

## **Brazilian jazz, aspects, stylistic contributions (In memoriam Sérgio Mendez 1941-2024)**

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**Abstract:** *Making a concise image referring to the variety and harmonic-melodic-rhythmic functionality of the traditional musical creation of the Brazilian continent is a complex one, considering the multitude of constituent elements, timbral coloration, rhythmic variations or melodic expression, phrasing. However, the artistic contribution of some instrumentalists of Brazilian origin can be highlighted unequivocally, their contribution having a special weight in the realization of the finished product called, creation”, the combination of traditional elements with the characteristic ones of already established styles, leads to the implementation of new ideas, the realization of new musical productions of international resonance. Regardless of the musical genre addressed, finality is important, the phenomenon of musical globalization (in our case) being the essential idea, interaction, compilation and implementation of specific stylistic elements outlining the desired artistic progress. The graphic exhibition in the score of the multitude of constituent elements is easy for the beneficial understanding and deepening of the resulting musical substance, a source of inspiration for a next creative phase, a challenge for all those who face the activity and musical art.*

Key-words: *bossa nova, samba, funk, Sergio Mendes, Brasil 66, musica instrumental, choro.*

### **1. Introduction**

Sérgio Santos Mendez (11.02.1941-05.09.2024) is considered to be “those” representative with a special weight of the Brazilian style, active on the jazz scene both on the American continent and internationally. *Brasil 66*'s own band has a rapid rise, the stylistic fusion between bossa nova and funk demonstrating a high degree of approval in the field.

The year 2012 culminates with the nomination at the Oscar Awards, Best Original Song, associate composer in the making of the song, “Real in Rio”, which later became the soundtrack of the film “Rio”.

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The ascent actually begins long before, in 2004 the song “Hey Mama”, 2006 (Black Eyes Peas) by reissuing an original version, in his own way, then in 1996 with the song „Mas que Nada“, in 2013 together with Pharell Williams the song „Happy“, all these successfully crown collaborations with various artists displayed of the international musical production.

Previous collaborations with established artists (mentors) such as Antonio Carlos Jobim, Cannonball Adderley, Herbie Mann, Stevie Wonder with the song “The Real Thing”, 4th place in Billboard Hot 100 magazine, with “The Look of Love”, multiple concerts at Carnegie Hall, *White House* in Washington, as well as a number of recordings on renowned labels such as Capitol Records or Atlantic Records, they contributed fundamentally to the formation of the late artist.

## 2. Characteristics of Brazilian Jazz

The present work is intended to be an ethnographic systematization of Brazilian musical creation called in popular terms *musica instrumental do Brasil*, where the primary place is occupied by the autochthonous stylistic structuring, later its fusion with elements of the jazz style practiced in (most) the states of the American continent from the north.

The essential element proposed is the detailed representation of the characteristics of Brazilian musical thought, in no way a retrospective of the resulting Brazilian jazz! The vision and elaboration of a coherent rhythmic section, the contrapuntal interference between the bass line, pianistic formulas, or guitar *riffs*, harmonic progressions, simply that typical *groove* that delights and induces the state of joy, whenever it is played instrumentally by musicians or aurally assimilated by the general public.

### 2.1. SAMBA

It appears at the end of the 20's in Rio de Janeiro (Mark Brill, 2018:37), taking different forms over the years, fulfilling the state of “representative brand” of the Brazilian creative concept. Incipiently a stylistic compilation between *maxixes*<sup>2</sup>, in fact an Afro-Brazilian rhythm signaled for the first time in Bahia, and the harmonic

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<sup>2</sup> Traditional Afro-Brazilian dance dating (in the early form of tango) from 1868 in Rio de Janeiro, also practiced in countries neighboring the Brazilian area such as Argentina or Uruguay, similar to the European polka dance style, performance through rapid movements in 2/4. Promoter of the style, pianist Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934 Rio de Janeiro).

melodic influences of the *choro*<sup>3</sup> style. Over time, it replaces as a sound background the street events of Portuguese origin *entrudo*, through the carnivals<sup>4</sup> in February, a association with the feeling of celebration, the works typical of the events entering and being taken over relatively quickly in the catalogue of commercial works.

