bohemian literature,’ on these occasions such frontiers were breached (Darnton, 1987, p. 30).

There is no doubt that it was this group that deepened the interest of the young Lúcio – just 24 years old at the time – in literature and in Rio’s Bohemian life. It was also through this group that he established a connection with Mário, always closer personally and intellectually to Murilo Miranda and Moacyr Werneck. But some intimacy was established, since Lúcio got to travel with Murilo Miranda and his wife, accompanying the musicologist to a meeting in 1939 with students and young literati from Belo Horizonte (Jardim, 2015, p. 165). Years later he was also one of the guests invited by São Paulo’s acting mayor, William Salem,⁶ for the commemorations held following the writer’s death (O Jornal, 20 March 1954, p. 12). According to Lúcio, Mário de Andrade, despite his being older, was always the most lively figure at the tables of the Taberna or the Brahma. After much conversation on a variety of subjects and “after more than five beers downed,” the group generally finished the night singing merrily, but not a São Paulo rural samba, as he said ironically and provocatively. According to him, Mário “was a lover of malicious samba full of rhythm” (Rangel, 1962, p. 23) and really liked to sing the “very urban *Manguieira*, a samba by Assis Valente, which he found beautiful” (Rangel, 2007, p. 85).

CURERS, SORCERERS, WITCH DOCTORS AND MEDICS: THE *REVISTA DA MÚSICA POPULAR*

As can be observed, the intellectual work of Lúcio Rangel was not his books on popular music, but his writings in the press, which to some extent relativizes his activities – though not his influence – in the construction of a historiographic literature of popular music. In any event, the creation and publication of *Revista*

da Música Popular acquires more significance and prominence within this context. Over a two-year period, between October 1954 and September 1956, fourteen issues of the *Revista*⁷ were published in which popular music had a central and exclusive role. The most widely read publications at the time, like *Carioca* and *Pranove*, linked directly to radio broadcasters, Nacional and Mayrink Veiga respectively, and *Radiolândia* and *Revista do Rádio*, were closer to the dynamic of the radio and record industries, and to the fantasies created around the glamour of the show world. The musical universe and contents found in these publications were seen as simple marketing pieces for the broadcasters or material “of a low artistic level, trivia,” aimed at the “*macacas de auditório* [‘studio monkeys,’ referring to the mostly female working class radio and TV studio audiences]... and at the scandals in the personal lives of the singers” (Lenharo, 1995, p. 8). Lúcio pictured a magazine in which popular music would be treated at a higher cultural level, refusing precisely to “publish news stories and articles aimed at the private life of musicians or... scandalous events,” not accepting any “paid texts or photos”: in sum, a publication that railed against “the sectors that commercialize Brazilian music... like plagiarists of boleros, the fabricators of sambas.”⁸

Perhaps a careful comparison of *Revista da Música Popular* and *Revista Acadêmica* is inevitable, since the latter literary periodical was at the core of Lúcio’s intellectual development, as well as being his first experience with the practice of the world of publishing and analytic writing. But primarily because it evinced the possibility of producing specialized critical reviews, which he very probably transposed from literature to popular music. Even when its team was already some distance from university life, *Revista Acadêmica* continued to be published, albeit in highly irregular manner, until 1948. Speaking of the publication, Moacir Werneck de Castro gives some clues to the potential involuntary influences between the two magazines: “A prodigy of improvisation, published irregularly, a modest print run, scant funding sources, it survived almost as a miracle. It gained visibility, however, as a vehicle of new ideas, as an avant-garde organ in a period of intense searching for a Brazilian national identity” (Castro, 1989, p. 69).

This tone of avant-garde political, literary and aesthetic engagement certainly influenced the committed stance that Lúcio imprinted on *Revista da Música Popular*,⁹ dedicated precisely to the quest to recognize ‘Brazilian national identity’ through its best popular music. This music had to be remembered, respected, safeguarded and disseminated, taking the place of the mass-produced radio music of the post-war period. Yet the ‘good music’ that established the

deepest relations with Brazil’s cultural formation and national identity was rooted in the past and suffocated by contemporary musical commercialization. Paradoxically, then, for Lúcio and colleagues from his generation, the defence of ‘new ideas’ and the ‘avant-garde’ stance were turned upside-down given that they involved recuperating the past of popular music.¹⁰ It is very likely that all these principles worked to limit its readership, since it was clearly addressed to a particular ‘well-educated elite,’ connoisseurs and enthusiasts of a certain type of popular music.

