Tradition and Innovation in Brazilian Popular Music: Keyboard Percussion Instruments in Choro

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
Faculty of Music
University of Toronto

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Abstract

The use of keyboard percussion instruments in choro, one of the earliest forms of Brazilian popular music, is a relatively recent phenomenon and its expansion into university music programs and relocation from small clubs and private homes to concert halls has changed the way that choro is learned and performed. For many Brazilians, this kind of innovation in a “traditional” genre represents a challenge to their notion of a Brazilian cultural identity. This study examines the dynamic relationship that Brazilians have with representations of their culture, especially in the area of popular music, through an in depth discussion of the use of keyboard percussion instruments within the genre of choro. I discuss the implications of using keyboard percussion in choro with a detailed description of its contemporary practice and a critical examination of the sociological and academic issues that surround choro historically and as practiced today. This includes an historical overview of choro and organology of keyboard percussion instruments in Brazil. I discuss multiple perspectives on the genre including a
consideration of *choro* as part of the “world music” movement and *choro*’s ambiguous relationship to jazz. Through an examination of the typical instrumentation and performance conventions used in *choro*, I address the meanings and implications of the adaptation of those practices and of the various instrumental roles found in *choro* to keyboard percussion instruments. Solutions to problems relating to instrumental adaptation are offered, with particular attention to issues of notation, improvisation, rhythmic approach and the role of the *cavaquinho*. I also discuss the significance of rhythmic feel and *suingue* (swing) in relation to the concept of *brasilidade* (brazilianness) as informed by and expressed through Brazilian popular music.
Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Brazilian instrumental music, like most Brazilian popular music, is affected by and participates in global flows of culture. While these flows are often depicted as taking place between the poles of centre-periphery, in a large multicultural country such as Brazil, identity is also contested on a local and personal level. In addition to being a musical genre which exists in a “between space … neither entirely ‘native’ nor entirely ‘imported’” (Walden 1996:2), *musica instrumental* represents a site for social interaction…between intersecting social circles or “worlds” that are comprised of individuals and groups related by social class, taste, musical associations, geographical and familial backgrounds, friendships, shared instruments, and so on. All of these factors – the elements of each musician’s individual experience – contribute to the way music is performed, listened to and interpreted (Connell 2002: 8-9).

In this paper I present an in depth discussion of the use of keyboard percussion instruments within the genre of *choro*, a largely instrumental form of Brazilian popular music. I discuss the implications of using keyboard percussion in *choro* through both a detailed description of its contemporary practice and a critical approach to further incorporation of these instruments in the practice. Following ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl’s lead, I hope to shed some light on how this unique form of *choro*’s place “in culture” and “as culture” demonstrates the dynamic relationship that Brazilians have with representations of their cultural identity, especially in the area of popular music, and further, that this element of constant change plays an important role in any definition of Brazilian culture.
Chapter 1, “Ideas and Issues in Contemporary Choro” addresses some of the sociological and academic issues that surround choro historically and as practiced today. I discuss multiple perspectives on the genre including a consideration of choro as part of the “world music” movement, choro’s ambiguous relationship to jazz, and a discussion of notions of Brazilian cultural identity as they relate to its popular music.

Chapter 2, “Histories” presents a description of the musical antecedents and sociological contexts from which choro arose, including brief biographies of several important practitioners. I follow this historical overview with a consideration of the organology of keyboard percussion instruments in Brazil. The subsequent section introduces several of the most active keyboard percussion practitioners in Brazil in the field of popular music along with comments on choro’s inclusion into the percussion programs of many Brazilian universities.

Chapter 3, “Performance Practices” describes the typical instrumentation and performance conventions used in choro and touches on some contemporary variations.

In chapter 4, “Interpretation” I consider critically the meanings and implications of musical interpretation of the practices described in chapter 3 with particular attention to issues of notation, improvisation and rhythmic approach. I also discuss their significance in relation to the concept of brasileidade (brazilianess) as informed by and expressed through Brazilian popular music.

Chapter 5, “Adaptation and Analysis” begins with a description of the principle keyboard percussion instruments considered in this study and continues with a discussion of their application to the various musical roles found in choro. This is followed by the presentation and brief analysis of several arrangements of choro pieces for various keyboard percussion
ensembles and solo instruments. The arrangements were made by a variety of contemporary Brazilian composers and percussionists, and include several adaptations by the author.

Lastly, I offer a summary of the foregoing material together with conclusions regarding its future, its place in discussions of Brazilian cultural identity and suggestions of related areas that need further research.

Research for this study was conducted between August 2009 and September 2010 in a series of urban centres in Brazil including Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Belém, Fortaleza and Uberlândia during the V Encontro Latino-Americano de Percussão (Nov 2 – 8, 2009). I interviewed with a variety of classical and popular musicians, professionals and amateurs, most of whom are performers and all of whom have experience in various facets of the *choro* tradition, on keyboard percussion instruments, or both. (A list of interview subjects is found in appendix E.)

Outside of the purely technical discussions of playing and arranging *choro* for keyboard percussion instruments, the main issue that arose during the research was the question of change versus tradition and how Brazilians perceive the idea of “authenticity” in their music. This continues to be an issue because the instrumentation of *choro* music has varied very little since its inception at the end of the 19th century. The inclusion of a hitherto unused instrument (particularly one such as the xylophone, with no obvious Brazilian roots) represents a serious challenge for the many traditionalists in Brazil, musicians, audiences and scholars. Throughout this paper, then, I will situate my discussions of keyboard percussion in *choro* against the cultural contexts and sociological concerns from which these issues arise, including the importance of popular music in constructions of Brazilian cultural identity and the issues that surround the use of newer instruments in genres that are deeply shaped by tradition.
Here I must clarify my use of the term *traditional* when used to describe either a *choro* musician, a piece of music or performance style. As with many longstanding musical practices, the notion of "the *choro* tradition" is a construct, referring to a specific practice that is not necessarily the oldest or perhaps for some, even most authentic manifestation. In everyday use in Brazil, then, "traditional *choro*" was used by my collaborators to describe the *choro* that is performed by musicians who learned their craft in the *roda*, in popular practice, and generally separate from formal training in Western Art music.¹ It is notable, however, that, while *choro* is generally accepted by most scholars as a form of popular music, many of the earliest performers and composers of core pieces that are often viewed as "traditional" were, in fact, trained in the European classical music milieu. Musicians such as Henrique Alves de Mesquita, Joaquim Calado, Papátio Silva, Chiquinha Gonzaga, Ernesto Nazaré and Anacleto de Medeiros are among the best known of the first generation of *chorões* (*choro* musicians) and all received formal training in the European classical music approach, through either private instruction or within an institution of music education. Subsequent generations of *choro* musicians, however, included many amateur, and sometimes, self-taught players (who often did not read music) from the middle and lower economic classes of the city of Rio de Janeiro, and who performed mainly for their own enjoyment at private social events in homes and small clubs. It was this second incarnation of *choro* that became widely popularized throughout Brazil, and ultimately recognized by most as “traditional” *choro*. Following typical practice among my collaborators in Brazil, I also use the term *traditional* to refer to these types of musicians (rather than those trained in, for example, conservatories) as well as the approach to *choro* performance most commonly embraced by them. This manner of performance includes, for examples, an emphasis on oral transmission rather than written scores, and a less formalized performance location such as a nightclub, restaurant or private home, rather than a concert hall. However, in recognizing the
invented nature of "the choro tradition" (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1992), I also want to suggest that the study of the use of keyboard percussion instruments in choro involves not the entry, but actually the re-entry of classically trained musicians into the genre. The implication is that the participation of such performers who are typically viewed today as non-traditional actually predates the consolidation of a notion of tradition that excludes them. I discuss this phenomenon in more detail in Chapter 2, "Histories".

Despite the fact that the use of keyboard percussion instruments in choro is somewhat limited among Brazilian musicians and percussionists in other cultures, this inquiry nevertheless engages with key issues in Brazilian popular music more broadly. As Nettl has written, if “the domain of music is a proper microcosm-then it should be possible to learn from every part or sector of the musical culture something that is significant about the musical culture as a whole” (2005:238). Regarding music’s relationship to Brazilian culture in general, however, Andrew Connell suggests a more cautious approach:

Brazil is a hierarchical society in which social mobility is at once defined in terms of and limited by conceptualizations of race and class. The connections between musical taste, consumption and social class have an extensive history in Brazil (Ulhôa Carvalho 1993, 2000, Reily 2001, Araújo 1988, 1999). For example, sertaneja and bolero have long been associated primarily with lower class performers and audiences, while MPB and bossa nova are generally thought of as elite, middle class genres. Because música instrumental is essentially a middle class music, I am hesitant to make any generalizations about Brazilian culture as a whole (Connell 2002:17).

As I shall demonstrate in later chapters, it is this very diversity in Brazilian popular music to which Connell alludes, that points to a very general and very Brazilian cultural trait – namely, the impulse of many artists to blend different musical styles, to mix and match genres, to create
and re-create endlessly. The ideas in this study also enter into the abundant discussions among scholars of musical appropriation and migration between cultures and nations.

In the gathering of the information presented in this document I discovered a wide variety of applications of the keyboard percussion instruments within *choro* and encountered diverging and sometimes opposing points of view in the responses to my questions on the subject. In keeping with the most common approach employed by my collaborators, my study focuses primarily on adapting keyboard percussion instruments to *choro*, (rather than adapting *choro* to keyboard percussion instruments) with an emphasis on maintaining what the majority of my collaborators view as essential performance practices and interpretive methods of the genre. However, in some instances it became a necessary tactic to adapt *choro* to the keyboard percussion instruments owing to specific instrumental considerations as well as to the individual approaches of the keyboard percussion performers interviewed. The variety of possible uses of keyboard percussion in *choro* underscores the importance of observations made by Melville Herskovits over sixty years ago. In discussing the difficulty of defining the anthropological subject, he noted that that there is not a single approach, but rather, a range of “limits within which a culture recognizes and sanctions variations in a … given mode of behavior” (Herskovits 1948:570). Depending on whom one asks, the practice of playing *choro* on keyboard percussion instruments might be described by Brazilians as a corruption of a valued tradition, a natural extension of that same tradition, a trivial offshoot of the genre, or as an essential pedagogical aid for classical and popular percussionist students and teachers. Even with this lack of consensus, what is clear is that *choro* practice is changing due to any number of causes including its growing place in university music programs and at other educational institutions throughout Brazil, its internationalization, and the increased flow of new music and musical approaches into Brazil.
Ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam has noted the existence of multiple viewpoints:

the ethnographic or ethnomusicological “truth” is not a single fixed entity, but rather a range of entities within a particular distribution of variation, and it is the limits of the variation, rather than a supposed absolute, which lead to an understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam 1964:50).

Merriam’s assertion of the fluidity of ethnomusicological truth is important. Yet it does not mean that debates over establishing that truth are not likely. My research suggests, in fact, that the existence of many valid truths can lead to heated debate.

Thus, choro practice in contemporary times presents a complex picture. Originally urban and middle class and centered primarily in the city of Rio de Janeiro and later, São Paulo, it became a national form of music in the 1920s and 30s through dissemination via radio or on recordings as well as through several governments’ efforts to promote it as a “truly” Brazilian form. With the success of newer styles such as samba and bossa nova, as well as foreign popular music influences in the latter half of the 20th century, choro came to be viewed by many Brazilians as a cultural anachronism.

The choro was initially an urban form associated with Rio, but it started to lose popularity in the capital and found new life elsewhere, particularly in the Northeast. It lost its exclusively urban identity and was transplanted into the relatively rural setting where it is in many ways best preserved today (Garcia 1997:206).

Strongly informing the current wave of many younger Brazilian musicians that play música instrumental (instrumental music), such as Hamilton de Holanda and Yamandú Costa, who regularly mix other styles of Brazilian and international music with choro, the genre is also
found in Brazilian university courses and dedicated schools of *choro*. During this study it became clear to me that there exists more than one kind of *choro*: a “traditional” form preserved and taught in institutions, and still performed as such in rural Brazil and in clubs dedicated to preserving the “authentic” *choro*, and a more contemporary approach which blends a variety of styles and has a greater emphasis on improvisation. This difference is another ongoing issue for many Brazilians and is significant because *choro* has been a central part of Brazilian musical culture for generations. In any attempt to define what is truly representative of *choro*, the question challenges whether Brazilians are relating to the past, present or future. Connell, referencing Homi K. Bhabha, writes,

> Defining Brazilianness involves intersecting ideas of nationalism, “authenticity”, memory, and dialogue between past and present constructions of ‘brasilidade’ (brazilianness) … the structuring of which takes place in the “ambivalent tension” between the ‘pedagogical’ and the ‘performative’. Bhabha defines the ‘pedagogical’ as the construction of tradition through the selection of particular historical moments whose narratives are told and retold. The ‘performative’ consists of the constant, repetitive reiteration and reinterpretation of national identity of individual actors (Bhabha 1990b). This constant friction between modernity and tradition opens up a space in which the negotiation over change and innovation take place (Connell 2002:122-123).

Furthermore, the term “authenticity” links with issues relating both to race and to the marketing of commodified, expressive art forms as noted by Radano:

> The musicological resonance of the term ‘authenticity’ might at first seem to imply an objectification and potential commodification of music itself – for instance, ‘early music’ as an essentialized and technologically reproducible object – and we would argue that this modern, if not postmodern, use of authenticity is not irrelevant to the ways in which authenticity contains the conditions of racialized music (Radano 2000:29).
The particularly Brazilian notion of “authenticity” encountered in the current research draws more on the language of nationalism than a particular biologism or organicism. However, expressions of Brazilian nationalism are rooted in the notion of mestiçagem (the mixing of races) and its implications for a Brazilian ‘race’ that is central to the idealized national identity.\(^1\)

The conceptions, constructions and understanding of these issues and how they relate to representations of Brazilian culture in the face of change, and specifically the changing nature of choro music, are central to this study and will be revisited in subsequent chapters.

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\(^1\) The roda de choro (choro circle) is social gathering where choro musicians meet to perform with and learn from each other, something like a “jam” session. It is described in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

\(^2\) The key text and basis for notions of mestiçagem in Brazil is Gilberto Freyre’s Casa Grande e Senzala, 1946, José Olympio, Rio de Janeiro.
Chapter 1: Ideas and Issues in Contemporary Choro

1.1 Objectivity and Witness

In this period of post modernism the social sciences can no longer claim that the fieldworker escapes significant participation in the total cultural performance of field research. Performance is, after all, according to Johannes Fabian, ‘not what they do and we observe; we are both engaged in it’ (Barz 1990:xv)

Much has been written in ethnomusicological literature regarding the researchers’ own subjective experience and how it shapes the methods and conclusions of their scholarship, and that is certainly true in this study. Professionally, I am a performer on keyboard percussion instruments and an aficionado of Brazilian popular music in general. In the course of my studies I repeatedly came upon statements by respected Brazilian musicians that an awareness of choro was indispensible in gaining a complete understanding of Brazilian popular music. This led me to investigate choro more deeply and to examine the connections between my instrument and this essential genre of Brazilian music.

Nevertheless, I am an outsider in the world of keyboard percussion instruments in choro – a distance amplified by my musical background, primary instruments, and their place in my training in both western classical percussion and jazz. The former assists in my understanding of the issues and particular perspectives of classically trained percussionists who make up the largest part of keyboard percussionists involved in playing choro in Brazil, and who at the same time, are dealing with a phenomenon that comes from outside their musical tradition. In one
sense, these musicians are just as much outsiders in the world of *choro* as I am. My jazz experience allows me some understanding of the other community of Brazilian *choro* playing keyboard percussionists who are part of the popular music stream that includes the practice of improvisation, a greater emphasis on rhythmic feel (groove) and a variety of other social and practical issues not always part of the classically trained performer’s experience. My longstanding interest in Brazilian music on the other hand, provides me not only with affinity but also with some familiarity and a way “in”. While attempting to be as reflexive as possible, I was inevitably curious about playing some of this music for myself and many of the musicians I interacted with during my research expected and demanded it, leading me into a subjective and personal experience. Is objectivity more than an abstract concept? Or, as Connell asks, is it even possible not to participate in the world? The best experience for me as an ethnographer seems to be a combination of observation and participation that allows me to become not quite an insider but no longer completely an outsider.

My experience as a working musician in Canada in the 21st century also influences my perspective on the subject. Toronto, my home base, has a large and active Brazilian musical community, and it is relatively easy to encounter groups performing some form of *samba*, *enredo*, *pagode*, *batucada*, *bossa nova* or *MPB* (*música popular brasileira* or brazilian popular music) in local clubs and restaurants. One also finds other music styles, less commonly heard, such as *maracatu*, *axé* and *baião*. The Brazilian community in Toronto is extremely welcoming and I have had the pleasure of hearing and performing most of these styles of music in varying degrees over the years. *Choro* however, is still relatively uncommon with only a few ensembles including one or two pieces in their repertoire. At the time of this writing, there is only one ensemble in the city, which is dedicated to the genre.
Despite all this, I am still an outsider simply by not being Brazilian. German vibraphonist and Brazilian popular music performer Hendrik Meurkens echoed this point to me in an interview. Meurkens feels that Brazilians can be protective of their musical traditions as cultural possessions and are not accepting of outsiders “doing” them no matter how well they might be performed. In his opinion, the issue of rhythmic interpretation especially is always at the forefront. Several Brazilian musicians with whom I spoke echoed this concern. I discuss this issue in more detail in chapter 4, “Interpretation” and consider how the interpretation of *choro*, as practiced differently by Brazilians and non-Brazilians, has implications for understanding notions of Brazilian identity.