### SAMBA RITM

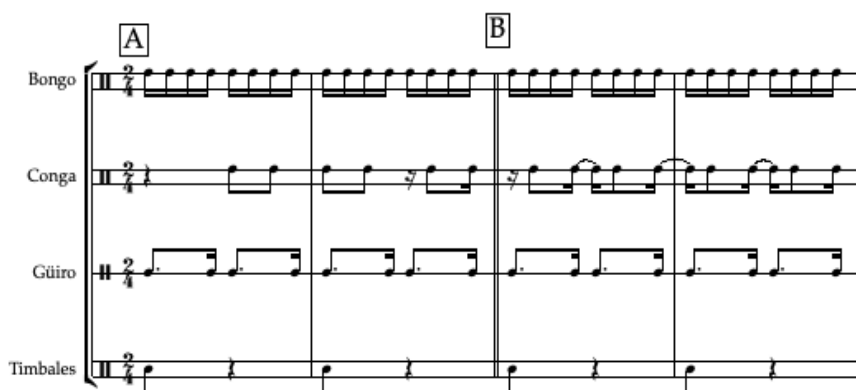


Fig.1. *Rhythmic structuring of the samba style*

The multitude of derived (Moore, Clark 2012, 133) forms such as *sambalanção*, *samba de breque*, *samba-enredo*, *samba-canção*, *samba-choro*, *samba exaltação*, *samba gafieira*, or *partido-alto*, are worth mentioning, rhythmically marked structural content, exposed in binary/ternary form.

<sup>3</sup> Acerbic rhythmic Brazilian instrumental urban style, with passages of stylistic virtuosity, transient modulations, multiple contrapuntal syncopations, sound spectrum based on instruments such as flute, 6 - or 7-string guitar for figuring the bass line, *pandeiro* percussion in mini format, or *cavaquinho*, 4-string *chordophone*, clarinet, trombone or trumpet.

<sup>4</sup> *Carnaval do Rio de Janeiro* dates back to 1723, being considered the largest in the world, with a flow of 2 million participants daily on the streets of the metropolis. Meanwhile it is reported about the existence of 200 schools of *samba* dancers, each of them appearing alternately within the festival *comissão de frente*, the first line of dancers in formations of 10-15 members.

## SAMBA – General Distribution

The musical score is for a Samba instrumental section in 2/4 time. It consists of four staves: Elektro-Gitarre (Electric Guitar), Klavier (Piano), Bassgitarre (Bass Guitar), and Drum Set. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into two sections, A and B. Section A is marked with a box 'A' and contains four measures. Section B is marked with a box 'B' and contains four measures. The Elektro-Gitarre part features a melodic line with chords Em7, A7, Cm7, and F7. The Klavier part provides harmonic support with chords and arpeggios. The Bassgitarre part has a simple bass line. The Drum Set part features a characteristic samba rhythm with snare and bass drum patterns.

Fig. 2. *General overall score, instrumental section*

## 2.2. BOSSA NOVA

Title derived in the 40's from the native expression of “to do/do something”, or, a “new challenge”. Since the 50's, the beneficial compilations (McGowan, 2008:116) with elements of the samba style are signaled, aspects that lead to the generation of new possibilities of rhythmic-melodic phrasing, arrangements and elevated orchestrations through the significant creative contribution of guitarist Joào Gilberto or Antonio Carlos Jobim, of soloist Nara Leão, all contributing as the constituent bordering settlements of the metropolis of Rio de Janeiro such as Copacabana, Ipanema or Arpoador to become descriptive subjects of demographic splendor, the lyrical-melodic stylistic fusion generating a high degree of agreement among music lovers.