Looking towards this horizon, the approach taken by RMP tended towards a more transcendent path, one defined by good aesthetic and musical taste and a commitment to the values of national culture. At the same time, however, it was directed towards a readership interested in the things of the radiophonic and phonographic world, also seduced by the life of its professional musicians and favourite stars who, as in other magazines, emblazoned its covers, ranging from Pixinguinha in the first issue to Orlando Silva in the last. This question was widely present among the analysts of popular music, pulled by the overarching aspiration to valorise popular music and by the “proposal to construct” something loftier and provide a “worthy service” (RMP, 2006, p. 25), precisely in the somewhat frivolous and banal universe of entertainment. For Lúcio Rangel specifically, this aspiration was stronger due to his trajectory as he shifted from the modernist literary world to popular music, linking and mediating between these two apparently antithetical worlds, as Brasília Itiberê highlighted. And Bohemia was one of the extraordinary places for the development of sociabilities that penetrated these limits and where the intermediations flowed naturally. From the modernist ‘Taberna’ of the 1930s and 40s to the samba circles, arriving in the glamorous Rio night world of the 1950s and 60s, the ‘Bohemian enchanter’ (Augusto, 2007, pp. 11-27) gradually became established, bestowing his charm, but also generating a series of conceptual and personal conflicts and even physical clashes.

It is extraordinary how these elements forming the personal trajectory and personality of Lúcio appear in RMP. It can be viewed as a privileged arena for analysing the ideas that were brewing and the fight surrounding popular music, but also as a space of sociability where affective relations clearly developed (Dosse, 2011, pp. 28-29). As in *Acadêmica*, RMP assembled a bunch of friends and acquaintances with multiple affinities, whose main point of convergence was ‘good popular music,’ whether Brazilian or jazz. Most of this group regularly frequented the Rio night, which for this reason received its own column in the magazine called ‘Música dentro da noite’ [Music in the

night], written by Fernando Lobo. The composer and radio presenter was an incorrigible Bohemian, and his column commented on the night life directly related to music and musicians. Of course the gossip, the unusual histories, the activities that took place in the bars, nightclubs and show houses became the topic of observations. Various other Bohemian friends of Lúcio wrote for the magazine or frequented its pages, like his nephew and friend Sérgio Porto, who would become known as Stanislaw Ponte Preta. A photo illustrating an article from January 1955 provides an eloquent illustration of the magazine's profile. In Maxim's, "an elegant bar in Copacabana, a favourite hangout for journalists, composers, artists, singers, night folk," the members of RMP were celebrating: José Sanz, Paulo Mendes Campos, Rubem Braga and, of course, Lúcio Rangel, next to Sílvio Caldas and Ary Barroso, among other musicians featured in the magazine (RMP, 2006, p. 201). Ary, in fact, had a column in *O Jornal* for five months in 1955 with the openly Bohemian and alcoholic title "Scotch e soda" (Scotch and soda). In this column he would remark precisely on the everyday revelry of the Rio night life in which this bunch – cited constantly by the composer – was habitually present (*O Jornal*, 1955). On this point, it is also worth emphasizing that many of the advertisers in RMP were establishments linked to this way of life, like Maxim's itself and the well-known Casa Villarino, 'the queen of whisky,' about which Lobo would write a book (Lobo, 1991). In addition, there were regularly adverts for Juca's Bar, Parque Recreio and even the São Paulo venue Captain's Bar, located in the Comodoro Hotel.

Despite the resistances to the "strange influences of progress" – in this case represented by radio – "that penetrate the lower classes" (RMP, 2006, p. 49), the everyday world of radio and records were also given a prominent place in the magazine. There were regular columns that obviously took a different approach to the kind offered by the popular magazines. Another friend, Nestor de Hollanda, a mixture of Bohemian journalist, writer and composer,¹¹ was responsible for the column "O Rádio em 30 dias" [Radio over Thirty Days]. In it he campaigned for intelligent radio broadcasting and against its commercialization and excesses of vulgarity. He said that there were well-intentioned men in radio and some good programs, but both were increasingly rare in the cultural radiophonic landscape. The fact was that if the good individual wished to 'do well,' be 'praised' and receive 'perfumed letters' from listeners, he had to 'change his thinking' and adapt. He also complained that the programs based solely on the announcer playing records and saying "let's listen to" and "you have just heard," interspersed with "advertising texts from fabric stores" and "news bulletins compiled from daily newspapers," were like "offering a tin of