Another element, which arose during this study, is that of the “internal” outsider, or rather, the participation of classically trained Brazilian musicians in the music of *choro* as a popular and partially improvised music genre. The revival of *choro* within various universities and other educational institutions has redefined the music’s place in Brazil, and this type of institutionalization has had other effects on the music itself. Fernando Rocha, percussion professor at the Federal University in Minas Gerais (UFMG), has suggested that *choro* is played differently when it is read (rather than played by ear) as is typical in classical contexts, because the musicians adhere to a more formal interpretation of rhythm and arrangement, and often eliminate the element of improvisation, rather than listening to each other and subtly adapting their rhythmic approach to create a unified whole, which is the customary performance practice in popular contexts. *Choro* musicians outside of institutional settings tend to feel a certain amount of ambivalence at hearing “their” music performed in this way by classically trained musicians. On the one hand, they feel a measure of contentment and pride that the tradition is
being continued and taken seriously by respected artists. Even so, they acknowledge that an essential thrust of the practice, some intangible fusion of social context, improvisation and rhythmic vitality, has been lost in the “translation”. As Ted Solis notes,

This prestige associated with ethnomusicological activity can also affect the tradition itself. [Ensemble leaders] Netsky and Witzleben both attest to heightened interest in, and greater approval of, Klezmer and Chinese orchestral music’s once they were presented to members of the heritage community in academic contexts (Solís 2004:13).

There are also issues of power and control involved as the classically trained musicians are often held in greater esteem than their popular or folkloric compatriots, and are generally part of a higher social and economic class. Some traditional *chorões* (choro musicians) are troubled by the thought of erudite musicians representing, and possibly misrepresenting, the genre to a wider public.

Yet another perspective on *choro’s* place in Brazilian culture is found in the many writings by Brazilian musicologists on the subject of popular music and national identity. Critics, writers and scholars such as José Ramos Tinhorão in particular, have been critical of foreign contaminants finding their way into Brazilian popular music and have written extensively in “defense” of the tradition (Tinhorão 1997). The influential Brazilian poet, novelist and musicologist Mario de Andrade wrote that the music of Brazil’s future would be less influenced by European models and based more on Brazil’s folkloric and popular music (1965). Yet Brazilian performers and composers, assisted by the rapid access to material provided by contemporary technology such as the internet, continue to produce new, hybrid musical forms and styles. In Brazil, this hybridity of culture is part of a long running discourse on nationality and modernity and is necessarily tied to the concepts of *mestiçagem* (the mixing of races) and
anthropofagia (cultural cannibalism), the latter first put forth by Oswaldo de Andrade in his “Manifesto Antropófago” from 1928. These concepts also surface in discussions on Tropicália, a popular music and arts movement at the end of the 1960s in Brazil, led by Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and others, and which included a predominant use of electric instruments and rock music influences.

As evidenced in the opening quote, creative musicians will likely continue to explore new ways of making music regardless of political and academic perspectives on the subject of authenticity, and these explorations will have an inevitable influence on their identity as individuals and as part of a culture, nation or social group.
1.2 Choro as “World Music”

Ethnomusicologist Tamara Livingston-Isenhour has written about the idea of the choro “revival” and places it in the context of music revivals worldwide, describing them as a “twentieth-century phenomenon that is a product of and a reaction against modernity” (Livingston-Isenhour 1993: iv). She goes on to illustrate how social, political and economic changes associated with the choro revival have caused a “distinct shift away from participatory modes to mostly presentational and recorded modes of choro” (Livingston-Isenhour 1993: iv).

The presentational and recorded modes to which Livingston-Isenhour refers are essentially promotional and marketing tools which give a voice and image to the genre in the 21st century international marketplace as a participant in the global phenomenon of “world music”. This can result in a give and take relationship between a given culture and more socioeconomically dominant societies, the United States and Western Europe for example, in consideration of commercial pop and European classical music.

[the musical genre] is part of a world movement that advances the desire of every nation not only to be recognized but also to participate in the workings of global economics and power. As does all world music, it faces a double bind. On the one hand, in order to assert [its own] identity within the dominant system, [the genre] is forced to a great extent to use the dominant system’s language (its technology, etc.). In the process, it necessarily takes on some of the characteristics of the system from which it aims to distinguish itself. On the other hand, as Meintjes points out, “To regulate and incorporate subordinate groups, the dominant class is forced to reformulate itself constantly so that its core values are not threatened. In reformulating itself it necessarily takes on some features of the subordinate groups that it surpresses” (Meintjes: 68) (Guilbault: 209).
Elsewhere, Charles Keil succinctly notes, “In class society the media of the dominant class must be used for the style to be legitimated” (Keil:122). Hermano Vianna goes one step further and suggests that older musical traditions (at least in Brazil) must integrate themselves with other popular music movements in order to remain relevant and to ensure that their particular perspective continues to be seen and grow.⁷ I discuss the further implications of this outlook as it relates to the use of keyboard percussion instruments in *choro* in the final chapter “Summary and Conclusions”.

From a marketing perspective, musicologist Tim Taylor has noted the growing relationship between popular world music and classical music reflected in the practices of both retailers and promoters. As a variety of non-western traditional musics are increasingly elevated to the status of fine art, they are displayed next to European classical genres and pitched to a desirable, high-end audience eager for something new.

More than simply filling the gap left by classical music, world music has begun to mix with classical sounds. It is now possible to hear classicalized world music performances such as Jonathan Elias’s “The Prayer Cycle” released in 1999, featuring singers ranging from Alanis Morrissette to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.⁸ The result is a mixture of world music, classical and new age “styles”, a sound that is increasingly common (Taylor 2007:174-175).

Elsewhere Taylor has written,
Partly as a result of this new openness, world music is becoming increasingly classicalized… [and] is being repositioned as a connoisseur’s music, a music that requires knowledge to understand (Taylor 2007:189).

In this light, the subject of keyboard percussion instruments in *choro* provides an apt entry point into debates over Brazilian musical culture, Brazilian culture, and world music in general insofar as it represents a blend of both popular and erudite traditions. This dialectic is a common component of discussions concerning Brazilian art and highlights a cultural tendency in Brazil to blur the lines, both in practice and in intellectual discussion, between artistic styles, genres, historical periods and definitions. Although trends can be dated chronologically and located on an historical timeline, many Brazilian artists view earlier artistic styles and movements as part of a larger whole and consider them to be equally contemporary with newer ones as long as they are still being practiced or identified with by some part of the artistic or general population. Thus the tendency to blend elements from various genres and eras is widespread enough to be called a hallmark of the Brazilian creative approach. As such, debates continue over how this blending should be done and what it means.

The influence of instruments and musical practices from the European music sphere into the world of *choro* reveals another issue relative to cultural identity within Brazil. Namely, that there is some apprehension among the traditional *choro* musicians that “their” music is being co-opted by a musical and cultural establishment that wants to change and use it for its own purposes. This raises an interesting question of ownership: what are the implications of *choro* being represented by Brazilian musicians who identify with being trained in the European classical tradition? Could this be viewed as a form of cultural appropriation? Brazilian percussionist and educator Ney Rosauro confirmed to me that it is absolutely necessary for
classically trained musicians, including Brazilians, to study the rhythmic interpretation and to have experience in popular music in order to play *choro* correctly. Every one I spoke with confirmed that the only way to achieve this correct rhythmic interpretation is to *conviver* (live with) the music for an extended period of time.

At the same time, many university percussion instructors in Brazil, such as Jorge Sacramento at the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador (UFBA), emphasized the importance of appreciating and internalizing the aesthetics of both western classical and popular music. While attempting to teach the *choro* tradition as faithfully as they are able in their fields, they view it and perform it from a distinct musical and social perspective. This intermingling of dual aesthetics has echoes of Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism. In a passage quoted by Gage Averill regarding world music ensembles in a university setting,

There is an enduring image… according to which, to better understand a foreign culture one should live in it, and forgetting one’s own, look at the world through the eyes of this culture… To be sure, to enter in some measure into an alien culture and look at the world through its eyes is a necessary moment in the process of understanding: but if understanding were exhausted in this moment, it would have been no more than a single duplication, and would have brought nothing new or enriching. Creative understanding does not renounce itself, its place in time, its culture; it does not forget anything (Todorov in Averill 2004:101).

Averill continues with his vision of intercultural music performance as it relates to university world music ensembles, and emphasizes that performers and researchers cannot exclude their own experiences from the equation,
The dialogical approach to intercultural studies that I advocate privileges the space of the encounter rather than the mastery of the codes. For the world music ensemble to become such a space of encounter, performers are not expected to renounce their musical selves but to bring a set of cultural and individual experiences to the ensemble as a precursor to the production of genuine understanding of both cultural difference and commonality. The world music ensemble can thus be reconceived as a context in which students engage in dialogue and collision with musical and cultural codes other than their “first-language” codes. When this is the goal, students and faculty alike should find it less threatening to “interrogate” the representational politics of world music ensembles even while performing in them (Averill:101).

This approach has clear implications for creating an alternative sense of identity for Brazilians trained in the western classical school when playing a traditional Brazilian music, a topic addressed in the following section. I am not suggesting that the less erudite voice, the traditional choro musician, is not still the authority for the tradition – a fact on which most Brazilian musicians, classically trained or otherwise, would agree – but that there are multiple and alternative approaches to choro in contemporary Brazil.

1.3 Culture Change and Refashioning Identity: Is the phrase “culture change” a redundancy?

Many studies have emphasized the importance and desire of most societies to see ethnomusicological studies focus on what they themselves consider the best and greatest of their culture. In this respect, this study hits the mark. Musicians from all corners of the Brazilian cultural spectrum generally acknowledge choro to be one of the most distinctive musical
achievements of their society, even if they have never played it or rarely listen to it. *Samba* is more widespread in Brazil (and internationally) than *choro*, and is lavishly celebrated during the annual Carnaval celebration as well as being an integral part of the tourist industry. But while *samba* is so firmly rooted in the soul of Brazil that it has attained the status of myth, its beginnings are inextricably bound up with those of *choro*. Many of the Brazilian musicians with whom I spoke view *choro* as a kind of older and wiser sibling of *samba*, in part because it is technically and harmonically more elaborate. It is common for performing groups and venues to present both genres during a performance and to mix and match musical elements of each in one composition.

This emphasis on *choro* as an “authentic” Brazilian music stems from a constant need in Brazilian society to recognize, define and protect its musical culture against mainly American and European influences. Connell writes

> The urge to preserve an “authentic” Brazilian music can be directly linked to the modernist ideas of the 1920s and the state supported cooptation of popular culture by the Estado Novo (the dictatorial government led by Getúlio Vargas) … the urge to forge a distinct national identity led to the codifying and concretizing of samba and choro within stylistic boundaries established in the 1930s. Innovations or interpretations seen as undermining what was perceived as the “purity” of these styles were met with resistance by those musicians critics and aficionados whose authority was invested in the preservation of the status quo (Connell 2002:62).

Interestingly, although he is referring to a period eighty years ago, the same dialogue exists today between promoters of the current revival of *choro* in the universities and conservatories of Brazil and the practitioners of its contemporary commercial incarnations. The longevity of the discussion suggests that issue will never completely be resolved as Brazilian
culture is multiple and in a constant state of change. In light of this, the question remains how future generations will sort out what it means to be Brazilian, what is Brazilian culture, and who and what best represent it.

Similar questions remain central to ethnomusicological study of music “in” or “as” culture, as suggested by Nettl’s assertion that

Nature is incapable of repeating itself precisely and therefore constant change is a given in our culture. But one may argue that an observer is incapable of perceiving a complex phenomenon except in its static form, change being a rapid succession of stable states, and that therefore, if culture is something constantly changing, one can deal with it only as an abstraction… Most approaches to the study of music in culture have used a static conception of culture. Music in or as culture implies a relationship, and what ethnomusicologists are about is the examination of views of this relationship (Nettl 2005:222).

How much can one glean from this “abstraction” that is the ever-changing relationship of elements that make up what we call culture? We know that the introduction of keyboard percussion instruments in popular Brazilian music is a relatively recent phenomenon that raises issues related to foreign influence and Brazilian cultural authenticity among others. This however, is not new to *choro*. One is reminded of the controversy which surrounded the most famous of *choro* musicians, Pixinguinha, in 1922 when upon returning to Brazil following a six month stay in Paris with his group Os Oito Batutas, he introduced saxophone and drum kit into the ensemble (instruments he had heard in the American jazz groups which were common in France at that time) and elicited harsh criticism from all sides for his capitulation to American influences.11 In an interview done in 2009, Hendrik Meurkens suggested that the sound of the vibraphone is not Brazilian and that its inclusion in any Brazilian style brings the music closer to
jazz. (Interestingly, he noted that the marimba and xylophone, while also not being traditional in the Brazilian culture, do not have as strong a connection to the jazz world and as such, sound less out of place in choro or in other Brazilian styles than the vibraphone.) While it is true the Brazilian style most people associate with jazz would be bossa nova, the extensive usage of the vibraphone by luminary Brazilian musicians such as Tom Jobim, Roberto Menescal, Ugo Marotta, Breno Sauer, Altivo Penteado (Garoto) and others from the very earliest recordings of the bossa nova movement, suggest that for many it was in fact, a very Brazilian “sound”.

Meurkens believes that the novelty of the sound produced by keyboard percussion instruments presents a problem for choro traditionalists. He notes that this issue exists in other styles – for example acoustic guitar and flute sound fine in Brazilian music but do not sound as appropriate in traditional American jazz in his opinion, or that saxophone “works” in jazz but not as readily in classical European music and that the timbre of the solo violin fits well in classical European music but sounds strange in bossa nova. Conversely, Arthur Dutra, a current generation percussionist from Rio de Janeiro disagreed with Meurkens’ assertion that the vibraphone does not belong in Brazilian music. He stated that if a musician plays with enough of a Brazilian sotaque (accent) in their playing (and by this he means a typical, Brazilian rhythmic swing), that Brazilian listeners will accept the musician and his or her interpretation as accurate. Meurkens’ statements may reveal more about himself and his background as a jazz musician (and non-Brazilian) than anything about how Brazilians view keyboard percussion instruments in their own musical milieu, yet they also demonstrate that the issues that arise with respect to adding new instruments to choro are not simply the question of whether the instrumentation is considered an essential part of the style or not, but rather, by whom, for what reasons, and based on what understanding about what the music is. I have encountered other Brazilian musicians who feel as Meurkens does, that the velha guarda or old school of choro musicians is often
closed to innovation. It seems that there are a variety of opinions and experiences for both Brazilian and non-Brazilian musicians in this area.

Dutra feels that the sound of an instrument is important as a voice, as an inspiration and as a reminder. He suggested to me that keyboard percussion instruments have a connection to Africa and Afro-Brazilian music because of the technique used to produce sound on them, the striking of the instrument with a stick. He feels there is “a naturalness” to playing Afro-Brazilian influenced music on these instruments because of this technique. André Juarez, one of the foremost interpreters of *choro* on the vibraphone, mentioned the challenge for him in performing *choro* on mallet instruments is in attempting to achieve the “wood flavour” of the music. By this, I believe he is referring to the timbre of the instruments, *violão* (nylon stringed guitar), *bandolim* (mandolin) and *cavaquinho* (a small, four stringed instrument of Portuguese origin, similar in size to the ukulele). And supporting his “wood flavour” theory, the majority of percussionists I spoke with preferred the xylophone (with keys made of wood, as opposed to the metal vibraphone) as a melody instrument when playing *choro* on keyboard percussion instruments.

Fernando Rocha, percussion instructor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, also referenced the difficulty for keyboard percussionists in learning *choro* in the traditional way, which is by regularly attending a *roda de choro* (literally, “choro circle”). This is a social event in which musicians of all ages and abilities meet to perform and learn *choro* pieces from each other. As these events are predicated on the idea of musicians being able to drop in on each other at private homes or in local bars, it is clearly difficult for players on keyboard percussion to attend the *roda* given the large size of their instruments and difficulty in transporting them. Rocha cites this as another reason why the xylophone is the best keyboard percussion instrument
for *choro*, because it is smaller and thus, more easily transported than the other keyboard percussion instruments. (For more on the *roda de choro* see chapter 2, “Histories”)

Meurkens suggested that the distinction between *choro* and *samba-jazz* is blurred by playing the music on vibraphone. He feels that even Brazilian musicians who accompany him in a performance will play the music differently, that they will play more jazzistically, when supporting him on vibraphone as opposed to supporting another type of instrumentalist. That is, they will interpret the rhythms more freely and will play improvised melodies and harmonies with more chromaticism. Whether this is due solely to the inclusion of the vibraphone or to Meurkens’ own playing style is not clear given that his own interpretations lean more toward the “jazz” approach. It does, however, suggest that there are multiple levels of accommodation among the musicians occurring within the traditional form, in reaction to the foreign influence of both a new instrument and an “outsider” musician.

### 1.4 Social Context of Choro

Merriam emphasized early on the necessity of considering the cultural and social aspects in the study of music by noting that

Music is a uniquely human phenomenon which exists only in terms of social interaction; that is, it is made by people for other people, and it is learned behavior. It does not and cannot exist by, of, and for itself; there must always be human beings doing something to produce it. In short, music cannot be defined as a phenomenon of sound alone, for it involves the behavior of individuals and groups of individuals, and its particular
organization demands the social concurrence of people who decide what it can and cannot be (Merriam 1964:27).

He goes on to warn against the merely descriptive study of music, or studies that define it as art, separate from culture as a whole. He notes “its aspects include the historical, social, psychological, structural, cultural, functional, physical, psychological, aesthetic, symbolic and others” (Merriam 1964:31). Given that *choro* is considered by many musicologists to be one of the earliest forms of a distinctly Brazilian popular music, one of its effects on a social level may have been to facilitate an interaction between the various economic and social classes in Rio de Janeiro at that time. Among these would have been the working class, middle class civil servants, businesspeople and the Afro-Brazilian community that had been recently freed from slavery and which was arriving in Rio in large numbers in search of employment (Vianna 1999). In the case of *choro*, the result of this convergence was the mixing of several different musical languages into a new, socially and musically acceptable form. The fact that *choro* was born in private gatherings in the homes of musicians and middle class professionals, and that this would have been one of the few places where the various economic classes could socialize comfortably at the time, supports this hypothesis. The social context of *choro*, normally played in bars, restaurants and private social gatherings, continues to be an important element of the practice (see chapter 2 “Histories”). It is then easily understandable how a recently created music in such a social context could have great emotional resonance and come to be associated with a sense of cultural identity for its practitioners in the evolving Brazilian urban society of the era.