A deepening, peak of the style on the North American continent takes place in 1962 through Sérgio Mendes Carnegie Hall NYC concert together with established countrymen such as Joào and Astrud Gilberto, Antonio Carlos Jobim and Roberto Menescal.

Other protagonists faithful to the style over the years would be Leny Andrade, Querteto em Cy, Mauricio Einhorn, Baden Powell, Zimbo Trio, Luiz Eca, Joao Donato, Carlos Lyra, Johnny Alf.

The rhythmic score structuring of the piece “RIO” would look like this:

**RIO RITM**

The score is titled "RIO RITM" and is written for four percussion instruments: Bongo, Conga, Güiro, and Timbales. It is in 2/4 time. The score is divided into two sections, A and B. Section A (measures 1-4) shows a steady 2/4 rhythm with various patterns. Section B (measures 5-8) shows a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and rests.

Fig.3. Rhythmic structuring Sergio Mendez, “Rio” song

The score is titled "RIO" and is written for four instruments: Elektro-Gitarre, Klavier, Bassgitarre, and Drum Set. It is in 2/4 time. The score is divided into two sections, A and B. Section A (measures 1-4) shows a steady 2/4 rhythm with various patterns. Section B (measures 5-8) shows a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and rests. Chord symbols are provided for the guitar: D<sup>9</sup> for section A and E<sup>9</sup> for section B.

Fig.4. General overall instrumental distribution

It is worth noting the concise rhythmic structuring, simultaneously outlined by guitar, piano and bass, in addition to the rich, contrapuntal rhythmic support of percussion.

### 2.3. PARTIDO ALTO

It can be structured as an interpretive (Nei Lopes 2009, 68) modality of the samba style in a restricted setting, a situation in which vocal soloists freely lyrically improvise, this aspect constituting the relevant part of spontaneous stylistic creation. The musical support is primarily characterized by the *agogo*-style patterns performed on *pandeiro*.<sup>5</sup>

Perfect representatives of the style are instrumental musicians such as Martinho da Vila, Clementina de Jesus, Joao Bosco or Toninho Horta.



Fig.5. Concentrated rhythmic basic structure

FORMULA AGOGO EXTINSA

Fig.6. Developed, expanded formula

In the contemporary stylistic practice, extensive orchestrations give support to the rhythmic structures typical of the style, the simultaneous melodic-harmonic fusion successfully crowning the characteristic note of the style.

<sup>5</sup> Musical instrument similar to the tambourine, with different sonority, due to the lack of *sustain* effect, the sound fading being produced by the hand with which the instrument is supported, this being decisive in the sound, structural separation.

FORMULA AGOGO COMPILATIE SAMBA

The image shows a rhythmic compilation for four instruments in 2/4 time. The Bongo part consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern. The Conga part features a syncopated eighth-note pattern with accents. The Güiro part has a sparse pattern of eighth notes. The Timbales part shows a syncopated eighth-note pattern with accents.

Fig.7. *Rhythmic compilation, elements, fusion*

It should be mentioned the special stylistic accompaniment of the piano made through a syncopated upward movement, intervallic structuring based on third parties (large and small) in symmetrical rhythmic unfolding.

PARTIDO ALTO PIAN

The image shows a piano accompaniment for a melodic line in 2/4 time. The chords are F<sup>9</sup>, Fm<sup>9</sup>, D<sup>7alt</sup>, G<sup>7alt</sup>, and Cm<sup>9</sup>. The piano part features a syncopated upward movement in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

Fig. 8. *Pianistic structuring, accompaniment formula*

Pianistic stylistic interpretation in *legato*, sonic accentuation of the intensity of the last sixteenth of the measure are contextually relevant for supporting the bass line, as follows:

PARTIDO ALTO LINIA BASULUI

The image shows a piano accompaniment for a melodic line in 2/4 time. The bass line is the primary focus, featuring a syncopated upward movement. The right hand is mostly silent, with some notes in the first few measures.