sardines for Sunday lunch” (RMP, 2006, pp. 50 and 214). For him, the national broadcasters should follow the example set by other countries, “where men of culture are more highly regarded,” and should divulge “above all, our folklore, our music” rather than the profusion of “mambos, congas, boleros, tangos and foxtrots.” Probably he was also taking as a reference point the programs of the radio presenter Almirante, recollected several times in the column (Lima, 2014; Paes, 2012). In reality, what the column presented in new form was the old question underlying radio broadcasting, the notion that the “musical education of the people, through radio, should be a fact” (RMP, 2006, p. 39). Curiously, moving beyond the educational fervour and the classificatory filter, the environment of the radio channels with their musicians, events, programs and so on appear in the pages of RMP in a similar fashion to its peers, including photos of singers, favourite composers and behind the scenes of the broadcasters and the ‘tittle-tattle’ of the artists. Apparently, the heart of the question was not the medium but rather its agents and content, which in the 1950s, according to the magazine, was experiencing a clear crisis of creativity.

Phonographic production was considered in the same way. There were important aspects of the record industry that had to be reported and debated, explaining the abundance of information and analyses in the magazine’s columns. Lúcio was an incurable melomaniac and an obsessive record collector, who compiled a huge record collection, as we shall see later. His ambition was to make the music to which he – and his colleagues from RMP – listened the standard for society. For this reason the magazine also wanted to comprise “the guide for an immense legion of fans, interested parties, collectors of records existing in our midst” (RMP, 2006, p. 25). Various columns collaborated towards the realization of this goal, usually written by Lúcio himself, despite the author of many of them not being identified or being published under a pseudonym. “These are rarities,”¹² targeted more at record collectors, commented on the importance of old records and rare 78 rpm records, adopting the viewpoint indicated earlier that “the past was better.” Meanwhile “Records of the month” took the opposite direction: it presented the latest and most important releases, in the columnist’s judgment, with small synopses followed by a review. Associated with the same theme, more organic articles were published in series across several volumes, such as the huge “Monthly discography of the Brazilian record industry,” edited by Cruz Cordeiro, and a curious “Dictionary of record labels (A-Z),” written each month by Sylvio Tullio Cardoso. Appearing in more independent and free form were the ‘complete discographies’ of artists like Jacob do Bandolim, Ataulfo Alves, Francisco Alves and Mário Reis. In addition,

there were also two columns concerned with jazz records. “A record per month,” published anonymously, commented on recently released jazz record and/or those judged to be more important to understanding the genre. Meanwhile “Select discography of traditional jazz” was authored by the millionaire and international playboy Jorge Guinle, known for his collection brought directly from the United States and which, as the title clearly suggests, gave preference to the basic discography of classic jazz. In fact the genre was considered in RMP in the same way as Brazilian popular music. In the African-American genre there was a lineage that should be revered and divulged: the traditional and authentic jazz made by black musicians. Very probably it was also included as an element that reinforced the magazine’s aura of fine aesthetic and music taste. It is curious to observe how the analytic, historical and phonographic articles on jazz took up more and more space in the magazine in its final issues, without any clear explanation for this fact.

This lively commitment to records in RMP in some ways would be encapsulated in the launch of the project for an “Anthology of Brazilian music,” the objective of which was to preserve re-recordings of old out-of-print records or the recording of new composers concerned with “all the traditional purity of the Brazilian themes and forms” of the country’s most authentic music. Unconnected to the magazine, the ‘Anthology’ was an autonomous project, to be composed by a collection published on “12 inch records, containing an average of 6 tracks on each side... and to be accompanied by a leaflet with a critical study of the composer, performer and music” (RMP, 2006, pp. 49 and 151). It would not be sold but distributed exclusively to the few “duly registered members,” approximately 200 people. Selection and organization of the “folkloric and popular” pieces of music would be the responsibility of the musicologist Mozart Araújo and the leaders of RMP, José Sanz and Lúcio Rangel. Two years after the launch of the idea, the project had still yet to materialize. In the section “The Reader writes” its creators explain that “it is still our idea to publish the announced records. However, we first have to resolve some difficulties that have emerged. Wait for news” (RMP, 2006, p. 712). These obstacles were, in fact, never overcome and the anthology project failed completely.¹³ But the temptation for historical anachronism in this case is irresistible: its similarity to what would become the *História da música popular* (History of popular music) collection, released by the Abril publishing house in the 1970s, is remarkable.