The Brazilian aesthetic appreciation of *choro* and the relevance of locale have a distinct difference from the idea described by Merriam in 1964. He notes that in the western world,
We can take music out of any other context and treat it objectively or subjectively as something which exists for itself. We do this not only in the listening process, but in our analysis of music; the student of music form looks at it as an objective entity which can be divorced both from himself and from its context (Merriam 1964: 262).

In Brazil, popular music is not idealized in this manner. Rather than existing as an autonomous entity, there are different sensibilities about what is valued in choro - its physical environment, its capacity when played well, to create an atmosphere of festivity and playfulness. While most Brazilian choro musicians are capable of understanding the concept of abstracting music from its cultural context, perhaps for the purposes of a theoretical discussion, there exists also a deliberate choice made and value placed on its native environment and context, the roda de choro (choro circle) a social event where the music is most often heard. In the same way that a social event involving eating, drinking and conversation might be unimaginable for chorões without the inclusion of live music, the music itself is diminished without the accompaniment and sound of these types of social activities. This attitude is far removed from the mindset of western classical cultures that objectify the music and idealize it as separate it from any broad cultural or social context, the performers themselves, or even from the room in which it is being performed.

Thus, is it understandable that, according to Rocha, the more contemporary practice of presenting choro in concert halls and academic institutions has changed the way the music is performed and heard. He also feels that the concert hall setting is less desirable because traditional musicians used to performing in small bars or private homes become more self-conscious and consequently play less well. Furthermore, the audience has a greater expectations for the music as it is their only stimulus (as opposed to eating, drinking, socializing, etc) and that
this takes away some of the spontaneity of the performance. Rocha confirms that in the typical context of a private party or bar, music is only part of the whole experience, whereas in a concert setting musicians have a greater responsibility to create an ambience of festivity with sound alone in what is, ironically, a more formal and constrained environment.

André Juarez also emphasized to me that “real” *choro* is performed in small, underground clubs and has a different feeling from that of *choro* in the theatre. In his opinion, *choro* is made for fun and for the musicians themselves, and that it has a particular “smell”. He mentioned that when it is performed on a stage in front of an audience he personally has never sensed this “smell” from *choro* played in a theatre.¹⁵

This idea bears some relationship with Mantle Hood’s discussion of the extramusical associations that are made in many musical cultures concerning a specific genre of music, a mode or a single composition. In many places music is associated with particular seasons, directions, hours or locations, as with the Indian raga, for example (Hood 1971). While a more exhaustive look at the psychological bases of these extramusical associations within the practice of *choro* is beyond the scope of this study, many of the points mentioned by Hood can be equally applied (and apparently are by most Brazilians) to the experience of *choro* in its traditional performance context of neighborhood bar or private home. Indeed, it may be that many of the problems that some Brazilians have with contemporary *choro* have more to do with performance context and less to do with the actual sounds being produced.
1.5 Choro and Jazz

The history of jazz in Brazil has yet to be written” (Calado 1990:221).

As Nettl notes, “one of the main problems of the ethnographer of musical life is to find a way of organizing a vast body of diverse bits of information” (Nettl 2005:223). This is certainly true in the case of the present study, which, in dealing with an extremely recent phenomenon of the meeting of two separate musical trajectories, makes almost impossible the establishment of typologies that could serve as templates for comparative description.

One might take issue with the relative advantages and problems with taking a comparative approach to the study of choro especially as it relates to American jazz, but in this instance the comparison is unavoidable – the common roots and subsequent interaction of the two is part of the social and practical history of the genre. Not only do the musical elements of choro bear many of the same origins as jazz (such as European song forms and harmonic structure, imitation of African based rhythms, the use of improvisation) but also their creation and evolution follow roughly the same historical timelines. Furthermore, from their beginnings in the late 19th century through the early 20th, their dissemination on the newly developed mediums of radio and phonograph (at first by magnetic cylinder and later on disc) allowed musicians from each culture the opportunity to hear, learn and integrate elements of the others’ style. I would add that owing to the similarities between the two genres, as well as the global popularity of jazz on one hand and the voracious appetite for new inspiration among jazz musicians on the other, it is probable that musicians of each style would be drawn to the others’. Although one can assume that the majority of information flowed from the United States to
Brazil rather than the other way around owing to the greater resources and influence of the American recording industry at the time, American popular musicians were not unaware of *choro*, (for example, the inclusion of a *maxixe* number (an early form of *choro* based on polka) in the 1913 New York musical *The Sunshine Girl* (Roberts: 1999:19) or the Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers dance to the *choro* “Dengozo” from the 1939 film *The Story of Irene and Vernon Castle*).

More recently, the 2008 recording *Choro Meets Ragtime* is an example of this ongoing relationship. This hybrid recording is the direct result of ethnomusicological research into the common roots and characteristics of the two genres. Released by Global Choro Music in 2008, this project is hinged on the common musical elements of European song form and harmony and Africanized rhythm that are shared by these traditions. While the ragtime compositions are easily interpreted in a *choro* format, one can hear clear melodic differences between the styles. The ragtime melodies are simpler and more “riff”-based than the florid, virtuosic lines found in the typical *choro* composition. The CD is a “play-along” type that has some deleted tracks in order to allow a musician to play the melody along with the accompaniment provided on the CD as an educational aid; a way to gain experience in playing *choro* in the same manner as jazz musician Jamey Abersold’s recordings do with well-known jazz compositions. In this circumstance however, the people producing this CD are clearly attempting to elicit the interest of the ragtime community in *choro* by including ragtime titles only.

Another factor, which inspires a comparative analysis of *choro* and American jazz, is the insistence of most Brazilian *choro* musicians, both past and present, that their music is definitely not jazz. Although it is clear that *choro* has been influenced by American music to a degree (see, for example, the 1940s recordings of “Cavaquinho Boogie” and “Benny Goodman no Choro” by
the guitarist Garoto, the latter which sets a typical *choro* melody into a Goodman-style, big band instrumentation and arrangement)\(^{18}\), the extent to which Brazilians defend the integrity of their first, truly Brazilian form of popular music indicates a host of social and political issues around the subjects of ownership, foreign influence and cultural integrity vis-à-vis their musical heritage.

Jota Moraes, a well known vibraphonist from Rio de Janeiro, told me that he doesn’t like to hear jazz elements in *choro* as he feels the rhythmic bases of the two genres are too different to blend. However, he feels there is an aesthetic similarity between bebop and *choro* in that they both allow a great amount of freedom for the musicians to improvise a kind of musical conversation, and that there is a special feeling of excitement when listening to musicians participate in this kind of interaction. Jota points out that many Brazilian composers have written contemporary *choros* (Egberto Gismonti and Hermeto Pascoal, for example) that are quite complicated harmonically, but nonetheless have little to do with jazz.

Vibraphonist Arthur Dutra suggested that many Brazilian musicians are defensive about their chosen field and mentioned that many jazz musicians in Brazil “hate” *choro* and further, that many traditional *choro* musicians feel similarly about jazz. He believes that this animosity has something to do with the limited funds available from governmental agencies to promote music and that the two camps often compete with each other for this support. In this case, the political stakes of what music is “Brazilian” and what music is not, are very clear. At the same time Dutra feels that these distinctions are breaking down with the younger generations who are less concerned with defining stylistic differences. Rather than viewing tradition as a set of rules to be followed, they see it simply as something that was invented in the past, and thus, as something that can be re-invented. In Dutra’s view, culture does not mysteriously arise from
some unknown depth of the human condition, but instead, is invented by people. He feels that most creative musicians re-invent their music as an ongoing activity and noted that *música de raiz* (pure or literally, “roots” music) does not exist, and that music is always derivative of an earlier form of music from some other foreign or previous culture.

Whether or not one is born and bred in a musical tradition, one’s musicality is the result of a patchwork of experience. A culturally specific sense of musicality may certainly be developed through the process of being native to that culture, but musicians’ musicalities are also collections of encounters and choices: pastiches of performances they have experienced, the lessons they have taken, the people with whom they have played, the other musicians they admire, other music’s that they play or enjoy, and the technical and cognitive limitations of their own musicianship (Rasmussen 2004:225).

As one of many younger Brazilians who have studied in the United States, vibraphonist André Juarez exemplifies this re-invention of “tradition” and displays a clear influence of jazz in some of his contemporary *choro* work. His composition “Gato Preto” (which is also the name of his choro group) is dedicated to the jazz duo of Gary Burton and Chick Corea who influenced Juarez’s early years as a musician. The piece is a newly composed melody using the harmonic sequence and structure of the jazz composition “Bud Powell” by Corea, but performed with the stylistic interpretation and rhythmic base of *choro*.

In light of the differing opinions and attitudes among Brazilian musicians regarding the relationship between jazz and *choro*, it is clear that no definitive answer can be reached in terms of how much jazz influence is and isn’t in *choro*. Nor is there consensus on how much cross-pollination is acceptable. What is clear is that the two genres have a connection, albeit an ambiguous one, in the minds, hearts and musical creations of *choro* and jazz musicians alike.
1.6 Multicultural Music or Multimusical Culture?

This title is borrowed from Bruno Nettl and illustrates perfectly the dilemma within the ongoing discussion of *brasilidade* (brazilianess) among Brazilian academics. As much as the current subject of the introduction of contemporary keyboard percussion instruments from a primarily classical music tradition into the more popular genre of *choro* is a blending of disparate influences, it exemplifies that culture’s approach to music as a whole.\(^{19}\) Within Brazil there exists a range of music, popular, folkloric and classical that is extremely heterogenous, even at the local level, and which at times seems deliberately designed to avoid classification. It may be that the definition of *brasilidade* lies not in what is done musically in Brazil but rather, in how it is done, and who does the defining. The integration of multiple musical influences from both Brazilian and non-Brazilian traditions often seems to be more the rule than the exception in Brazil, creating a contemporary musical culture of experimentation and hybridity. Tim Taylor notes,

But the term “hybrid” has so many uses in and out of music that it has come to represent a variety of musics and other cultural forms, discourses, political strategies and identity conceptions. These usages are frequently intertwined in complex ways that can complicate investigation into a particular facet of the term and the musics and peoples that it is supposed to characterize (Taylor 2007:140).

I would agree with this assessment and suggest that it is equally applicable to terms such as “alternative” and “experimental” which, when applied to a musical movement, say less about
the actual sound produced and more about the process, social context, and identity constructions of the people producing it. While these terms are also used extensively by the recording industry for marketing purposes (a subject examined at length by Taylor in *Beyond Exoticism*), they also have meaning for many contemporary artists from various cultures who attempt to genuinely address questions of personal and cultural identity in the 21st century. Taylor continues,

The popularity of the metaphor of hybridity has meant that older discourses of authenticity are no longer the only ways that the music industry labels music from other places, and that western listeners apprehend music from other places. Listeners of world music are now less likely to criticize music that doesn’t seem authentic, and more likely to welcome it as a hybrid. Hybridity at the same time however, is also increasingly becoming construed as another kind of authenticity, demonstrating the constantly shifting nature of regimes of authenticity around world music (Taylor 2007:140-141).

While Taylor is mainly concerned with power imbalances and notions of “otherness” that occur along racial and social lines, I am more interested in understanding the multiple factors of musical identification in a rapidly changing era of globalization. Thus, we can ask the questions, what are the criteria, and who chooses those criteria, used in assessing whether or not a hybrid of different musical traditions within the same culture or country can be said to “authentically” represent that culture?

This issue recalls a line from Christopher Waterman’s article “Race Music: Bo Chatmon, ‘Corrine Corrine’ and the Excluded Middle”: “Where music functions as a talisman of the purity of “blood”, stylistic hybridity is correlated with miscegenation and, by extension, with cultural dissolution” (Waterman 2000:196). In most contexts Waterman’s inference would be accurate. However, Brazil may represent the exception to the rule insofar as miscegenation in that culture
is viewed as a route to creating, perhaps not a “pure” bloodline, but at the least, an authentically Brazilian one. The true Brazilian as a person of mixed race (European, African, indigenous) has been part reality and part national myth, and the *mestiço* (a person of mixed race) both exalted and despised at various stages, blamed for among other things, Brazil’s lack of progress relative to other western nations, and praised for the uniqueness of the culture (see chapter 2 “Histories”). This blending also applies to many Brazilian arts including music, and as has been noted before, the tendency for Brazilian musicians to mix multiple styles and traditions is extremely common. Thus, the notion of Brazil and Brazilians as a racial and cultural melting pot is a core tenet of Brazilian identity. This is not to suggest that issue of race and the power structures which are associated with it do not exist in Brazilian musical society, but rather, that it plays a complex and subtle role in the Brazilian post-colonial racial matrix.

In these and many other colonial instances, however, domination quickly destabilizes, turning the direction of “influence” back upon the oppressors, and consequently unseating the simple logic of colonizer/colonized. ... Music thus occupies a domain at once between races but has the potential of embodying - becoming – different racial significations. The concept of hybridity, then, does not signal a move away from racialized metaphysics, but rather serves to reinforce that metaphysics (Radano 2000:8).

Regarding these “racial significations” and their relation to notions of Brazilian identity and representations of national culture, Radano continues,

It is through music that the “new ethnicities” proposed by Stuart Hall – identities of conditional difference rather than identities of unbridgeable separation – may be enacted by such theorizing of the musical within the racial. (Radano 2000:9).
The challenge then, in attempting to define Brazilian culture, is that Brazilians identify with hybridity, which itself is part of a process of ongoing change. The tendency to blend multiple styles and traditions with newer innovations, both domestic and foreign, insures that the culture is never in stasis but instead, exists in a constant state of becoming, as a vital, energetic, continual process rather than as a fixed result. As Hermano Vianna notes:

The ‘national’ is not something that is fixed and unchangeable. It is changing all the time, it is a collective enterprise that is constantly renewing itself. Isolated national culture does not exist, not in a way that can be thought of as a homogenous whole… It is not necessary to put a tamborim [a percussion instrument associated with samba] in drum ‘n’ bass to make it Brazilian. Who has the right to define what is Brazilian and what isn’t? There are many contrasting and conflicting definitions of brazilianess and I am not interested in finding a lowest common denominator for all of them: I prefer to encourage diversity

[O nacional não é algo fixo, imutável. O nacional muda a cada instante, é uma produção coletiva sempre renovada. E não há cultura nacional isolada, nem que possa ser pensada como um todo homogêneo... Não é necessário botar um tamborim no drum’n’bass para soar brasileiro. Quem tem autoridade para definir o que é brasileiro e o que não é? Há muitas definições contrastantes e rivais de brasilidade, e não me interessa encontrar um mínimo denominador comum para todas elas: prefiro incentivar a diversidade]²⁰ (Vianna and Villares 2008 in Stroud 2008:180; trans. Stroud). ²¹

Elsewhere he addresses this phenomenon as it relates directly to the origins of choro:

Maxixe would not have existed if polka had not been imported from some corner of the Austro-Hungarian empire. And quite probably there wouldn’t have been samba if maxixe hadn’t existed. That’s how it will be from now on: music wants to be free and therefore refuses to be isolated by national boundaries [Não haveria maxixe se não fosse a polca, importado de algum recanto do Império Austro-Hungaro. E muito provavelmente não
The tendency of Brazilian popular musicians to constantly blend different musical styles, to mix and match genres and to equate themselves with that process more than with any determined or definable musical outcome, forms a part of their cultural identity. This includes not only the extension of identifiable Brazilian musical traditions, but also international influences and newer styles and forms created within Brazil’s borders. Ethnomusicologist Sean Stroud notes,

As the twentieth century entered its final decades, adherents of musical nationalism in Brazil increasingly saw the ground cut away from beneath them as popular music diversified further and further away from any notion of absolutist purity… Evidence of that complex hybrid tradition can be seen in such disparate developments as Beto Villares and Hermano Vianna’s Música do Brasil project, the music of Carlinhos Brown and the blocos-afro in Bahia, and the manguebeat movement that arose in Pernambuco in the early 1990’s… Brazil has repeatedly found itself at the intersection of transatlantic musical movements and the country has been directly involved in the global musical field for some considerable time. Brazil has also experienced extreme nationalist sentiments at various historical moments but has also consistently been the subject of pronounced international influences in the political, cultural and economic spheres. An almost constant tension between the two competing and contradictory forces can be identified: the fundamental character of Brazilian popular culture is simultaneously national and international (Stroud 2008:183-184).

This characteristic of Brazilian popular music artists ensures that their musical identity is inseparably interwoven with their practice of incorporating any and all influences into their
musical creations, that for them, brasilidade is more about becoming than being. It is a reflection of their relationship with the rest of the world and with how they see and present themselves in the context of the global community.

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2 I present two of these statements here: “Choro represents the foundation of our music. To play, to understand, to be, to think Brazilian music, everyone must cross by the concept and the music of choro.” (Egberto Gismonti – in Bruce Gilman’s Interview with Egberto Gismonti, 1998, Brazil Magazine online, retrieved from the internet Sept. 3, 2008: http://www.brazilbrasil.com/musjun98.htm);

“Any and all Brazilian music, from the point of view of instrumental music, if it is really Brazilian in origin, we must consider as its basis, the choro.” (Sivuca - in Thomas George Caracas Garcia’s The Brazilian Choro: Music, Politics and Performance, 1997, Dept. of Music, Duke University, p. 97).