Fig. 9. *Structuring the bass line, focused expression*

## PARTIDO ALTO BASS LINE – IMPROVISATIONAL SUPPORT



Fig.10. *Base line stylistic development, symmetrical deepening*

Syncopated structuring of the bass line necessary for the (in)direct contouring of the improvisational moment, the creation of rhythmic intensity by avoiding the symmetry in alternation of the accentuation of the main time, a favorable element, elementary to the support of improvisational creation.

## 2.4. CHORO

The appearance of the style<sup>6</sup> is recorded for the first time in the 1870s in Rio de Janeiro, with multiple stylistic roots such as polka, traditional Scottish music, waltzes and European music, by salon“ of the 1840s. All these founding elements were processed and implemented by active amateur musicians, or semi-professionals of the time.

Interesting, however, is the conformation of the resulting sound spectrum, based on typical traditional instruments such as the flute, the *cavaquinho* guitar (soprano register guitar) representing one of the stringed instruments, the other guitar (*baixaria*) taking over the harmonic segment as well as the contrapuntal structuring of the bass line.

Later the additional implementation of instruments such as trumpet, trombone, saxophone clarinet, *ophicleide*<sup>7</sup>, takes a stylistic outline and consolidation, the structuring in the form of rondo of the repertoire taken over, the resulting compilations based on the rhythmic structure formed by syncopated lines, the original traditional character of the compositions as well as the creative results achieved in this context lead to the unique stylistic outline of the so-called Brazilian style.

<sup>6</sup> *Tupinamba de Ulhoa*, de Marchi, 2013, p.33-41.

<sup>7</sup> Brass wind instrument, with keys, predecessor of the tuba used in the marching band, *dixieland*-style orchestras preceding the big band, consisting mainly of instruments with *mundstück*.




The *choro* style is perfected and intensively elaborated by Brazilian composers such as Chiquinha Gonzaga and Ernesto Nazareth in piano works, or by Heitor Villa/Lobos in numerous works for guitar, chamber music or concerts.

The style constitutes and remains (Solodow 2014, 133) an important element, representative of Brazilian popular creation, with special traditional weight, metropolises such as Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia or Sao Paulo actively perpetuating this style even today.

Promoters and followers of the style include Joaquim Antonio Callado, Pixiguinha Joao Pernambuco, K/Ximbinho, Radames Gnattali, Jacob de Bandolim, Waldir Azevedo, Paulo Moura Garoto, Altamiro Carriho, Ademide Fonseca.

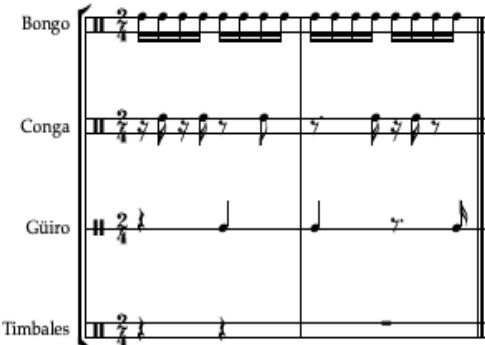
FORMULA CHORO STANDARD



Bongo

Conga

FORMULA CHORO COMPILATIE PARTIDO ALTO



Bongo

Conga

Güiro

Timbales

Fig.11. *Concentrated rhythmic, basic core* Fig.12. *Compilation stylistic development*

Contextually, the interference of constituent elements (Ramos, 2004) such as the bass line or the distribution of voices in the pianistic harmonic expression, founds and consolidates the typical structure unmistakable to the style.

CHORO  
PIAN

G frigic      Cmaj7      C#°      Dm7      G13/9b

LINIA BASULUI

Fig.13. *Contrapuntal structuring, instrumental interaction*

In the structuring of the bass line, use is made of stylistic elements such as specific articulations, accents, the implementation of melodic cells in order to achieve a consistent support necessary for both rhythmic, harmonic and melodic pulsation, repetitive notes, or the support over time through fundamentals emphasizes the concise stylistic conformation, demonstrating inventiveness, awareness, creative control.