The anthology also reveals another element that appears recurrently in RMP: the concern with the authenticity and originality of popular music, as

an expression of the ‘Brazilian soul’ and they country’s deepest nationality. And one form of fitting urban music into this social and political, and aesthetically positive, horizon was undoubtedly to compare it to folklore. These relations, however, were always somewhat opaque and ill-defined, depending on the circumstances and tacit needs of their use (Certeau, 1994). Strictly speaking, the magazine contained just a few texts directly related to the traditional themes of folklore or that clearly adopted a folklorist point of view, such as those dealing with clothing in the “Candomblé of Bahia,” the ‘Pastoris’ groups, the “Curers, sorcerers, witch doctors and medics,” the “Brazilian folkloric theatre” or the relation between “folk music and Brazilian popular music.” This was because RMP was not a magazine focused on folklore, but only concerned with it and its fate in a society that was rapidly becoming modernized. In actuality, what existed were approximations to some of the ideals of folklore that could help valorise and ennoble the entertainment music originally made to dance, play on records and hear on the radio. These relations were always made explicit in the internal articles and editorials. The column by Mariza Lira, “A Social History of Rio’s Popular Music,” was a kind of benchmark in this sense. In it appears her endeavour to establish connections between the traditional urban manifestations and some of the musical genres that emerged in the major cities in the transition from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, embodying but above all broadening the indefinable notion of ‘urban folklore.’ It is important to stress, however, that Mariza Lira was a different kind of folklorist, pulled between the more traditional positions and a strong attraction to urban music (Moraes, 2010, pp. 227-237). In reality, she lived between the two worlds. In 1950, for example, she made an educational radio program called *Brasil Folclórico* (Folkloric Brazil). But prior to that, between 1938 and 1940, she contributed to the magazine *Pranove*, the “official mouthpiece of PRA-9,” the well-known and popular Rádio Mayrink Veiga, writing an active column called “Acoustic Gallery” containing small biographies of radio musicians and performers (Pranove, 1938, 1939, 1940).

Elements like originality, authenticity and rootedness served, therefore, as an indication of the social and cultural relevance of urban music, which would also enable artistic and musical sublimation, additionally helping distance the genre from simple entertainment and commercialization. The association of these fundamentals in time had created and already solidified urban traditions in the 1950s that could be identified and needed to be preserved in the face of the unfettered advance of market interests in the mass media. Contrary to the exclusively folkloric texts, countless articles and themes explored the subject

from this angle, whether relating to Brazilian popular music or American. Overall this approach was centred on the identification and resolute defence of the “good and authentic” popular music, especially in its most important genres, samba and jazz. This folkloric timbre probably also served to give an air of academic seriousness to the magazine made by the “Bohemian Rio bunch,” although various members came from other backgrounds.

Despite the presence of this folklorizing perspective, it is impossible to confine the magazine to these principles. As I have sought to underline, while RMP had the general aim of defending “good and authentic popular music,” its contributors gave a diverse range of hues to this guideline. An incredible number of journalists, critics, musicologists, folklorists, radio presenters, Bohemians and playboys wrote for the publication, whether as columnists or occasional collaborators, presenting countless different positions and analyses. There was a remarkable multiplicity of “curers, sorcerers, witch doctors and medics,”¹⁴ presenting a near infinite variety of knowledge and themes, making RMP a highly singular experience for its time, difficult to fit into rigid intellectual conceptions, especially those of folklorism. A reading of the material in Volume 3 of the magazine provides eloquent testimony to this varied profile. As encountered in the common entertainment magazines, on pages 30 and 31 RMP presents the glamorous and cheerful world of entertainment, depicted in photos of the “most beautiful women” with skimpy bikinis in the “Copacabana Palace swimming pool” and also the beautiful “*cabrochas* [samba dancers] of Jupira” present in the show of Carlos Machado, *Este Rio moleque*, a musical revue that achieved success in 1954. Struck by the visual information, on turning the page the reader immediately finds, however, the continuation of the dense and dated text of Mário de Andrade on Ernesto Nazareth. Continuing to flick through the pages, the reader comes across an article on “themes of Afro-North-American folklore,” by José Sanz, followed by the text by the Argentine historian and jazz critic Nestor Ortiz Oderigo. The following page is taken up entirely by an advert for “Casa Villarino. The queen of whisky,” frequented by members of the magazine. Some pages later the reader finds a text on jazz written by the playboy Jorge Guinle, photographed in smoking jacket and bow tie. This was the disconcerting and fragmentary variety that became a hallmark of RMP (RMP, 2006, pp. 158-173).