3 The term “Música Popular Brasileira”, often shortened to “MPB”, refers not to all popular Brazilian music but to the work of a specific generation of artists from the late 1960s and early 70s whose music defies easy categorization, and which often includes a mixture of bossa nova, regional folk music, protest songs, samba, rock and other influences (McGowan and Pessanha:75).

4 More information on this group, called “Tio Chorinho”, can be found at www.myspace.com/tiochorinho

5 Andrade’s argument was that Brazil’s history of cannibalizing other cultures was the best method to assert itself against European cultural domination. Although the literal meaning of antropofagia is simply “cannibalism”, Oswaldo uses it in the sense of “cultural cannibalism” or the absorption and incorporation of foreign cultural practices into Brazilian culture.

6 For more on Tropicália, see Christopher Dunn 2001, Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counter Culture, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.


9 In the latter half of the 19th century in Rio, at many house parties such as that of the famous baiana and hostess Tia Ciata, it was common to hear choro played in the parlour and at the same
time, samba played outside in the yard. For more on this subject see, Jose Ramos Tinhorão 1974 Pequena História da Música Popular – Da Modinha ao Tropicalismo, Petrópolis (Brazil): Editora Vozes Ltda.

10 See www.samba-choro.com.br which lists performances of these genres for most urban centres in Brazil as well as hosting online chat groups and providing historical information about the genres and its practitioners.

11 Curiously, Mauricio Carrilho stated in an interview that the saxophone was first used in choro by Viriato Figueira da Silva who passed away in 1883, well before Pixinguinha or the instrument’s appearance in American jazz. Saxophone also played a prominent role in the military bands which were prevalent in Brazil at the end of the 19th century and which sometimes performed choro compositions, albeit in a highly arranged form. The instrument seems not to have caught on among the first generation of choro musicians who performed in the terno ensembles (Carrilho in Chediak 2007:44-45).

12 From a personal interview with Ney Rosauro.

13 One musician I spoke with acknowledged the strain of traditionalism in the world of choro and told a story of arriving at a roda de choro with his pandeiro that had a synthetic skin rather than a traditional one made of goat or cow hide. He was immediately discouraged from using it and was not permitted to participate in the roda.

14 From a personal interview with the author, 2010.

15 From a personal interview with the author, 2010.

16 Maxixe is a dance and style of music, sometimes called Brazilian Tango, and is a subgenre of choro. For more on maxixe see chapter 2, “Histories”.

17 Choro Meets Ragtime 2008, Global Choro Music, CMRT01PE.

18 Garoto 1979 (rec. 1940s), MIS, COLP 12392-MIS029.

19 It is interesting to note that the introduction of keyboard percussion instruments in choro is felt among most Brazilian percussionists as a ‘foreign’ musical influence even though the European classical music tradition has existed in Brazil since before choro was created. In a sense, putting keyboard percussion instruments in a featured role is as much a later 20th century innovation in European classical and contemporary music as it is elsewhere. An article by Allan Kozinn and published in the New York Times in 2009 referenced the same idea, If you think about it, drums are the new violins ... see “Percussionists Go From Background to Podium” from New York Times, Dec. 27, 2009.
20 Hermano Vianna quoted in “Hermano Vianna concorre ao Multicultural Estadão”, O Estado de São Paulo, 28/05/01.


21 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Portuguese sources in this document are mine.
Chapter 2: Histories

The first three sections of this chapter outline the history and development of the genre of *choro*, its musical antecedents and social context. The subsequent sections present a brief discussion of the history of keyboard percussion instruments in Brazil and their current usage in the world of *choro*.

2.1 The Roots of Choro

To understand the roots of *choro* it is useful to recognize the role played by the city of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil’s cultural, social and economic development in the early 19th century. Rio de Janeiro has been the political and cultural capital for most of Brazil’s history. Prior to independence from Portugal, Rio de Janeiro was the capital of the Portuguese colonies in the New World and for the brief period from 1808-1822, it served as the capital of the entire Portuguese Empire. With a convenient location in the center of the territory and direct access to the African colonies across the Atlantic, Rio was the ideal location for the easy transport of information, goods and people between the Crown and its colonies. Although the largest number of African forced labourers entered Brazil through the port of Salvador in Bahia, in the north of the country, a significant number also entered through Rio (Garcia 1997).

In 1808, the Portuguese king Dom João VI was forced to flee Napoleon’s invading armies and moved his entire court to Rio de Janeiro. While the elite in the city already enjoyed classical and local court music, the imperial entourage and accompanying wealthy families attracted a community of artists and musicians which helped to stimulate Brazil’s cultural
climate by bringing current European styles and thought, and increasing the amount of erudite music performed and composed there. Most local music was European in style and is exemplified by the works of José Nunes Garcia who was appointed court composer shortly after the King’s arrival in Rio de Janeiro. A Brazilian mulatto priest, Garcia is considered to be the first prominent black composer in the western classical tradition, as well as the first one to be published.\(^1\)\(^2\)

The cultural mix in Rio, while initially mainly Portuguese, grew to include Polish, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Jewish, German and Dutch settlers who brought with them their musical traditions and instruments. An open immigration policy as well as the large numbers of slaves imported from Africa played a significant role in the developing sounds and practices of Brazilian music. As Garcia writes,

While the European musical tradition predominated to some extent – harmonic vocabulary, melodic style, forms, and melodic/harmonic instruments – the music of Africa lent to Brazilian popular music its most recognizable trait: rhythmic complexity, undeniably the most important single factor in the development of a distinctly Brazilian popular music. This rhythmic component in Brazilian music distinguished it from the rest of Latin America, where fewer slaves were imported and therefore blacks and mixed races made up a lesser part of the population (Garcia 1997:17-18).

A comparison might be made with the United States and especially its jazz tradition, but there are significant distinctions between the two in the various ways in which Africans were “imported, exploited, assimilated and finally discriminated against” (Garcia 1997:18). In terms of sheer numbers, the estimate of 250,000 to 400,000 Africans brought to America is dwarfed by the generally accepted figure of 3.5 million who survived the passage to Brazil. At the height of
the slave trade, during the 1810s, it is estimated that 30% of the total population of Brazil consisted of slaves.\(^3\) While Brazilian musicology sometimes groups all of them into one category, these slaves represented different language and cultural groups from four main regions of Africa: Mozambique, Angola, the Congo, and the Gold Coast. As such, there were several different musical systems imported into Brazil.

The treatment of slaves in the United States and Brazil also differed greatly. Africans brought to the United States were separated from others with similar ethnic and linguistic backgrounds including their own families. They were forced to learn English and to accept Christianity, and their native religious and cultural practices were not allowed. The mixing of blacks and whites was strongly discouraged. These measures were taken in an effort to minimize the slaves’ ability to rebel against their oppressors.

In Brazil, slaves were permitted to retain their languages and many of their cultural practices. Although officially forced to convert to Christianity, slaves maintained their native religions clandestinely with syncretic associations to Catholicism. These practices developed into the contemporary religious forms of candomblé, quimbanda, macumba and others\(^4\) that would later give birth to the musical genre samba (Garcia 1997:21). With few European women in the colony, mixed race marriages and extra-marital unions were an accepted practice and at times, sanctioned by the church and state, both of which were eager to populate the new colony while maintaining social and political order. As a result, people of mixed ancestry became extremely common. Some estimates hold as many as 80% of Brazil’s current population has some African ancestry.\(^5\)

This familiarity, however, did not translate into social or economic equality between the races in Brazil. Through most of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries,
upper class Brazilians were in denial about their origins and embraced European ideas of racial superiority. Darker skin was seen as an impediment to upward social mobility and some authors even blamed Brazil’s lack of economic progress on the racial mix of its people. As the intellectual elite accepted these notions of the racial inferiority of blacks, they also rejected music with any connections to African culture. As outlined in more detail below, genres such as *maxixe* and *samba* were given the more acceptable names of *tango brasileiro* (Brazilian tango) and *canção* (song), while the rhythmic (read: African) element in these styles was constantly diluted or eliminated altogether.

While the majority of the early *choro* musicians were white, some musicologists attribute this to the difficult economic situation endured by the blacks in late 19th century Brazil. Jose Ramos Tinhorão writes,

> [This] also explains the fact that there did not exist any prejudice of color among the chorões [choro musicians]. The fact that a majority of them were white or light mulattos was not the result of any incompatibility with the blacks, but was explained in the economic reality of the blacks – who were until recently, slaves – and formed the largest part of the lower classes.

> [(Isso) explica também o fato de não existir qualquer preconceito de cór entre as chorões. O fato de a sua maioria ser broncos e mulatos claros não resulta de qualquer incompatibilidade com os negros, mas se explicava pela realidade econômica de os pretos – ainda há pouco escravos – formarem o grosso das mais baixas camadas populares] (Tinhorão 1997:104).

Tinhorão considers this kind of social distinction to be the result of economic differences rather than race. He suggests that many in the black community could not afford to buy a musical
instrument or to be as generous to other musicians, as was the practice at social events where *choro* was played, and so, were present in lesser numbers at these events. Others have suggested that this idea is an attempt to reconstruct the history of the period and to show Brazilian society in a better light.\(^7\)

After the abolition of slavery in 1888, there was a mass migration of blacks from northeastern Brazil and other inland areas, to Rio de Janeiro. This inevitably led to an intense competition for employment and created horrible living conditions for many who were forced to live in the newly developing *favelas* (slums) in the mountains around the city. With no public education or social services, those who were employed were paid very poorly and their children were often forced to work or turn to crime in order to survive. This exacerbated the racist attitudes of the upper and middle classes, and although these problems were described as class issues, they were closely linked to race.

Though many black performers did eventually become part of the *choro* scene (including the most famous *choro* musician, Pixinguinha (Alfredo da Rocha Viana Filho, 1897-1973)), issues of racial inequality persisted. Black musicians were regularly excluded from performing at the best theatres and a great controversy surrounded Pixinguinha’s 1922 trip to Paris with his group Os Oito Batutas as the elite were shocked to be represented on the international cultural scene by an ensemble of black performers.

**Aboriginal contributions**

While many Brazilian musicians and musicologists cite aboriginal culture as an important influence in Brazilian music, the reality is that aboriginal peoples of that region were mostly
ignored or assimilated during the colonial and imperial eras and their music has had little recognizable impact on Brazilian musical culture. The incorporation of aboriginal themes into the compositions of erudite composers such as Antônio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896) and Heitor Villa Lobos (1887-1959) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had more to do with inspiring a nationalist sensibility than with any significant use of indigenous musical material. Some popular musicians (most notably composer Egberto Gismonti) have attempted to include these influences in their work and have spent time studying music in the indigenous communities. There also exist some folkloric traditions in the Amazon and central-west regions of Brazil that contain a combination of indigenous, African and European elements owing to the mixing and close proximity of the respective communities there. Several of the more isolated indigenous communities in the Amazon continue their traditional musical practices at religious and social events. Aboriginal instruments such as the pífaro or pífano (bamboo flute), chocalho (rattle) and réco-réco (gourd rasp) have found their way into Brazilian popular music but these contributions are relatively minor when compared to those of African and European music.  

2.2 The Musical Antecedents of Choro

Modinha

First appearing in Rio de Janeiro in the late 19th century, choro was largely shaped by three forms of music found in Brazil at that time: the modinha, the lundu and the maxixe. Some Brazilian musicologists refer to modinha as the earliest distinctly Brazilian genre as there are several sources indicating that the modinha was first performed in the Portuguese courts to great acclaim by the Brazilian musician Caldas Barbosa in 1770 (Sandroni 2001:41). The modinha,
sometimes called a *seresta*, evolved from the Portuguese *moda* (literally, “song” or “melody”), *modinha* being the diminutive of *moda* in the Portuguese language. Both were a form of lyrical, art song usually accompanied by guitar or piano that originated in the salons of the upper classes in Portugal and Brazil in the early part of the eighteenth century (see figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1; m. 1-4 of “Beijo a Mão Que Me Condena” by José Mauricio Nunes Garcia showing the melodic and accompaniment style of a typical *modinha da salon*:

Though it began as art song, influenced especially by Italian opera arias, the *modinha* was quickly accepted by all levels of Brazilian society. This led to the emergence of two variations of the form: - the *modinha da salão* (salon modinha) and *modinha da rua* (street modinha). While the former exhibited more elaborate melodies and were sung in the upper class salons usually accompanied by piano, the *modinha da rua* was characterized by simple, sentimental melodies preferred by street serenaders of the lower classes, usually with guitar accompaniment. Both types contained an element of spontaneity and improvisation in the melodies and poetry, and both were based on simple ternary (ABA), rondo (ABACA) or strophic (verse – refrain) structures.

Although many composers and, to a lesser extent performers, moved freely between the two variations, the *modinha da rua* grew in popularity toward the end of the 19th century while the *modinha da salão* waned. Livingston-Isenhour has suggested that this occurred for social
rather than musical reasons as “it was impossible for the upper classes to disassociate the modinha da salão from its common, poorer cousin, and they eventually abandoned it for other, more fashionable genres of salon music” (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia 2005:25).

While it continued to be performed into the first part of the 20th century, the modinha was eventually supplanted by styles with African based rhythms, notably lundu, maxixe, choro and samba. The modinha’s influence on choro is evident in three areas; the latter's common rondo form, its lyrical and sentimental quality, and the instrumentation of flute, guitar and cavaquinho, common to modinhas of the late 19th century, which played a direct role in the formation of choro ensembles.

Lundu

The lundu (and its variant spellings, lundum, landu, landon gandu, zandu) is an African song and dance of Bantu origin. According to ethnomusicologist Carlos Sandroni, historical references to it begin to appear in both Brazil and Portugal around 1780 (2001:39). It is often mentioned together with another African dance, the batuque (batuca, baduca), and according to Mozart de Araújo, the former was descended from the latter. Sandroni points out however, that all documented sources referring to the lundu song as being unequivocably of African origin are from Portugal. With respect to Brazilian researchers, he writes,

The authors that I examined were incapable of providing even one document in which the name “lundu” was used to refer to an activity exclusively negro. The same is not true for the term “calundus” which is referred to in this sense already by the XVII century; but any etymological relation between the two terms is denied by Araújo.

[Os autores que examinei foram incapazes de fornecer um só documento em que o nome “lundu” seja usado para se referir a uma atividade exclusiva dos negros. O mesmo não
se dá quanto à palavra “calundus”, que é referida neste sentido já no século XVII; mas a relação etimológica entre os dois termos é negada por Araújo] (Sandroni 2001:40).

He goes on to cite numerous references to *lundu* as a dance “of whites and browns [mulattos]” (*de brancos e pardos*) (2001:40). In the XVIII century poem “Cartas Chilenas” by Tomás Antônio Gonzaga, it is a mulatta who dances the *lundu*, while in verses by the Portuguese poet Nicholau Tolentino, the person who plays the *doce lundum chorado* (sweet, cried lundu) is nothing less than a blonde, foolish child (*loiro peralta adamado*) (2001:40). Sandroni suggests that the *lundu* song evolved from the community of black and white labourers from the farms and *fazendas* (plantations). In Brazil, he has identified three distinct forms of the genre as a popular dance, a salon song, and a folkloric song. However, there is much confusion over nomenclature and origin of the various forms of the style.

These musical forms arose during a period of intense trading activity over several hundred years between Portugal, Africa and Brazil, forming a network of interaction that spawned what Peter Freyer calls the ‘Atlantic dance tradition’. Because of the speed with which these kinds of cultural practices moved between the above mentioned ports, it becomes all but impossible to determine their exact beginnings, and is certainly a mistake to assume that they moved in one direction only. Rather, the Brazilian and Portuguese *lundu*, along with the Chilean and Argentinian *cueca*, Haitian *chica*, Martinique *calenda* and other such dances are national variants of one widely shared tradition, with developments in the new world having much impact elsewhere in the triangle. As Freyer points out, any attempt to define beginnings would be an oversimplification: “There was obviously a continuum of styles without any clearly defined dividing line and it would be misleading to try and disentangle them in terms of their African provenance” (Freyer 2000:119).
Tinhorão notes another demonstration of this cultural intermingling in descriptions of the early lundu that attribute to it many of the characteristics of the Spanish fandango, such as raising the arms above the head, finger snapping and foot stamping. Like the fandango, lundu is essentially a courtship dance between one man and one woman with sexually suggestive movements by both partners. Freyer notes that the term fandango itself is used in Brazil in three distinct senses (Freyer 2000:119). While this influence may have occurred as a result of the brief period in which Spain ruled Brazil (1581-1640) there is also documented evidence of the African presence in Spain from the 8th century as well as Brazilian influence in Portuguese musical circles in later years, leading to the possibility that these movements were of Bantu or even new world origin.

In any case, the lundu became popular in Brazil in the early 18th century. It has the distinction of being the first Brazilian popular music genre to combine rhythms that are characteristic of African rhythmic practice with European melody, harmony and instrumentation. Initially popular among blacks and the poorest of the white population, it soon traveled up the social scale, entering the taverns and theatres and eventually becoming accepted by all levels of society and considered as Brazil’s national dance. It was a more sanitized version of the dance that was performed in the salons of the upper classes, free from the suggestive movements that in many ways were the hallmark of the style. The syncopated rhythms of the music, however, remained, as seen in the vocal part in figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2; m. 1-4 of “Lundu da Salão no. 12” by J. F. Leal, illustrates the rhythmic syncopation of a typical lundu da salon:
Musically, the dance became divorced from the Bantu songs that were originally used to accompany it, and it became more and more associated with the sentimental lyricism and harmony of the *modinha*. Vocal *lundus* began to be published in the late 18th and early 19th centuries which shared many stylistic characteristics with the *modinha* including shifts between the major and minor keys and a predominant use of the flatted seventh (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia: 2005:28). The distinguishing feature of the *lundu* however was its African rhythm. Oneyda Alvarenga notes Mario de Andrade’s emphasis on these characteristics,

The *lundu* was the first form of black music that Brazilian society accepted and for his part, the negro gave to our music some of its important characteristics such as a systematic syncopation and the use of the lowered seventh. These two constancies of Brazilian music [are] … perfectly defined in the *lundu*.