## 2.5. BAIÃO

Style originating from the northeastern part of Brazil (Ezeguiel, de Syllos 2016, 304), the *baiao* title referring to the contrapuntal form between the melodic line and the harmonic-rhythmic musical structuring viewed as a whole. Promoters such as Luis Gonzaga in 1946 with the composition *Baiao*, or Waldir Azevedo in 1950 with the work *Delicado*, open new stlist creative horizons. The rhythmic structuring indirectly renders the similarity with certain peculiarities of the *habanera* style, constitutive elements often used in the patterns of Afro-Caribbean styles.

Timbral coloration again plays an important role in creative expression thus instruments such as the accordion, the triangle, the *zabumba* (Libin 2014, 76.)<sup>8</sup>, (percussion instrument similar to the large drum in the battery set, low frequencies, required for pulsation), or expression modal harmonic by applying the mixolydian, or the (atypical) lydian mode with the 7th step lowered, stylistically reinforces the compositional manner.

<sup>8</sup> Percussion instrument similar to the large drum in the battery set, low frequencies, required for pulsation.

FORMULA BAIÃO

Bongo

Conga

Güiro

Timbales

Fig.14. *Fundamental rhythmic structuring, basic core*

Additionally, the analysis of the bass line and the structure of the pianistic line, the simultaneous ingenious rhythmic-harmonic combination, perfects and completes the compositional thinking and expression at the same time, the two elements being considered the founder of the style.

#### BAIÃO FORMULA PIAN

Fig. 15. *Pianistic support, complex, simultaneous rhythmic formulas*

The contrapuntal expression of the style accompaniment method represents a modal compilation between the frigid mode (the small second between the note *b* and and the *natural do*) and the doric mode (with the sixth step raised *g#*).

### BAIAO LINIA BASULUI



Fig.16. *Stylistic elaboration of the bass line*

The stylistic structuring of the bass line through the use in alternating upward movement of the fundamental and the quint of tonality, completes the dynamism, outlines the harmonic-rhythmic intensity resulting from the simultaneous joining of the two lines so necessary to support the melodic line.

## 2.6. FREVO

The style is entirely the musical (Azoubel, 2012: 204) background of the annual events of February in Brazil, namely the street carnival, which has its origins in the compilation of styles such as polka, *maxixe*<sup>9</sup>, neighboring countries such as military march, or *dobrados*<sup>10</sup>.

A *frevo*-style musical arrangement will render the characteristics and tradition of the military march with a dominant, incisive sonority due to the multitude of brass instruments participating, or the rhythm played through the percussion instruments, particularly well outlined.

Therefore, stylistically, a high tempo is observed, with high sound intensity, the steps of the style being some quick but quite simple, the dancers making use of umbrellas (*sombrinhas*) as a traditional element additional to clothing.

The *frevo* style can be found in MPB<sup>11</sup> in works by Brazilian composers such as Gal Costa or Moraes Moreira, Capiba, Lorenzo da Silva (Zuzinha), Jose Uricino da Silva, Mathias da Rocha, the creative stylistic template is discovered.

<sup>9</sup> *Maxixe dança*, known as an authentic form of Brazilian tango practiced mainly in Rio de Janeiro, stylistically supported by an accompaniment similar to the choro style, which appeared in 1868, at the same time that tango was gaining momentum in neighboring countries such as Argentina or Uruguay.

<sup>10</sup> Traditional Brazilian musical genre with origins in the European military march. Close sonority achieved by the implementation of brass wind instruments, as well as percussion, tripartite structuring A, B, C, where the last part usually has the form of a trio.

<sup>11</sup> *Musica Popular Brasileira*, hoard of Brazilian creation, synonymous with Hall of Fame, in other dimensions.