During its two years of existence, RMP faced many problems relating to funding sources and revenue to ensure its regular publication and the print run, however modest, of the magazine. Rigorously speaking, it could be said that it only had a regular active life in 1955, begun in October of the previous

year. In November and December of 1955 it presented just one issue, returning only in April of the following year. From Volume 12 onwards it began to run out of steam, appearing again in June and September (Issue 14), when the magazine vanished for good. This fact perhaps underlines the limit to its impact, especially when compared, for instance, to the same missionizing zeal shown by Almirante on his radio programs during the same period (Lima, 2014; Paes, 2012). The magazine maintained its paid adverts in the press, such as *O Jornal*, and the columnists in the mainstream press always commented with much satisfaction on the publication of a new issue. The editorial to the second issue gives a small clue to how well the magazine was received when it announces the “enthusiasm stirred” by the first issue, sold out in “the majority of the newsstands of the Federal District [Rio de Janeiro at the time] and São Paulo, despite the high print run for a specialized publication” (RMP, 2006, p. 77). We simply need to take into account the somewhat boastful and self-interested nature of the information, communicated by the editorial of a recently launched publication seeking market space and divulgation. Furthermore, despite enlisting authors from diverse backgrounds and covering a variety of themes, RMP was a magazine that above all revealed the artistic and Bohemian ambient and lifestyle of Rio, displayed both in the comments on the everyday life or ‘tittle-tattle’ of the city, and in the reports and adverts for bars, shows and the like. In this sense, perhaps it would be prudent to look more carefully at the influence that it may have had at the time. It was probably the community of journalists who established the magazine, and rightly so, as responsible for setting the foundations for the musical criticism that emerged during the period and thereafter became realized in a more professional and permanent manner in Brazil’s newspapers and magazines. However, its activities and influence may have been overestimated. Possibly the prestige of Lúcio, intellectuals and other critics that appeared with such cultural force at the time had projected an importance to the publication that was much more confined to a specific community, an interpretation that the historiography of popular music that appears at the start of the twenty-first century seems to have rather inadvertently submitted. In reality, little is known still about its reception and wider influences.

IMPLACABLE ARCHIVES

This life fully and intimately connected to popular music developed in Lúcio Rangel other derived interests, such as the practice of preserving and archiving his musical reminiscences. he “combined the passion for Brazilian

popular music with a spirit of conservation and research,” a combination that was something of a peculiarity among some critics of popular music at the time, as the columnist of *O Jornal* emphasized in 1955: “today Lúcio Rangel possesses, along with Almirante, the selflessness of just a few devotees, the ‘implacable archives’ of our popular music, principally our samba” (*O Jornal*, 26 August 1955, p. 7).¹⁵ It so happens that his collection was a little different to Almirante’s, since it was almost exclusively dedicated to the phonographic universe.

Undoubtedly the vinyl record was, at the time, a factor of symbolic and physical attraction that fascinated listeners, and the endless sequence of releases induced the compiling of series and constantly keeping track. Sophisticated audiophiles like the millionaire Guinle kept, collected and spoke with authority about the music found on the records and the contexts in which these were produced (Maisonneuve, 2001; 2009). More vociferous “phonophiles, phonomaniacs and discomaniacs” (Koshiba, 2013) like Lúcio participated actively in their own way in the universe of “mechanical music.” All of them loved to ‘play’ their records on their audio equipment: ‘playing a record’ became synonymous with ‘playing music,’ producing a new category of ‘specialist,’ removing musical practice from the exclusive plane of the musicians (Iazzetta, 2009). Indeed it was clearly apparent that RMP stimulated and reinforced this enchantment, both in keeping track the new releases and in highlighting the recuperation of the records of the past.

In an interview conducted in 1970, Lúcio revealed that the start of his collection and physical fascination in records began at a very young age, forever mixing up his personal life with this universe: “In 1925, at the age of eleven, I ceased going to the movies in order to buy records. It was the beginning of a passion that led me to live alongside performers and composers of the musical repertoire and to write about them, in more than 2,000 articles, and to create, in 1954, *Revista da Música Popular*” (*Os guardiães...*, 22 April 1970, p. 3).