*[O lundu foi a primeira forma de música negra que a sociedade brasileira aceitou e por ele o negro deu à nossa música algumas características importantes dela, como a sistematização da síncopa e a o emprego da sétima abaixada. Estas duas constancias da música brasileira… perfeitamente definidas no lundu]* (Andrade in Alvarenga 1950:150).

An emphasis on the offbeat sixteenth or eighth note in its melody, accompaniment or some combination of both, set the *lundu* apart from the other popular music of the time (see
melody in example on preceding page). As the style became increasingly popular among the upper classes it became less rhytmically complex. In Portugal, by the end of the 19th century, it had evolved into a respectable salon genre known as the *doce lundu chorado* (sweet, cried lundu) with little to differentiate it from the *modinha*.

The lundu’s main contribution to *choro* lies in the widespread acceptance and integration of African rhythms in a genre of a popular music that permeated all levels of Brazilian society. This process would be carried even further by the dance craze *maxixe* and later by *samba*.

**Maxixe**

As with many of the styles and genres discussed in this paper, the exact origins of *maxixe* are unclear. Some accounts credit it to a particular dancer, whose nickname was Maxixe (also the name of a kind of bitter Brazilian fruit), who created the fast paced steps in an improvised manner while attempting to dance to the polka, which had been recently introduced from Europe. Another possibility is that the name is derived from *danca do macho* as it is the male dancer who is clearly the dominant partner. This *machismo* becomes *machice* or *machichi* and later adopted the orthography of the fruit (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia, 2005:32).

The popular and controversial *maxixe* emerged in the middle of the 19th century not long after the polka had arrived in Brazil. While the *lundu* had developed directly from African sources, the *maxixe* was the first type of urban dance created in Brazil from the fusion of polka and *habanera* rhythm (see figure 2.3). Its influence from the polka, as well as from the earlier *lundu*, is described by *choro* musician Henrique Cazes in much the same context as Fryer’s “Atlantic Dance Tradition” mentioned above:
In this way, we can observe that the Brazilian maxixe, the beguine from Martinique, the danzon from Santiago de Cuba and the North American ragtime are all adaptations of the polka. The differing results are owing to the inherent musical accent of each colonizer (Portuguese, Spanish, French and English) and, in some cases, to a strong influence of religious music. The region of Africa from which came their slaves also had an influence as they brought differing musical and religious traditions from distinct tribes.

[Assim, se observarmos o maxixe brasileiro, o beguine da Martinica, o danzon de Santiago de Cuba e o ragtime norte-americano, vemos que todas são adaptações da polca. A diferença de resultado se deve ao sotaque inerente à música de cada colonizador (português, espanhol, francês e ingles) e, em alguns casos, a uma maior influência da música religiosa. A região da África de onde vinham os escravos também influiu, pois foram trazidas diferentes tradições musicais e religiosas por negros de tribos distinctas] (Cazes 1998:17).

Some researchers have attempted to trace the specific rhythmic characteristics to identifiable sources in Africa. Tania Cancado has detailed links between characteristic syncopations found in the Brazilian forms *modinha, lundu* and *maxixe* (which Cancado calls ‘Brazilian tango’) and common timelines that occur in music from the Angola/Zaire and Ghana regions of Africa. She notes that in the *modinha*, these syncopations are found only in the melody whereas in the *lundu* and *maxixe* they occur in both melody and accompaniment, suggesting the increasing influence of African elements into the evolving music of Brazil.  

At times, the *maxixe* was called *tango brasileiro* (Brazilian tango) by many composers, most notably Ernesto Nazaré (1863-1934) and Chiquinha Gonzaga (1847-1935) who were two principal composers at the forefront of the *choro* movement. In some ways this description was accurate in that both styles were based on the Cuban *habanera* rhythm (see figure 2.3), although
in the case of the Argentinean tango it was generally played at a relatively slow tempo whereas the *maxixe* was always performed as a fast paced, energetic dance (see figure 2.4).

Figure 2.3; Basic Habanera Rhythm

![Figure 2.3; Basic Habanera Rhythm](image)

Figure 2.4; m. 1-4 of the *maxixi* “Sons de Carilões” by João Pernambuco. Note the accompanying rhythm (indicated by the downward stems) and its similarity to the *habanera* rhythm.

Nazaré is believed to have labeled his works written in this style as *tango brasileiro* rather than *maxixe* because the latter was rife with sexual connotations. The *maxixe* involved very close contact between the dancers as well as a suggestive interlacing of the legs and was considered vulgar by many of the Brazilian elite. As such, *maxixe* has been called the link between *lundu* and the modern urban *samba*. In 1907 the *maxixe* “Vem cá, mulata!” (Come here, mulatta!) was considered so vulgar that the Minister of War in Brazil banned it from the repertoire of all military bands. Once again, music with obvious African roots was forbidden in favor of the more European waltzes, schottiches and polkas.

Severiano points out that although Nazaré popularized the *tango brasileiro*, it was an earlier Brazilian composer from the erudite, musical scene in Rio de Janeiro, Henrique Alves de
Mesquita (1830-1906), who first created the style. Mesquita had lived and trained in Paris for nine years and then returned to Rio de Janeiro in 1866. Severiano writes,

It was in this period, in which he struggled to reaffirm his prestige in our [musical] world, that he created the brazilian tango – a mixture of the habanera and of the Spanish tango with elements of the polca and lundu – composing ‘Olhos Matadores’ [in 1868] and ‘Ali Baba’ (in 1872)

[Foi nesse período, em que lutou para reafirmar o seu prestígio em nosso meio, que ele criou o tango brasileiro – uma mistura da habanera e do tango espanhol com elementos da polca e do lundu - compondo ‘Olhos Matadores’ e ‘Ali Baba’] (Severiano 2008:29).

In 1914 Nazaré paid homage to Mesquita with the composition of a tango brasileiro titled “Mesquitinha”.

Musically then, the maxixe was a blend of the Afro-Cuban habanera rhythm, already popular in 19th century Brazil, and the European polka which had arrived in Rio de Janeiro in the 1840’s. As Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia quote musicologist José Tinhorão, “the maxixe was born as choro musicians who accompanied the dance naturally adapted the rhythms of the polka to include the Afro-Brazilian rhythm to better support the movements of the dancers” and later, “as European music was played by ear according to local tastes, it developed into new forms such as the polka-lundu, the maxixe and finally, the choro” (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia 2005:32). Arthur Ramos follows this line of thought even further stating that the maxixe is not a specific form but rather, a style of playing binary dances such as the polka:

There does not exist a separate musical form for the maxixe. There existed, definitely, a genre, a style of Brazilian dance that utilized the binary rhythm of the polka, of the tango

As had occurred with the lundu after a few years, a modified, and for some, watered-down version of the maxixe dance and music began to be accepted by the upper classes of Brazilian society. This more restrained version, called maxixe de salão, attained a greater respectability with the opening of an operetta titled “Zizinha Maxixe” in 1895 featuring music by Chiquinha Gonzaga, including her most famous composition, “Corta Jaca” (also known as “O Gaucho”).

The structure of the maxixe is very similar to the polka with melodic lines built on eight bar phrases within an ABACA, rondo form. The differences lie in its use of syncopated rhythm in the accompanying parts and its fast tempo. Owing to its instrumental nature, the maxixe often exhibits fast runs and arpeggios as seen in figure 2.5, commonly in sixteenth notes, which are not usually found in polka, lundu or modinha.

Figure 2.5; m. 1-11 of “Graúna” by João Pernambuco illustrates a typical maxixe melody including many arpegios and sixteenth note lines.
Other than its speed and rhythm, there was little to distinguish the *maxixe* from polka. In the following passage Bruno Keifer describes this musical melting pot, and seems to suggest that the *tango brasileiro* was nothing more than another name for *maxixe*.

In the evolution of the polka brasileira one was made to feel, at a certain level, the influence of the habanera; in the polka-lundu there is a mixture of foreign elements, more or less nationalized, with others from black backgrounds. Nothing impeded the mixture of the three genres – polka, habanera and lundu. They could exist perfectly well with any of the labels assigned, the names having longer or shorter duration historically…. The tango brasileiro resulted from the confluences cited, without attaining altogether, an established rhythm like that of the waltz or the maxixe. Maxixe, although it has, in certain cases, a similarity in rhythm of the tango, even so, it is not admissible, in our view, to confuse the two genres.

[Na evolução da polca brasileira se faz sentir, em certa altura, a influência da habanera; na polca-lundu, misturam-se elementos estrangeiros, mais ou menos nacionalizados, com outros, de procedência negra. Nada impediu que a confluência dos três géneros: polca, habanera e lundu, podia se dar perfeitamente sob diversas denominações, tendo estas durações históricas maiores ou menores…O tango brasileiro resultou das confluências citadas, sem atingir, contudo, uma estabilidade rítmica semelhante, digamos, a vársa ou…ao maxixe. Maxixe, embora haja, em certos casos, uma semelhança entre o ritmo de algum tango e o do maxixe, nem por isso é admissível, a nosso ver, confundir os dois gêneros] (Keifer 1979:48).

### 2.3 Development of the Style

According to Thomas Garcia, *choro* began with a handful of composers and performers from the Rio de Janeiro region in the late 19th century. At that time it was fashionable at social events to include a group of musicians who would perform the popular European derived music
of the day (see figures 2.6, 2.7, 2.8). This was typically a selection of waltzes, polkas, mazurkas and schottisches mixed in with Brazilian lundus and maxixes. As Garcia describes it, “As the century progressed, these dances became to be played with a Brazilian flair that represented the various influences of the immigrant populations. This approach to playing assimilated European music according to local tastes, and later it developed into a separate genre: the choro” (Garcia 1997:30).

Figure 2.6; m. 9-16 of “Rosa” by Pixinguinha illustrates a typical waltz rhythm and melody.

![Figure 2.6](image)

Figure 2.7; m. 1-4 of “Apanhei-te Cavaquinho” by Ernesto Nazaré illustrates a typical polka rhythm and melody.

![Figure 2.7](image)

Figure 2.8; m. 1-8 of “Iara” by Anacleto de Medeiros illustrates a typical schottische rhythm and melody.

![Figure 2.8](image)
In order to offer continuous music for these social events, which would go late into the evening and often last until the next morning, the mostly amateur musicians learned to embellish the songs through improvisation by subtly altering primarily the rhythmic, and at times the harmonic and melodic material in them. They also learned hundreds of songs and would share their knowledge of this repertoire with each other. The earliest ensembles consisted of a trio of flute, guitar, and *cavaquinho* (a ukelele sized instrument with four strings) and this ensemble was called the *terno*. Soon, the gatherings came to include more and more musicians who would sit in a circle playing, teaching and improvising for each other. These gatherings became known as a *choro* or *roda* de *choro* (choro circle) and the musicians as *chorões*. Over time, the term came to be applied to the genre of music itself.

The origins of the word *choro* are unclear. Henrique Cazes has suggested that word comes from a type of rural African dance sometimes practiced in Brazil called *xolo* which later became *xoro* and then, *choro* (1998:18). Another more probable theory holds that it derives from *choromeleiro*, (or ‘sweet music’ from the Greek choros melos) also used in colonial Brazil to indicate an ensemble of mainly woodwind instruments. The *charamela* was a small, reedy wind instrument that was an important part of the *choromeleiros*, and sometimes found in the *fazenda*
(farmhouse) bands. These ensembles were usually made up of slaves and working class people and provided music for social events on the rural plantations throughout the country. These ensembles often used guitar and *cavaquinho* in combination with the *charamela*.

Since the guitar's portability made it an excellent candidate for accompaniment, the connection between the chararamela and the guitar is logical, especially when the nature of the instrument’s use in colonial Brazil is considered. … The *cavaquinho* was also used in choromeleiro ensembles for rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment as well as melodic counterpoint…these string instruments are the core of the choro ensemble, lending still more credence to the choromeleiro-choro connection (Garcia 1997:77-78).

Yet another explanation is that the name is a derivative of the Portuguese word *chorar*, which means ‘to cry’. Despite the historical connection to the *choromeleiro* ensembles described above, this latter definition is the one most often cited by contemporary *choro* musicians. For them, the emotive qualities of *choro* are its most dominant characteristic.

The word *choro* then, can refer to either the genre of music, the ensemble of musicians playing the music, or the social and musical event at which this music is played. The musicians playing *choro* are called *chorões* (singular: *chorão*).

The *roda de choro* (choro circle) plays an important role in the original concept and evolution of *choro* music. As it is a social event, the inclusion of all who care to participate is a fundamental element. Every musician, regardless of his or her technical abilities on their instrument, would be welcomed into the circle and given an opportunity to play. It is this sense of openness and democracy which in part informs the music’s contrapuntal and yielding character - the give and take of each musical part contributing equally to the whole which is highly valued by *chorões*. Any member of society who was willing to host or regularly attend
such events would also be called a chorão regardless of whether they could play an instrument or not. This emphasizes the social and interactive nature of the music. Many Brazilian musicians are of the opinion that while choro can be performed in a concert setting, it is not a true choro unless there is also a degree of informal, social interaction during the music making including dancing, eating and conversation.

Much has been written concerning the vast majority of early choro musicians’ employment as middle class professionals, such as civil servants, mailmen, soldiers, bank tellers, janitors, etc. Garcia points out that the primary source of this information regarding choro from its inception until the 1930’s is Alexandre Gonsalves Pinto’s book O Choro: Reminiscencias dos Chorões Antigos (The Choro: Reminiscences of the Old Choro Musicians). He notes that the book’s many errors, and casual presentation make it valuable as a social history but it is not to be considered as a final authority. Pinto’s descriptions include nothing about the music’s form or style, but describe instead the musician’s addresses, occupations and comportment. As there are several well-known choro musicians from the period who are absent from the book, one can only conclude that the subjects are associates or friends of Pinto and that it is not an exhaustive examination of the choro scene in Rio de Janeiro during that time.

Of the earliest choro composers, the most influential were pianist Chiquinha Gonzaga (Francisca Edwiges Neves Gonzaga, 1847–1935), flautist Joaquim Antônio da Silva Calado (1848-1873) and pianist Ernesto Nazaré (1863–1934). Gonzaga is distinguished by being one of the few female musicians in an otherwise male dominated activity. Another important figure was Anacleto de Medeiros (1866-1907) who was a virtuoso saxophonist and military band director and who composed and arranged many choro classics for his Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros (Fireman’s Brigade Band). The marching band was another European tradition that had been
absorbed by Brazilian culture and was the most common instrumental ensemble in Brazil at the end of the 19th century. Because the marching band regularly used notated music to perform, many of Medeiros’ preserved works and arrangements are some of the earliest documented choros.

Joaquim Antônio da Silva Calado is often called the father of choro. Calado was a classically trained flautist and composer and like Nazaré, wrote rhythmically dense melodies (usually to be played by himself) with an underpinning of syncopated accompaniment. Calado moved freely between classical and popular styles of music and by the early 1870s was considered the greatest flutist in Brazil. In the mid 1870s, he formed a group called Choro Carioca that was the first reference to this new type of music and ensemble consisting of flute, cavaquinho and two guitars. Calado is also credited with insisting that the guitarist provide the typical, contrapuntal bass line, called baixaria, in the music. 12

As a solo pianist, Ernesto Nazaré played mainly in the theatres and music stores and was a regular performer at the prestigious Odeon Cinema in Rio de Janeiro. Pianos were popular among upper class Brazilians and owning one was a sign of social distinction. Often, a solo pianist would be hired to play at a private function in the upper class houses. Nazaré was well thought of by classical musicians of his time and has been described by Villa Lobos as “the true incarnation of the Brazilian musical soul”.13 Throughout his career he performed both popular and classical music such as Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms and was especially influenced by the music of Chopin.

All the above-mentioned musicians composed works that mixed several European chamber music forms such as the waltz, schottische, polka and mazurka with African dance forms such as lundu and maxixe. Since the vast majority of these works were composed as instrumental
music, as opposed to the more common song forms of the above-mentioned genres, they took on a decidedly more rhythmic character. At a 1926 conference of the Sociedade de Cultura Artística of São Paulo, Brazilian art critic Mario de Andrade elaborated:

In general, dance compositions base their vulgarization on imitating the popular orchestral chorus. Popular dances are in the majority sung dances. It has always been so, and the virtuoso instrumentalists of the Renaissance—when they transplanted the gigues, allemandes, and sarabandes from song to instrument—had a considerable task of creative adaptation. This adaptation consisted in extracting from the sung dances their song essence and giving them an instrumental character. They substituted the strophic theme with a melodic motif, the oral phrase with a rhythmic cell. …… However, in order to popularize itself, the maxixe, as well as the Argentine tango and the foxtrot, soon became a song form and turned into a sung dance.

This songlike aspect can be perceived even in the most admirable choreographic musicians, like John Philip Sousa or Johann Strauss, through their strophic rather than cellular norm of invention. One feels the sung melody and the oral verse. Ernesto Nazaré stands apart from this general aspect of choreographic composers by way of the almost systematic absence of vocality in his tangos. It is the motif, the melodic cell, or the rhythmic cell that serves as the foundation for his constructions (Andrade – in Thompson 2002:1).

An example of Nazaré’s distinctive approach can be seen below in figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9; m. 1-8 of “Batuque” by Ernesto Nazaré illustrates Nazaré’s use of the rhythmic cell as a means of melodic construction.
As a classically trained musician, Nazaré was aware of the prevailing sentiment that maxixe and lundu were considered vulgar and lower class forms, and he attempted to side step those associations by labeling his works as “Brazilian tangos”. His “tangos”, however, have nothing in common with the Argentinean tango and are clearly a distinct genre closer to the maxixe. The instrumental character of his “Brazilian tangos” combined with the African influences led to a greater emphasis on busy, florid (and at times, virtuosic) melodies with a syncopated rhythmic accompaniment. These qualities would later be seen as fundamental characteristics of choro. It is interesting to note that during his lifetime, Nazare’s music was considered very advanced and too difficult to play by many choro musicians. It was not until the 1950s that it would become part of the standard choro repertoire.