## FREVO RITM



Fig.17. "Frevo", rhythmic core, foundation

Stylistically, elements such as the movement of the bass line (tuba) is one in hard time, the alternation with the secondary time (trombone, horn, *ophicleide*) being decisive.

The countermelodies (saxophone, trumpet) as well as the harmonic support (trombone, horn, euphonium) complete the image of a style suitable for the festive, official, emotional, contextual festive moment, with a multitude of participants, admirers, consumers of the genre, eager for interaction, joy and social display.

## 2.7. AFOXÊ

The first stylistic (Aebersold 2011, 36-42) attestation is confirmed and described as originating in Bahia, originating *candomblé*.<sup>12</sup> It is considered (somewhat) similar to Cuban *Santeria* or Haitian *Voodoo*, due to the interaction of the South American population with Africans from the western part of the continent or Roman Catholic traditions. Followers are called *povo de santo* (people of the Holy Spirit) or *Candomblecistas*, currently in close accordance with religion, the practice being officially recognized and protected within Brazilian society.

Musical is essentially a traditional rhythm previously used in the expression of carnival ceremonies, which invokes the way to banish the Exu divinity from the

<sup>12</sup> Derived and practiced from the culture of the *Yoruba* population native to South Africa, *candomblé* represents an ancient religion that worshiped the god Orixàs, a spiritual entity representative of the forces of nature, festively honored by the African population through unique rituals, songs, rhythms or dances.

festivity, a practice especially deepened at dawn, in the hope of a successful completion of the ceremony.

Among the promoters, followers of the style can be listed Gilberto Gil, Djavan, Caetano Veloso.

### AFOXÉ RITM

The musical notation for 'AFOXÉ RITM' consists of four staves. The top staff is labeled 'Bongo' and contains a few notes. The second staff is 'Conga', showing a complex, repetitive rhythmic pattern. The third staff is 'Gúiro', with a sparse, syncopated pattern. The bottom staff is 'Timbales', showing a simple, steady rhythmic pattern.

Fig. 18. *Developed rhythmic expression*

Due to the rhythmic complexity, the bass line boils down to an elliptical syncopated formula of time 1, which contextually strengthens the dynamics of the style, the instrumental execution (usually in motion on the streets of the Brazilian metropolis) thus becomes an easy one.

### AFOXÉ RITM 2

The musical notation for 'AFOXÉ RITM 2' consists of four staves. The top staff is 'Shaker', showing a dense, repetitive rhythmic pattern. The second staff is 'Agogo', with a complex, syncopated pattern. The third staff is 'Timbales', with a sparse, syncopated pattern. The bottom staff is 'Conga', showing a simple, steady rhythmic pattern.

Fig.19. *Rhythmic expression with broad development, contrapuntal correlation*

The structuring of the contrapuntal vision is becoming more and more interesting, the guitar taking over both the harmonic support and the unison dubbing of the bass line, both additionally outlined harmonically and rhythmically by the piano.

New harmonic-rhythmic structuring method, relevant here being the interference of the guitar and the piano in the foreground, of the piano with the bass line in the background. Solid compilation, which in the first phase (neither) requires rhythmic support, the functionality being as observed an assured element.

### 3. Conclusions

The multitude of traditional Brazilian elements enrich and strengthen the arsenal of universal jazz expression. The resulting mergers over the years with different influences (African, South American, Asian, Indian), contributed to the evolution and development over time of the phenomenon called “jazz”.

The creative element, the contemporary vision, the desire for progress, the creation is produced by and for humanity, respectively by instrumentalists/composers for music lovers. Unfortunately, a certain stagnation is currently observed, although a multitude of valuable instrumentalists with a volume of impressive technical knowledge and skills stand out, the creative moment, implicitly its artistic valorization being in reality a difficult one.

The hope that the legacy left by the founders and followers of the style continues to serve as a source of inspiration and contemporary artistic creation, this would represent the urge and motivation of current and next generations towards new heights of thought, musical evolution.

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