As is common in the activity of collecting, over time the small series turn into a more voluminous set, transforming into a major collection. An avid collector, Lúcio also added to his collection with new purchases and donations, like the 16,000 records offered by his friend Chico Wright (Rangel, 2007, pp. 52-54). With unchecked growth, a collection requires organization and an archiving system for the collector to order his universe of private consultation and take possession of the hundreds of items of information contained within it. Furthermore, the physical care and accumulation of the material, especially the records, becomes a problem for private life, requiring expensive

alternatives. The customary solution was always to sell or donate the collection. In the case of Lúcio’s collection, it was sold to Rio’s Museum of Image and Sound (MIS-RJ), but unlike the Almirante collection, little is known still about how it was transferred, in what conditions, and how it was organized.

Frequently the collector develops ecstatic instincts concerning his theme and collection, generating some obsessions. One of these fixations is on detailed information and the absolute precision of the same, which ends up producing fine-grained knowledge and a specific kind of erudition. In this sense, Lúcio was “capable of telling you who was the guitar player on Sinhó’s first recording, or who composed the chorus for a Rádio Sociedade samba” (O Jornal, 26 August 55, p. 7). For these reasons, Lúcio entered into a meticulous conflict in 1955 with another record collector who was beginning his career, Ary Vasconcelos (1926-2003). The dispute was over the reading of the labels and the numbering of the records issued by Casa Edison and began, of course, with doubts concerning the pioneerism of the samba “Pelo Telefone” by Donga and Mauro de Almeida, and which recording had been the first. It took place through articles with the suggestive title of “The language of the labels” (a theme and title that would probably arouse envy in historians of the “third generation of the Annals” in the 1970s and 80s), published in the columns of the two journalists – Lúcio’s in *Jornal do Commercio*, and Ary’s in *O Jornal*.¹⁶ Another compulsion common in the collector is the pressing need to search for ‘all’ the material existing on the theme. Lúcio, for example, went as far as to say, perhaps exaggeratedly, that, as a guarantee, he had everything in duplicate when he transferred his collection to MIS-RJ (Eu beije!, 1974). These associated elements bestow the collection with an unimaginable reach and meaning, and it is common for the creators themselves and their users to create a kind of unconditional veneration for the collection, generating myths, allure and curiosity (Blom, 2003, pp. 193-201).

According to Lúcio Rangel, the formation of his collection was central to the development of his career as a critic and historian of popular music. And both became sources of information for all those who worked with popular music. For scholars, professionals and others interested in the subject, in the 1950s and 60s “his record collection makes up for the disasters of RCA Victor in archival terms and its information is what matters to the writers of programs” (O Jornal, 26 August 1955, p. 7).¹⁷ This is why the journalist Eneida – author of *História do carnaval carioca* (History of the Rio Carnival) – said that Lúcio knew “our little sambas that no one else knows” and had “a record collection inside his head” (RMP, 2006, p. 176). This reverence for the memory and knowledge

of Lúcio Rangel and his record collection took shape and became consolidated in the imagination of scholars of popular music. In the interview given to *O Pasquim*, Millôr, Sérgio Cabral and Albino Pinheiro insisted on this point, emphasizing his importance and influence, which he himself always denied.¹⁸ The consideration of Lúcio as a key source of credible information reached the point that Sérgio Augusto suggested in a creative and good-humoured way that, for his time, he had been like a “biped google” (Augusto, 2014).

HOW TO TELL A HISTORY

It is remarkable how the personal and professional history of Lúcio Rangel shapes and blends with a certain generation of memoir writers, journalists and critics of popular music who preserved the memory and at the same time constructed and invented a history for this social and cultural phenomenon, one still recent in the mid-twentieth century. The cultural dynamic that formed between Lúcio, this group and the phenomenon is very curious. Despite not being professional musicians – though some of them had been circumstantially – they actively participated, from the inside, in the formation of the phenomenon being created in the first half of the twentieth century. This means that their memories comprise an extraordinary resource for capturing the direct or indirect impressions of this formative process. In this fragmentary and volatile universe, the reminiscences acquired an even more partial and incomplete character, since they were still being formed. Hence the memories of self merge with the history that they want to tell and construct. This fact marked their viewpoints profoundly, directly related to the later formulation of a narrative and history of popular music. This dynamic played a significant role in affirming and reaffirming the new culture taking shape, which associated traditional musical and cultural practices with conceptions and productions already marked by the technology and logic of electronic media. And undoubtedly this dynamic generated countless dilemmas and contradictions, as seen in Lúcio’s trajectory, very often difficult to comprehend and capture, generating a series of incomprehensions, since this fragmented and diversified “culture of the people” appeared as a novelty on the margins of official culture, resisting but at the same time incorporating and negotiating with it. Gradually this circuit formed a social memory, constructing a particular tradition, transformed later into memory on paper (written reminiscences, archives and books), thereby creating historiographic parameters for a discourse on the past of this musical culture. When this process stabilized and the narratives attained a degree of discursive