In subsequent generations, important contributors to the genre were guitarist João Pernambuco (João Teixeira Guimarães, 1883-1947), flautist and saxophonist Pixinguinha (Alfredo da Rocha Viana Filho, 1897-1973), guitarist Garoto (Anibal Agosto Sardinha, 1915-1955), bandolim (mandolin) player Jacob do Bandolim (Jacob Pick Bittencourt, 1918-1969) and cavaquinho player Valdir Azevedo (1923 - 1980). They developed the form further by including improvised contrapuntal lines and completely improvised solos, a process which is now synonymous with the genre. Garoto is especially credited with expanding the harmonic language.
of *choro* as he spent time in the United States while on tour with Carmen Miranda in 1940 and performed with many American jazz and bebop musicians there. It is still a point of disagreement between the traditionalists of *choro* who believe that it is enough to play the compositions with only some ornamentation of the melody, and the newer generations who find it acceptable to improvise complete passages and even whole sections of the pieces.

By the 1920’s, several different forces combined to propel the *choro* to wider exposure in Brazil and internationally. The development of audio recording, first through mechanical cylinders and later on vinyl discs, as well as the introduction of radio to Brazil, played an important role. These new media transformed what was originally a Rio de Janeiro based regional style of music into a national movement. Also, successive governments in the first half of the 20th century actively promoted *choro* as a uniquely Brazilian art form in an attempt to foster a sense of nationalism that included the recognition of their African and European roots. This led to the professionalization of *choro* and created a new setting for it, distinct from its original function as a social gathering of amateur musicians. The genre began to find a new audience in dance halls, cinemas and at other public functions. Musically, *choro* became more virtuosic and harmonically elaborate – perhaps in reaction to the American music that was being heard more often thanks to the newly introduced technology of recordings and radio, as well as in response to the newer sound of *samba*. Born in the favelas around Rio de Janeiro in the early 1900s, *samba* would eventually take over *choro*’s position as Brazil’s representative national style of music.

Through the 1930’s, as radio and recordings became more common, there was less of a need for ensembles of amateur musicians at parties. Amateur players often had trouble keeping up musically with the professional *chorões* and so the grassroots tradition began to wane. Many
radio stations and record companies had their own in-house ensembles called *regionais* (singular: *regional*). These groups were influenced by the sound of the American big bands, which were being heard more frequently on radio and recordings. The typical *regional* of this era was larger than the *terno*, often including a dozen or more musicians including brass instruments, drumkit and saxophones along with the typical guitars, *bandolims* and *cavaquinhos*. These groups would accompany singers and play dance music, not only *choro*, but other genres such as *samba*, *modinha*, *canção* and American music. Some famous *choros* such as “Tico-Tico no Fubá”, “Não me Toques” and “Carinhoso” were revived when they were set to lyrics and recorded by vocalists such as Carmen Miranda in the style of the American big bands, but the vast majority of *choros* slipped into relative obscurity as the style came to be viewed by many Brazilians as a cultural anachronism.

In the 1940s and 50s, as *choro* faded in popularity in Rio de Janeiro in favour of other styles such as *samba canção* and *bossa nova*, the technology of radio and recordings allowed it to spread to the smaller cities and rural areas of Brazil. Although *choro* made a brief commercial resurgence in the early 1960s through recordings and concerts by recognized performers such as Jacob do Bandolim (Jacob Pick Bittencourt), Altimiro Carrilho and Waldir Azevedo, its current level of popularity in Brazil began as a widespread revival in the 1970s as a new generation of musicians explored the original repertoire and added their own compositions and style to the tradition. Much of this rebirth was supported financially by the Brazilian government, which was still a military dictatorship at the time, and which viewed *choro*, as an instrumental form of music, to be essentially apolitical and incapable of rousing anti-government protest. When the government did finally return to civilian control in 1985, the removal of restrictions allowed rock and pop music (which had often been censored for its rebellious lyrics and sound) to experience
a sudden growth in popularity. This, combined with a severe economic depression in Brazil in the late 1980s and early 1990s, combined to lessen choro’s visibility.

Examples of more recent choro musicians include Joel Nacimento, Raphael Rabello, Paulo Moura, Yamandú Costa, Ronaldo do Bandolim, Rogério Souza and Hamilton de Holanda. Rabello, who passed away in 1995, was a classically trained guitarist and his work represents the more conservative side of the genre while performers such as Holanda and Costa are part of the younger generation who include more improvisation and unusual forms in their interpretations that are often technically virtuosic and harmonically challenging to the listener. Their compositions and arrangements of choro standards can go beyond the formal rondo and strophic structures of the original repertoire to approach a level of elaboration commonly found in contemporary jazz. In the original spirit of the music, the jovem guarda (young generation) sometimes reinterpret rock, pop and classical pieces in the style of choro including popular Brazilian melodies from the world of bossa nova and frevo. This younger generation of musicians commonly crosses stylistic boundaries in their work making it difficult to define them as choro musicians exclusively (see Packman 2007, 2009).

Hamilton de Holanda is a young bandolinista (mandolin player) whose virtuosity is matched only by his taste for innovation and technical challenge. Hamilton’s recordings display a stunning combination of musical elements including many normally associated with American jazz such as wide-ranging ensemble improvisations and an extended harmonic vocabulary. Yet, vis-à-vis his choice of instrumentation, form and rhythmic interpretation, much of his repertoire falls comfortably under the heading of choro.

Yamandú Costa is a guitarist and composer, whose principal instrument is the seven-string instrument which is a central part of the choro tradition. Costa performs a wide range of
styles including *choro*, *bossa nova*, *milonga*, *tango*, *samba* and *chamamé* and as such his work as a whole is difficult to categorize. However, he has been influential among younger *choro* musicians for his elevated technique and unique interpretations of *choro* standards.

Today, *choro* is an important part of the cultural scene in Brazil and there are *choro* clubs in most urban centres. *Choro* method books are plentiful and study of the subject has become a part of the university and conservatory system in recent years with classes and academic courses offered in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Belo Horizonte. There are a variety of annual festivals in Brazil dedicated to *choro* music. Internationally, *choro* has benefited from exposure on the worldwide web on a variety of web sites that promote artists, groups, clubs and general education about the genre. ¹⁵ *Choro* clubs and organizations can be found in the United States, Europe and Japan. Particularly strong interest is found among the community of bluegrass musicians in the United States as the predominantly string-based *choro* sound of guitars, *cavaquinho* and *bandolim* resonates with American mandolin, guitar and fiddle players. As such, contemporary *choro* is a participant in “the increasingly global reach of popular music, especially through the growing influence and popularity of ‘world music’” (Connell 2002:20).

2.4 Keyboard Percussion in Brazil

From an organological perspective, the history of keyboard percussion instruments in Brazilian society is not a long one. They are generally not considered indigenous nor are they accepted in all musical contexts. Yet such exclusion may be just a question of time and
familiarity. Various studies have illustrated the gradual acceptance of foreign instruments in longstanding music traditions (eg. Nettl 2005).

There have been a few references in historical studies of Brazilian music to a keyboard percussion instrument similar to the African balafon (eg. Sandroni 2001) sometimes called marimba, which suggest that the instrument was brought to Brazil during the slave trade. In his book Information on the Marimba, David Vela cites musicologist Renato de Almeida’s assertion that some Afro-Brazilian cucumbis (a type of dance) were accompanied by a variety of instruments including marimba. He goes on to say that in this mixture of instruments “the European influence is clearly manifested, but at the same time there are indigenous signs in their cucumbis… that is to say that the occasional accompaniment of these dances by the marimba is no certain indication that the Negros brought it to Brazil” (Vela 1993:38). Based on its infrequent occurrence, it seems that the tradition of this instrument in Brazil has all but disappeared. Research is further complicated by the fact that several different instruments of African origin bear the name marimba, some having wooden bars which are struck with a stick and having a clear relationship to the contemporary instrument, while others belong more properly to the plucked idiophone category (sometimes called lamellophone). These latter instruments are commonly known as thumb pianos and also surface periodically in the history of Brazilian percussion. Ethnomusicologist Kazadi wa Mukuna suggests that some of the instruments of African origin which were brought to Brazil had extra-musical social functions or religious significance which, unlike the marimba, ensured their survival,

In the New World, those [instruments] that could not find the same type of extra-musical activities when they were used, were put to the side with the passage of time … [and] gradually disappeared with the advent of intensive agriculture and above all, with the work of mining. Others, like the marimba, almost didn’t survive, confined to one specific
practice; while others, like the agogô, continued to play their roles, becoming commonplace in the ritual musical gatherings as much as in the popular ones.

[No Novo Mundo os [instrumentos] que não puderam encontrar o mesmo tipo de atividades extra-musicais nas quais eram usados. Foram postos ao lado no decorrer do tempo... [e] gradualmente desapareceram com o advento da agricultura intensiva e sobre tudo, com o trabalho de mineração. Outros, como a marimba, quase não sobreviveram, confinados a uma prática específica; enquanto outros, como o agogô, continuaram a desempenhar seus papéis, tornando-se um lugar comum tanto nos conjuntos musicais rituais como nos populares] (Mukuna 1978:133).

The introduction of modern keyboard percussion instruments in Brazilian music is not a result of internal influences but rather, of intercultural contact from abroad. It could be seen as an extension of western European art music’s influence since the most consistent use of keyboard percussion instruments in Brazil in modern times occurred (and continues) in the form of the xylophone and glockenspiel played in the European style orchestras found in most major urban areas. Market influences and a quickly growing Brazilian economy have also resulted in a greater availability of keyboard percussion instruments in the country in the latter part of the 20th century. Prior to the 1950s, these instruments were extremely rare in Brazil owing at least in part to the high cost of importation. It wasn’t until the 1990s that a few domestic manufacturers began to produce instruments of reasonable quality making them much more affordable to the average musician.

The relatively recent introduction of these instruments into Brazilian culture, and more specifically into the choro genre, is evidence of ongoing contact between cultures that that brings us back to the issue of Brazilianness. “Culture contact is always a deeply penetrating and transforming challenge to an individual’s idea about self” (Kubik 1994:23). “Identities begin to
be discussed precisely when for some reason – in at least a segment of the society – there is uncertainty about identities. In other words, identity begins to be discussed from the moment it has become somebody’s problem” (1991:27). The “problem”, as noted in the first chapter of this study, is whether an instrument or instrumental ensemble newly introduced into an older, accepted style of music, can continue to truly represent the culture of the people who created that music. Tensions around the “americanization” of Brazilian culture are a constant topic throughout the history of Brazilian popular music and the appearance of an instrument which is not only foreign to the choro genre, but also any other traditional Brazilian music, and that has clear links to jazz, would easily trigger a debate over the definition of identity, tradition and authenticity in that culture.

2.5 Choro Keyboard Percussion Musicians

An interesting distinction between the simultaneous developments of the Brazilian choro and American ragtime in the first part of the 20th century lies in the use of keyboard percussion instruments. While these instruments did not form any part of the choro tradition, the xylophone was commonly found in ragtime performances and recordings (also called “novelty ragtime”), reaching a “Golden Age” in the 1920s and 30s with American musicians such as George Hamilton Green, Red Norvo, William Dorn, Sammy Herman, Lou Chiha “Friscoe”, Harry Breuer and the Englishman Teddy Brown (Cahn 1979:3). Some early examples include a published version of the ragtime piece “Dill Pickles” for “marimba band” dating from 1916, a recorded version of the piece “Red Pepper” for xylophone from 1912 (Berlin 1980:10), and from William Cahn’s extensively detailed book covering the use of the xylophone in acoustic
recordings in a variety of musical styles, a solo recording of “St. Louis Rag” played by Chris Chapman as early as 1906 (Cahn:8). Interestingly, Cahn’s book also lists a xylophone recording of Ernesto Nazaré’s maxixe “Dengozo” made by the Argentine Marimba Band for the Cameo Record Corporation of New York in 1924 (Cahn:66). This example may represent the first documented recording of a piece of Brazilian popular music on a keyboard percussion instrument.

In Brazilian popular music, the vibraphone is known to have been present, if only occasionally, and mainly as a novelty and supporting instrument, since the mid 1940s in performances and recordings by bandleaders such as Sergio Ricardo, Sylvio Mazzucca or Djalma Ferreira with his group Os Millionarios do Ritmo (The Rhythm Millionaires). These artists appeared in clubs and gafieiras (dance halls) to perform an eclectic blend of Brazilian, Cuban and American popular music styles. The visibility of the instrument was raised greatly in the 1960s with the explosion of bossa nova (new thing). With its laid back, urban aesthetic and radical modernism (at least by Brazilian standards) bossa nova seemed tailor made for the cool sound of the vibraphone which appeared in dozens of recordings by eminent artists such as Tom Jobim and Roberto Menescal as well as lesser known bossanovistas including Breno Sauer, Altivo Penteado (also known as Garoto), Ugo Marotta and Jose Claudio das Neves of the group Os Saxsambistas Brasileiros. The vibraphonists themselves were usually pianists who doubled on the instrument as well as at various times on accordion, organ and electronic keyboards.

Although not nearly as commonly found in choro circles, the vibraphone was not completely unknown. One of the most prominent choro performers and composers of all time, Jacob do Bandolim, released an album titled Epoca de Ouro – Jacob e Seu Bandolim\textsuperscript{16} (Golden Epoch – Jacob and his Bandolim) in 1959 with arrangements by Radamés Gnattali which
included vibraphone played by Chuca-Chuca (or Xuca-Xuca) on several tracks, and who also recorded with vocalist Mariza. These are highly arranged or stylized versions of choro tunes, waltzes and sambas that were closer to chamber music than the choro played by the original terno ensembles. They also lacked the terno’s looser and more improvisational feeling and approach to the music (See appendix A, “Transcriptions of Selected Mallet Choro Recordings”, example A.1 “Cessa Tudo” and appendix F, “Audio Examples” track F.1). The vibraphone in this recording always appears as a supporting countermelody to Jacob’s melody played on the bandolim.

Another early example of a choro mallet recording is Dick Farney e Seu Quinteto (Dick Farney and his Quintet) from 1955, featuring a vibraphonist listed only as Silvio (The instrument on the recording sounds more like a xylophone or marimba – see appendix A, example A.3 “Nervosinho” and appendix F, track F.2). The performer is possibly Sylvio Vianna, or pianist Silvio Tancredi who was known to have doubled on vibraphone, or less likely, bandleader Sylvio Mazzucca who was also a vibraphone player. The music on this recording is looser and includes more improvisation (although, not by the keyboard percussionist) than the one by Jacob do Bandolim mentioned above, and also displays a clear influence of American jazz that was popular in Rio at that time. At any rate, the recording is unusual in that it is an instrumental album by Farney who was known primarily as a vocalist, a crooner in the style of Frank Sinatra or Bing Crosby. An excellent pianist as well, Farney led a series of trios and quartets through the late 1950s and 1960s as well as a large dance orchestra, all of which were active in both São Paulo and Rio (Severiano 2008:296).

Yet another group active in Rio de Janeiro in the late 1950s and early 1960s was Os Saxsambistas with vibraphonist and xylophonist José Claudio das Neves. Os Saxsambistas
released at least four albums which included a danceable mixture of sambas, foxtrots and choros including the well known “Tico-Tico no Fubá” in 1960 (see appendix A, example A.2 “Tico-Tico no Fubá” and appendix F, track F.3). On this recording the piece is rhythmically treated more in the style of samba with the bass rhythm keeping steady quartenote pulses, atabaque (Brazilian hand drum similar to the conga) that mimics the first and second surdo (bass drum) parts as they are typically found in samba, and the inclusion of a cuica (small friction drum). Das Neves also recorded with a lesser-known group called the Bossa Nova Modern Quartet that released an album in 1963, and another with drummer Paulinho Magalhaes titled Metais e Surdina (date unknown).  

The pianist Pernambuco released the album Em Ritmo de Dança (In the Rhythm of Dance) in 1957 containing the choros “Requebrando” and “Ginga de Urubu” (see appendix A, example A.4 and appendix F, track F.4) and which featured vibraphonist Sylvio (note the spelling difference from the name of the player on the Dick Farney recording mentioned above). Again, it is unclear whether the performer is Silvio Tancredi, Sylvio Mazzucca or another musician. In this recording the vibraphone (or xylophone?) plays a very incidental role until the final chorus. Like the Farney recording, the music sounds like a combination of choro and American jazz because of the inclusion of an extended harmonic vocabulary and improvised solos. With the exception of Epoca de Ouro – Jacob e Seu Bandolim, all of the above-mentioned recordings are best not considered as typical choro but perhaps, a hybrid form such as choro-jazz or jazz-choro.

With the proliferation of vibraphones in the bossa nova movement, choros were occasionally performed and recorded on keyboard percussion instruments by musicians such as Breno Sauer, Altivo Penteado (also known as “Garoto” but not the same person as the well-
known guitarist mentioned above), Ugo Marotta, Heitor Barbosa, Jota Junior, Primo, Chuca-Chuca, Caculinha and Jose Claudio das Neves and yet the style remained as a novelty rather than a full fledged movement.

An early, classically trained proponent of *choro* on keyboard percussion instruments from Brazil is Luiz de Souza D’Anunciação also known as Pinduca. Born in Sergipe in the northeast of Brazil in 1928, Pinduca spent most of his career in Rio de Janeiro working in both the classical and popular music fields as well as with the popular radio music orchestras of the 1950s and 60s. He had a close association with composer Radamés Gnattali who wrote “Divertimento para Marimba e Cordas” (Divertamento for Marimba and Strings) for him. Pinduca also wrote many instructional method books covering a wide range of traditional Brazilian percussion instruments and arranged a number of *choros* for keyboard percussion.