and semantic unity, they became institutionalized, consolidating and making official an interpretation of what the history of Brazilian popular culture should be. And this history was told and retold, and reproduced even today.

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NOTES

¹ Lúcio Rangel said that it was a doctorate, but when Millôr Fernandes asked him whether doctorates in Law existed in the 1940s, he prevaricated. Indeed the interview, which included the presence of Millôr, Sérgio Augusto, Ivan Lessa, Ziraldo, Jaguar, Albino Pinheiro and Sérgio Cabral, is fairly chaotic, as was common in the interviews conducted by *O Pasquim*. The atmosphere was that of a group of friends gathered for a chat in the editorial

office, fuelled by whisky. This convivial ambient is filled with jokes, ironic comments and fibs that compel the researcher to take care with the information and claims made.

² The first statement is by Albino Ribeiro during the interview. The second is by Lúcio Rangel himself.

³ He also frequently played an imaginary trombone, imitating it very well with his mouth (ITIBERÊ, 1962; EU BEIJEL..., 1974, p.11).

⁴ Hermínio Bello Carvalho, on the dust cover to the book *Samba, Jazz & outras notas* (RANGEL, 2007).

⁵ The expression ‘mariposas da noite’ was a euphemism for prostitutes, but was also extended to other women out in the streets, bars and clubs at night, Bohemians and farristas, ‘revellers.’ (TN).

⁶ President of the Municipal Chamber of São Paulo, the councillor assumed the post of mayor in the first semester of 1954 following the resignation of Jânio Quadros, recently elected state governor.

⁷ Volumes 1 to 3 in 1954; 4 to 11 in 1955; 12 to 14 in 1956.

⁸ The postures served as the official guidelines to the magazine, since these are the citations contained in the editorials, respectively: RMP, 2006 (facsimile copy, n. 13, June 1956; n. 6, April 1955; n. 5, February 1955).

⁹ Hereafter referred to by the acronym RMP.

¹⁰ Tárík de Souza in the introduction to the facsimile editions of the magazine collection clearly stresses its avant-garde status, emphasizing that it was the “bossa nova of the national press” (RMP, 2006, p. 22).

¹¹ As well as composing songs, he wrote theatre plays and a well-known work that became a reference text (HOLLANDA, 1969).

¹² Lúcio also reveals his profile as a collector and discophile when he complains about the hike in the price of 78 rpm records following the success of his own column: “some of the traders in the second-hand record stores, taking advantage of the prestige of this magazine among collectors, have begun to sell the records being commented on here at extraordinarily high prices, sometimes in the region of a thousand cruzeiros each. Discophiles need to be cautious, seeking better trading among themselves, to avoid being exploited by unscrupulous merchants” (RMP, 2006, p.193).

¹³ Historiographic works clearly indicate its launch, even emphasizing its important role, blurring the discographic project of Lúcio Rangel with its real existence, something that never took place.

¹⁴ A reference to the article “Curandeiros, feiticeiros, bruxos e médicos,” written by Luiza Barreto Leite on a topic debated at the International Congress of Folklore held in São Paulo in 1954 (RMP, 2006, pp. 298-299).

¹⁵ Coluna Rádio e TV, by G.F.

¹⁵ Discos, *Jornal do Commercio*, 8 February 1958; Música Popular, *O Jornal*, 15, 20 and 21 February 1958.

¹⁶ It is curious how in the interview in *O Pasquim* Millôr, Sérgio Cabral and Albino Pinheiro insist on his importance and influence, which he always seeks to refute (EU BEIJEL..., 1974, p. 10).

¹⁷ EU BEIJEL..., 1974, p. 10.

Article received on May 23rd 2017.
Approved on September 19th 2017.