The period between 1965 until the end of the millennium saw relatively little activity in the area of keyboard percussion instruments in *choro*. The reasons for this are various. As rock, pop, jazz and other forms of foreign (primarily American) music continued to be popular and to influence Brazilian composers and performers, most notably in the *Tropicália* movement, interest in *choro* among musicians and the general public waned as it came to be viewed as a dated style. Also, several government-sponsored revivals of *choro* in the 1970s promoted the genre as a traditional Brazilian music with the goal of counterbalancing the perceived “denationalization” of Brazilian culture and its popular music (Stroud 2008:111). This led to a wave of conservatism within *choro* circles that did little to encourage any type of instrumental or compositional innovation. Arthur Dutra has suggested that the conservatism in traditional *choro* circles arises in part from the attitude of Jacob do Bandolim who was a virtuoso and very influential musician in the 1950s and 60s. Jacob’s dislike of innovation in the genre, and his
emphasis on treating traditional *choro* with a serious and respectful attitude is well documented.\textsuperscript{25} The use of the vibraphone on his recording *Epoca de Ouro – Jacob e Seu Bandolim*, was likely an influence of the arranger on the recording, Radamés Gnattali. As well as being an arranger, Gnattali was a pianist, composer and conductor who moved freely between erudite and popular musical circles in Brazil from the 1930s until his death in 1988, and was much less of a traditionalist than Jacob. Gnattali’s work often reflected a variety of musical influences including neo-romantic orchestral music, jazz and various Brazilian popular music styles.

Another factor which impacted on public perception and interest in *choro* came in the form of several in-depth studies by Brazilian music researchers. The first was a series of sixteen LP recordings with extensive liner notes made between 1973 and 1977 by private researcher Marcos Perriera. Titled *Música Popular do Brasil* (Popular Music of Brazil), this project documented a vast array of regional folkloric and urban musical styles from all corners of the country and created an enormous interest and much greater understanding among the general public of the musical diversity found in Brazil.\textsuperscript{26}

Hermano Vianna is another researcher of Brazilian popular music who was contracted by the Abril publishing group in the late 1990s to commemorate the 500\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the “discovery” of Brazil by documenting the regional musics of the country in a large collection of videos, audio recordings and photographs entitled *Música do Brasil* (Music of Brazil). Vianna’s project overlapped with Perriera’s to some degree but was also able to access regions and music unavailable to Perreira because of its greater funding. Both Perriera’s and Vianna’s projects served somewhat to mitigate *choro*’s appeal as authentic, traditional Brazilian music by exposing its obvious European influences and contrasting it with a wide variety of rural, local and
indigenous styles of music from across Brazil. (This, of course, raises the question of what defines a “tradition” and how much time is required for a musical practice to become established to the point where it is considered “authentic”.)

In 2011 it is still relatively uncommon for a popular musician to play choro on keyboard percussion instruments. Of the dozens of people I spoke with, whether percussionists, chorões, popular or classical performers, the number of people who had seen or done it was very small. And yet, as noted earlier, it has been known to exist as early as the 1940s when percussionist and vibraphonist Luciano Perrone recorded with the famous guitarist Garoto (Aníbal Augusto Sardinha).27

With the expansion of percussion education programs within the university and conservatory music systems in the 1970s and 80s, the availability of solo and ensemble percussion literature began to grow, principally driven by percussionists who were seeking newer and more challenging repertoire. Arrangements such as “Na Glória” (see appendix B “Choro Arrangements for Keyboard Percussion Ensemble” example B.1 and appendix G “Video Examples”, track G.1) were and are still commonly found in most Brazilian educational programs.

Every director of a university-based percussion program in Brazil that I spoke with asserted that an understanding of choro was crucial to the development of a well-rounded Brazilian musicality and many included the performance of choro on keyboard percussion instruments as a required part of their program. Because of this emphasis, it is far more common to hear a classically trained percussionist play choro on keyboard percussion instruments than a popular musician. And yet, because of the factors noted by Rocha in chapter one, including the more formal sense of suingue (swing) and lack of improvisational ability found among the
classically trained, it is clear that the music is undergoing a transformation as a result of these new circumstances.

In popular music, contemporary performers such as Jota Moraes, André Juarez, Daniela Rennó, Ricardo Valverde and Hendrik Meurkens are examples of the newest generation of popular keyboard percussionists to include *choro* in their repertoire. Their interpretations of *choro* range from having a decidedly jazz approach, often containing more elaborate harmony and improvisations or including the “jazz” instruments of drumkit and electric or acoustic bass which are not found in a typical *choro* ensemble, to more conservative settings. A good example of the first interpretation is found in Hendrik Meurkens’ “Mimosa” (see appendix A, example A.5 and appendix F, track F.5). This piece, containing obvious jazz and bossa nova influences, retains elements of *choro* in its busy melodic line and use of the Afro-Brazilian rhythm. Played with a *terno* instrumentation it could readily be performed as a typical *choro* piece.

A more conservative approach can be heard in the version of “Apanhei-te Cavaquinho” recorded by André Juarez (see appendix A, example A.6 and appendix F, track F.6). In this recording Juarez employs a typical *terno* of *violão*, *cavaquinho* and *pandeiro* to accompany his rendition of the melody on marimba. The *violão* maintains a countrapuntal *baixaria* throughout, the *cavaquinho* improvises typical rhythms for its role and the pandeiro provides a bed of constant sixteenth notes. The solo marimba voice plays the melody with no improvisation and a minimum of embellishment.

André Juarez is a São Paulo based vibraphonist who performs and records in a variety of genres. Since 1995 he has released ten CDs as a bandleader, in styles varying from Bach transcriptions to jazz, funk-rock and MPB. He has also released a duo album with pianist Edmundo Villiani-Cortes and two solo vibraphone CDs with contemporary compositions by a
variety of Brazilian composers. Juarez has appeared as a sideman on dozens of recordings. His latest project, titled *Gato Preto* (Black Cat) contains traditional and contemporary *choro* pieces using the classic *choro* instrumental ensemble of violão, cavaquinho and pandeiro as accompaniment. Juarez is also music director and conductor of Coral USP, a student based choir at the University of São Paulo which has traveled and performed extensively and has released two CDs.

Jota Moraes is an active composer, arranger, pianist and vibraphonist based in Rio de Janeiro. He was born in 1948 in Caçapava, São Paulo and began his career when he was 12 years old playing vibraphone in The Brothers’ Quartet. He works in a variety of popular music styles such as *samba*, jazz, rock, pop and MPB and has performed and recorded with many established Brazilian artists including Caetano Veloso, Elis Regina, Maria Bethânia, Chico Buarque, Gonzaguinha, Paralamas do Sucesso, Legião Urbana and Raul Seixas. Since 1982 Moraes has been a part of a very successful instrumental music group in Brazil called Cama de Gato.

Vibraphonist Daniela Rennó is based in Belo Horizonte and co-leads a group with drummer Márcio Bahia. Their repertoire is a mixture of contemporary jazz and funk with Brazilian influences, including *choro*, *samba* and *baião*. Rennó also performs with Duo Noise, as a freelance artist, composes music for film and television, and operates Studio Acústico, a recording studio in Belo Horizonte. She has recorded with Alda Rezende, Uakti, Toninho Horta and Lô Borges.

Ricardo Valverde is a percussionist and vibraphonist originally from the Bahia region of Brazil who currently works in São Paulo. He has recorded with a variety of MPB, *choro* and *samba* performers including Grupo Cochichando, Regional Naquele Tempo and pianist Silvia Goes. In the world of *choro*, Valverde is a disciple of Luiz 7 Cordas (Luiz Araújo Amorim, b.
1946) one of the most important *choro* musicians of his generation who has worked with many well-known Brazilian music artists including Arthur Moreira Lima, Nelson Gonçalves, Martinho da Vila, Altamiro Carrilho, Valdir Azevedo and Gonzaguinha.

Hendrik Meurkens is a harmonica and vibraphone player. Originally from Germany, Meurkens worked in Rio de Janeiro in the early 1980s before re-locating to New York City. His repertoire includes a mixture of jazz, *samba*, *bossa nova* and *choro* pieces. Meurkens has released 15 albums as leader and appeared on dozens more. He has also performed with artists such as Charlie Byrd, Jimmy Cobb, Ivan Lins, Monty Alexander, Claudio Roditi, Astrid Gilberto, Ray Brown, Paquito D’Rivera and James Moody.

Among keyboard percussionists who play *choro* in popular music settings, the style is also undergoing a transformation. Despite the concerns of the traditionalists, varying degrees of jazz influences can be detected in the approach to improvisation taken by most of these performers with some, such as Meurkens, leaning more toward the jazz side and others, such as Valverde, taking a more traditional approach. A current shift back to valorizing jazz among the younger generations and middle classes in Brazil may be partly responsible for this, as well as a diminished concern about American cultural imperialism. This could be a result of globalization or simply a greater sense of self-confidence on the part of Brazilians regarding their cultural identity as it is represented in popular music.

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I use the term “black” to refer to people who identify or who are identified as such, typically indicating darker skinned people with curly hair and less European features, or of visible African descent for example. It is important to recognize however, that in Brazil there are a wide range of terms used to describe people of colour given the fact that the lines of racial identification there are often unclear.

Thomas E. Skidmore Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.41. According to Skidmore, in 1819 1,081,174 of Brazil’s total population of 3,598,132 were slaves.

For a detailed discussion of Afro-Brazilian religious practices, see Maristela Oliveira de Andrade’s 500 anos de catolicismos e sincretismos no Brasil, 2002 Editora Universitaria.


Garcia, p.130-131.

For a more complete discussion of indigenous music in Brazil, see Rosângela Pereira de Tugny’s Músicas africanas e indígenas no Brasil, Editora UFMG, 2006.

Adonias, Música no Rio de Janeiro Imperial (Rio de Janeiro, MEC, nd).


The term “roda” (circle) appears in a variety of descriptions of musical and social events in Brazil and cuts across many stylistic boundaries. It refers to almost any gathering where people form a circle to play music, dance or celebrate.

In addition to referring to the bass voice in choro, the Portuguese word baixaria also means something “vile” or “low”. This understanding of lowness extends to inventiveness and the ability to live outside of laws and rules. The skill to deviate from the expected is a quality which is highly valued in choro performance, especially with respect to the bass line. This concept is explained in more detail in Chapter 4, “Interpretation”.

Herminio Bello de Carvalho O Canto do Pajé: Villa Lobos e a Música Popular Brasiliera, Rio

14 Carmen Miranda (1909-1955) was a Portuguese born samba singer and motion picture star most active in the 1940s and 50s. She is famous for popularizing Brazilian music all over the world and at one point she was the highest paid entertainer in the United States.

15 Some of the more extensive web site about choro include “Choro Music” at http://www.choromusic.com, and “Agenda do Samba e Choro” at http://www.samba-choro.com.br

16 Época de Ouro 1959, Jacob e Seu Bandolim em Hi Fi, Discos RCA Victor BBL 1033.

17 According to Jota Moraes, a contemporary vibraphonist, composer, arranger and pianist from Rio de Janeiro, Chuca-Chuca was well known in both Rio and São Paulo in the 1950s and 1960s.

18 Mariza 1959, A Suave Mariza, Discos Copacabana.

19 Dick Farney, Dick Farney e Seu Quinteto 1955, Gravações Elétricas Limitada LPP – 4.

20 Os Sax Sambistas 1960, Percussão em Festa, Plaza Discos PZ 9001.

21 Bossa Nova Modern Quintet 1963, Bossa Nova Jazz Samba, Nilser.

22 Paulinho e Sua Orquestra early 1960s, Metais e Surdina, Euterpe.

23 Pernambuco 1957, Em Ritmo de Dança, Polydor LPNG 4.005.

24 Tropicália was a popular music and arts movement at the end of the 1960s in Brazil led by Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and others and included a predominant use of electric instruments and rock music influences. For more on Tropicália, see Christopher Dunn 2001, Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counter Culture, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.

25 From a personal interview with the author, 2010.

26 See Sean Stroud’s The Defense of Tradition in Brazilian Popular Music for a more detailed examination of these events.

27 Garoto, 1979 Garoto, Discos Copacabana COLP 12392-MIS 029.
Chapter 3: Performance Practices

This chapter will describe the general musical characteristics of choro including form, instrumentation, and harmonic, melodic and rhythmic content as well as the performance practice and interpretation of each instrument’s role. Although the solo guitar, solo piano, and military band instrumentations will be addressed as needed, the emphasis will be on the terno form of instrumentation as it remains the core of choro literature and performance.

3.1 Typical Choro Instrumentation

The first choro ensembles, known as ternos, were typically consisted of flute, guitar and cavaquinho. The typically nylon-stringed guitar initially provided harmonic accompaniment and a contrapuntal bass voice against the other parts, but over time this role gave way with the inclusion of a seven-stringed version of the instrument (with the extra string in the lower register) that was used almost exclusively in choro ensembles. At times, a second guitar was added to provide harmonic and rhythmic support, allowing the first guitar to provide the bass function (baixaria) exclusively. The cavaquinho, although also capable of supplying harmony, was relied on more as a rhythm instrument as it was strummed with rapid and percussive, syncopated phrases while accompanying the melody.

With the rising popularity of the choro sessions, other instruments became common in choro ensembles including the pandeiro, the bandolim (Portuguese mandolin), clarinet, trombone, accordion, and to a lesser extent the ophecleide, an early predecessor of the tuba. The pandeiro is a small, hand held frame drum with jingles on the frame, similar to the European
There are, however, some important differences in construction and playing technique. For example, the jingles on pandeiro are inverted rather than back-to-back as found on the European-style instrument. Pandeiro heads (at least in the choro tradition) are generally tuned lower than a typical western tambourine. This allows the player to achieve a variety of pitches while utilizing a unique playing technique that is described in more detail below in section 3.3. The accordion, while not initially a part of choro, most likely came via the Northeast of Brazil where it was very common and from where a large number of settlers traveled to Rio in search of employment in the 1930s and 40s. The use of accordion may also have been a consequence of the many immigrants to Brazil from Eastern Europe as choro is very similar to polka both structurally and in its instrumentation.

With the addition of the percussion instruments, the cavaquinho gained the freedom to play a more melodic role as well as providing rhythm. It is interesting to note that while the piano is not considered to be a traditional part of the choro ensemble or the roda de choro, two of the most important early choro proponents, Chiquinha Gonzaga and Ernesto Nazaré were both classically trained pianists. It is very likely that their involvement in the genre facilitated its acceptance by the elite society of Rio de Janeiro that was predisposed to the piano music of Europe rather than the more guitar-based, popular music of the day.

The solo piano form of choro had a somewhat parallel existence in the salons, movie houses and theatres of Rio de Janeiro. While piano was not typically found in the roda de choro, it was capable of providing most of the contrapuntal elements of the terno style including the bass voice and contrapuntal lines, facilitating its use by individual performers rather than in ensembles. Because the piano choras were often notated, much of this repertoire has survived, unlike the choras performed by ternos of the late 19th century.
Although the guitar is today undoubtedly the most popular instrument in Brazil and a part of both popular and classical traditions, for most of the 18th and 19th centuries it was shunned, and even actively persecuted by the elite classes in favour of the piano. There are many stories of police arresting guitar players for no reason other than that they were playing the guitar. João Pernambuco (João Teixeira Guimarães) was one of the earliest exponents of the choro style for solo guitar. Originally from Jatobá, Pernambuco was raised in the city of Recife in the Northeast. He wrote and composed many choras and through his compositions, helped to introduce one of the most important rhythmic styles from that region, the baião, into the choro complex. While the solo guitar form of choro does not fully exhibit the contrapuntal complexities found in the terno, melodically and rhythmically it is very similar. As it requires a great deal of technique, solo guitar choras were less common among the amateurs in the roda de choro and more common in the professional circuit. The solo guitar style has continued to inspire both popular and classical guitarists including Brazil’s most famous composer, Heitor Villa Lobos, who wrote numerous choras for the instrument. In many ways, it was the work of Villa Lobos that allowed the instrument to gain back a measure of respectability in elite music circles.

Another form of choro instrumentation was based on the military band, which was extremely popular in Brazil at the turn of the century. Anacleto de Medeiros was the most significant composer of this style of choro and his Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros (Fireman’s Brigade Band) was the first ensemble to record for the first recording company in Brazil, the Casa Edison in 1902. Owing to the larger size of these ensembles, these choras had more formal arrangements and less improvisation than would be found in the terno, but were an important part of choro’s evolution until they began to fade in the following decade. Not much is known about how they actually played the music as little detail has been preserved in notation and the recordings are of low quality. Garcia writes:
These bands performed at various parades, military and civic functions, parties and dances. Official, posed photographs of bands show band members in uniform holding wind and brass instruments as well as drums and cymbals…. Photographic evidence shows no guitars or cavaquinhos (Garcia 1997:257-258).

Although not originally a part of the genre, the pandeiro has become an integral member of the choro ensemble. Garcia suggests that it first appeared in a professional setting with Pixinguinha’s group Os Oito Batutas (The Eight Virtuosi) in 1919, but the pandeiro and other percussion instruments were almost certainly used in choro before that date. Another common percussion instrument in early choro recordings is the réco réco, a kind of gourd or metal scraper. The percussion instruments in choro usually provide a steady sixteenth note rhythm that is described in more detail in later sections.

In the later 1920’s American music began to influence musicians in Brazil including one of the most famous chorões, Pixinguinha. In 1922, after a six-month stay performing in Paris with Os Oito Batutas, Pixinguinha began to incorporate into his ensemble instruments used by the American jazz bands he had heard in France, including the saxophone and drum kit. This innovation was met with much resistance among Brazilian traditionalists although Pixinguinha continued to play the saxophone for the next fifty years. Later on, choro was played by the larger regional ensembles that augmented the terno with various numbers of strings and winds. Later still, these groups became even more similar to American big bands by adding brass instruments, double bass and drum kit, and performing choros in a more aggressive manner clearly influenced by American jazz.
Contemporary *choro* musicians play almost any instrument as the popularity of the genre has grown in recent decades. Accordion, trumpet and saxophone are regularly heard in this context, as is acoustic or electric bass playing the role of the *baixaria*. However, the standard *choro* ensemble still consists of the basic *terno* with a few additional elements: a melody instrument of flute, clarinet, *bandolim*, saxophone or trombone, together with one or two guitars (one being of the seven-string variety), *cavaquinho*, and *pandeiro*.

### 3.2 Musical Elements

#### Form

The structure of most *choros* follows a simple rondo form of AABBACCA, or a variant of this, with each section typically in a different key. Some later *choros* have only two sections appearing as AABA or AABB. The A and B sections are often the relative minor/major of each other with the C section appearing as either the dominant or subdominant of the A. Alternately, the B or C sections can be in the parallel major or minor of the A section. In contemporary *choros*, the various sections can be in more distantly related key areas or not related at all.

Metrically, some *choros* can exhibit a ternary meter such as a waltz, but more commonly have a binary meter that is usually notated with a 2/4 time signature. In the latter case, the rhythmic basis typically occurs as a polka, schottishe, *baião* or *maxixe* although others are possible. The various sub-genres are usually distinguished by the rhythm of the melodic line or of the accompaniment yet still fall under the general heading of *choro* because of the way they are performed and interpreted. This interpretation can include, but is not limited to, alteration
and/or embellishment of the melody, the addition of written or improvised contrapuntal parts in
the other voices, improvised “solos” over one or more sections of the form, harmonic alterations,
rhythmic syncopations in the accompaniment or melody which emphasize the offbeat sixteenth
rhythm. One peculiarity is that the melody in the waltz form is generally left unsyncopated,
unlike the melodies of the various binary forms.

Harmony

The earliest choras were harmonically unelaborated and followed the models of the
European harmonic language vocabulary found in the modinha and lundu. Garcia notes that the
choro has never been harmonically progressive and that its main interest lies in the
expressiveness, virtuosity and rhythmic character as well as the mood or “swing” created by the
performers (Garcia 1997). Like much early jazz, the choro utilizes standard harmonic
progressions such as I – IV – V7 – I in major and i – III – iv – ii – V7 – i in minor. Although
there was a tendency toward chromaticism, especially in the improvisations, Garcia suggests that
as an orally transmitted genre,

accompanimental instrumentalists improvised around the tonal plan. Early chorões were
relatively unsophisticated, and the harmony was within their grasp. With the
professionalization of the choro in the 1920s and 30s, the level of training and
proficiency among chorões increased. As the twentieth century progressed, harmony in
the choro became increasingly dissonant and no longer limited to merely triads and
seventh chords; the new professionals were better equipped to deal with this increasing
harmonic complexity (Garcia 1997:99).

Much of this more elaborate harmony was a direct influence of American music,
particularly jazz, although some Brazilian musicians have cited the influence of Impressionism
and other 20th century European musical movements as having some bearing on the expanding harmonic vocabulary of *choro* and other forms of Brazilian popular music. Brazilian musicians such as Garoto (Anibal Augusto Sardinha) actively exploited the similarities between *choro* and jazz and did much to advance the harmonic possibilities of *choro*. Contemporary *choro* compositions can range from simple harmonic progressions to bebop-like harmony, to completely dissonant or atonal harmonic landscapes as in some of the music of Hamilton de Holanda or Hermeto Pascoal.

### 3.3 Stylistic Traits

The role that each instrument plays in the performance of *choro* is crucial to the proper execution of the genre. Usually a featured soloist performs highly ornamented versions of well-known melodies while the supporting instruments, one or two guitars, *cavaquinho*, a possible “second voice” or countermelody\(^3\), and *pandeiro*, improvise a harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment and provide a degree of melodic counterpoint. Bass lines called *baixaria* are played by the *violão* (Brazilian six-string guitar) or on the seven-string guitar (*sete cordas*). *Cavaquinho* maintains the driving rhythm and harmony as well as providing an occasional solo or counterpoint. A second guitar would provide rhythmic and harmonic support while a countermelody sometimes acts as another contrapuntal line which responds to and interacts with the melody. The *pandeiro* provides a rhythmic base. While each instrument has a degree of freedom in its interpretation, it is a limited form of improvisation that allows the various voices maximum range without interference in the others’ musical territory.
The melody instrument has the most liberty to interpret rhythmically and to ornament the melody of a composition. The following figures 3.1a, b and c illustrate three different expressions of the rhythm of a single choro melody:

Figure 3.1; m. 5-8 of “Os Cinco Companheiros” by Pixinguinha. These three examples illustrate three different rhythmic expressions of the same choro melody.

3.1a

3.1b

3.1c

Glissandi up or down into a note, as well as grace note ornamentation, are common practices as illustrated in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2; m. 5-8 of “Os Cinco Companheiros” by Pixinguinha illustrates a typical use of glissandi and grace notes to ornament a choro melody.
The use of trills, appoggiaturas and mordents in *choro* is common, particularly on the first sixteenth of a group of four sixteenth notes, as in figure 3.3:

Figure 3.3; Typical mordent on a group of sixteenth notes:

Or on the second beat of the Afro-Brazilian rhythm as in figure 3.4:

Figure 3.4; Mordent on the Afro-Brazilian rhythm:

In discussing ornaments and articulations in the book *Vocabulario do Choro* (Vocabulary of Choro) Mario Sève writes, “There are no rules for the use of such resources, which will vary according to the player. But we must be very careful of excesses that may divert attention from important rhythmic aspects of the phrasing or may even bore the listener with repetition.”

[Não há regras para o uso de tais recursos, que vão variar a cada intérprete. Mas deve-se ter muito cuidado com exageros, que podem desviar a atenção de importantes aspectos rítmicos do fraseado ou cansar o ouvinte com sua repetição] (Sève 1999:15; trans. Claudia Costa Guimarães).

The following figures 3.5a, b and c illustrate three different, melodic variations of the performance of the same *choro* melody:
Figure 3.5; m. 18-21 of “Sons de Carilhões” by João Pernambuco The following three examples are three different, melodic variations of the same *choro* melody:

**figure 3.5a**

**figure 3.5b**

**figure 3.5c**

Each of the above three examples are ways of interpreting the same melody by using either rhythmic variations, minor melodic variations (usually restricted to passing notes or alternate notes found in the harmony), or a combination of both.

As can be seen in most of these examples, another characteristic of the typical *choro* melody is a long, sweeping line covering a wide range. Often these melodic figures are built on arpeggios with wide leaps that outline the harmony of the piece. As such, most *choros* are extremely difficult to sing and there are few vocalists of note in the history of the genre. Vocalists that did participate in the musical gatherings (also called *choros*) were usually called upon for their knowledge of *modinhas* and *lundus*. 
A typical melodic characteristic of the *choro* melody is a pick-up figure of three sixteenth notes at the beginning of the piece as in figure 3.6:

Figure 3.6; m. 1-3 of “Benzinho”, with pickup, by Jacob do Bandolim:

![Figure 3.6](image1)

Sometimes, this figure is elongated to cover two beats and seen in figure 3.7:

Figure 3.7; m. 1-3, of “Lingua de Preto” with elongated pickup, by Honório Lopes:

![Figure 3.7](image2)

Garcia has postulated that this practice of beginning a piece with pickup notes was adopted to accommodate the majority of accompaniment musicians on guitars, *cavaquinhos* or percussion who could not read music and who played by ear. The predictable pick-up allowed them to prepare for the beginning of the piece.⁴

The *pandeiro* provides a constant stream of sixteenth notes in a *choro* performance by using a complicated, one handed technique (the other hand holds the instrument) that employs strokes from the fingertips, thumb and heel of the hand as indicated in figure 3.8:

Figure 3.8; basic pandeiro rhythm with individual strokes:
T = thumb
F = finger
H = heel

With this technique the player will usually improvise a steady pattern of accents such as the following two variations in figures 39a and 39b:

Figure 3.9a; pandeiro rhythmic pattern:

Figure 3.9b; pandeiro rhythmic pattern:

The performer may also improvise a varying pattern of accents and rhythms to complement the accompaniment and/or melodic rhythm, as in figure 3.10:

Figure 3.10; pandeiro rhythmic variations:
All of the above examples are also possible on the réco réco.

The cavaquinho plays a crucial role in providing rhythmic momentum to a choro performance, especially if there is no pandeiro present. Figure 3.11 contains a list of some of the more commonly found accompanying rhythms, in various choro styles that are played on the cavaquinho:

Figure 3.11; common rhythmic cells for cavaquinho.\(^5\)

(arrows indicate direction of strum across strings)

Polka

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
\cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot
\end{array}
\]

Schottisch

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
\cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot
\end{array}
\]

Maxixi
A good *cavaquinho* player would be expected to improvise a varied rhythm to a *choro* such as in figure 3.12:

Figure 3.12; common accompaniment rhythms for cavaquinho: ⁶

In early *choro*, the *cavaquinho* provided rhythm and harmony only. Later on, the instrument also began to play contrapuntal lines and improvised solos, most likely as a result of the inclusion of percussion into the ensemble which helped to carry the rhythm of a piece, (relieving the cavaquinho of that responsibility) and of the second guitar which provided harmony. These contrapuntal parts would be similar to those played by other supporting melodic instruments such as that found in figure 3.13 of this excerpt of the piece “Carinhoso”:

Figure 3.13; m. 30-37 from “Carinhoso” by Pixinguinha, illustrates a typical *choro* melody with countermelody: ⁷
If there is only one guitar in a *choro* performance, it is responsible for providing the contrapuntal bass part called *baixaria*, as well as some harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment. If two guitars are present, one would play the *baixaria* and the other, the harmony. The harmonic accompaniment is rarely strummed but rather, plucked in block chords or arpeggiated rhythmically. This rhythm is usually less complex than that of the *cavaquinho* as seen in the following figure 3.14:

Figure 3.14; illustrates a typical guitar rhythm:

![Guitar rhythm](image)

Sometimes this was called the *pandeiro* rhythm as it mimics the constant sixteenth note rhythm usually played by the *pandeiro*. Like the *pandeiro*, it sometimes also employs a variety of improvised accents, as illustrated in the above example, to provide another level of rhythmic interest (Garcia: 252). This same rhythm with accents could also be played arpeggiated as well as in figure 3.15:

Figure 3.15; illustrates a typical arpeggiated guitar rhythm:

![Arpeggiated guitar rhythm](image)

Example 3.16 presents another typical guitar rhythm used in *choro*, first referred to by Gerhard Béhague as the “Afro-Brazilian rhythm”:
Figure 3.16; illustrates a typical afro-brazilian rhythm on guitar:

This rhythm or some variation of it, when played together with the improvised cavaquinho rhythm provides a bed of constant sixteenth notes, which is an important distinguishing characteristic of choro. I will take a more detailed look at the nuances and functions of the countermelody and baixaria in the following chapter 4, “Interpretation”.

3.4 Contemporary Choro

Almost from its inception, choro has been linked with the modern samba tradition in terms of the social context in which they are performed. Both forms evolved in Rio de Janeiro in the latter part of the nineteenth century and were practiced during social gatherings held at the homes of baianas, well-known matrons from the Afro-Brazilian community with connections to the various Afro-Brazilian religions such as candomblé and umbanda. The story generally recounted is that during these parties of the baianas, the musicians inside the home would play choro and the musicians outside in the backyard would play samba, with the other musicians, guests and revelers moving freely between them.

Since then, choro and samba have been commonly found on the same stage and many compositions have musical characteristics of both, sometimes to the point where it becomes difficult to separate the elements. While there are contemporary choro groups that perform
“traditional” choro only, many of the more popular contemporary musicians succeed with a blend of choro, samba, baião and various other musical influences in their repertoire.

Many compositions by guitarist and composer Guinga (Carlos Althier de Souza Lemos Escobar) demonstrate a clear choro influence, including complex melodies across a wide register and the prevalence of the Afro-Brazilian rhythmic figure, as are found in his compositions “Choro Breve”, “Choro-Réquiem”, “D Menor”, “Dichavado” and “Cheio de Dedos” (see appendix B, example B.5 for an arrangement of this work for solo vibraphone and appendix F, track F.12). Much of the repertoire of clarinetist Paulo Moura combines choro and samba music in the gafieira tradition of dance hall or ballroom dancing. Multi-instrumentalist Hermeto Pascoal has composed a number of contemporary choros which often have a more elaborate harmonic content, altered forms and wide ranging improvisations as compared to traditional choro works. (An arrangement for keyboard percussion ensemble of Pascoal’s composition “Chorinho Pra Ele” can be heard in the accompanying CD, track 7.) Furthermore, the abundance of study material made possible through the internet and ever-sophisticated uses of music technology have created an environment in which foreign influences are more readily available to all musicians and are finding their way into the repertoire of contemporary choro performers such as Hamilton de Holanda and Rogério Souza. A more detailed discussion of traditional and contemporary uses of improvisation in choro is found in the following chapter 4, “Interpretation”.

1 Garcia p.156.

2 Garcia p.261-262.
I use the term “countermelody” to refer to a second supporting voice that usually provides melodic responses to the improvised melody played by the soloist. In my research this part was usually referred to as the “second voice” (*segunda voz*), but in keeping with common analytical practice, I use the term “countermelody”.

Garcia p.105.

from *Escola Moderna do Cavaquinho*, Henrique Cazes, 1988, Lumiar Editora.


from *Choro Songbook*, 2007, Almir Chediak.
Chapter 4: Interpretation

4.1 “Suingue” and the Brazilian Rhythmic Approach

The specific rhythmic figures found in *choro* and in most forms of Brazilian popular music, as well as the nuance required for their correct placement within a piece of music, are one of the most important and distinctive elements of the genre. Almost everyone I interviewed emphasized that in all popular music, the rhythmic feel or “suingue” (swing) is more important than any given technique. Defining this *suingue* however, has been one of the major challenges for ethnomusicologists who study the subject. There seems to be a general agreement among both classical and popular Brazilian musicians that the western classical interpretation of rhythm tends to be more “accurate” in a mathematical sense and that this accuracy is relative to the abstract concept of notation in general. When the actual performance of the music is something challenging to notate, the social and musical conventions of the genre must prevail over the concept of what is “correct” on paper. Wellington Cláudio Vidal, a percussionist from Brasília, also emphasizes that the rhythmic sense in *choro* is more important than a specific technique and that some kinds of classical techniques on keyboard percussion instruments could actually be a hindrance. He uses the example of Jota Moraes, a pianist and self-taught vibraphonist from Rio de Janeiro, as someone who possesses an awkward technique on keyboard percussion instruments (as defined by western classical conventions) and yet who manages to use it to his advantage to make the feeling of the music come through in his playing.
Historically, the use of notation in performance of choro was a later addition. In the early days of the style, before it became professionalized, the majority of chorões could not read music and played by ear and memory. At times, chord sheets with lyrics were used as a reminder but musicians were expected to know the melodies. The few notated examples that have survived from this era come from the military band repertoire, which had to be notated for the performers to play unison parts, as well as from the compositions by the more classically trained proponents of the style such as Joaquim Antônio da Silva Calado and Ernesto Nazaré.

As with much popular music, often what is written in choro notation is not exactly what is played, but rather, the notation serves as a reminder of the melody, harmonic sequence and form of a composition. This is also true in the case of its rhythm. For example, when reading jazz notation, it is often understood that a pair of eighth notes indicated as in figure 4.1:

Figure 4.1; notated eighth notes.

are usually interpreted as sounding somewhere between two even eighth notes and the following figure 4.2:

Figure 4.2; double dotted eighth note and thirty second note.
And this interpretation usually suggests a compound beat sounding like a triplet as in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3; “swing” triplet rhythm.

![Figure 4.3](image)

In the same manner, in much Brazilian music, the characteristic Afro-Brazilian rhythm found in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4; Afro-Brazilian rhythm.

![Figure 4.4](image)

is usually interpreted as sounding somewhere between that figure and an even triplet illustrated in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5; triplet.

![Figure 4.5](image)

Also, the second note in this figure is often given more weight than the other two, less emphasis than a proper accent, but slightly more volume and perhaps, more temporal space.

Echoing Vidal’s point, Fernando Rocha, a percussionist from Belo Horizonte, notes that classically trained percussionists often have trouble learning this idiomatically correct rhythmic
interpretation that is central to *choro* (the 16\textsuperscript{th} note – 8\textsuperscript{th} note – 16\textsuperscript{th} note “Afro-Brazilian” figure) because classical musicians are trained to play rhythmic durations very accurately. They often struggle because in traditional *choro*, there is often a subtle and uneven pushing or pulling of that figure. In his words “it is difficult for classically trained musicians to recognize that the 16\textsuperscript{th} note is not always 25\% of the beat in the Afro-Brazilian rhythm”\textsuperscript{1}.

Another typical figure in both polka and *choro*, is normally notated as a sequence of five sixteenth notes as in figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6; five sixteenth notes:

This phrase is often interpreted in faster tempos as two sixteenths followed by three triplet sixteenths, as in figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7; typical rhythmic variation of sixteenth notes in *choro*:

In slower tempos it can be interpreted as an eighth note followed by a triplet sixteenth and a regular sixteenth, as in figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8; slower tempo rhythmic variation of sixteenth notes in *choro*:
These latter two interpretations serve to create a kind of cascade of notes at the end of the phrase, which sound as if they are rushing toward the downbeat. This places an emphasis on these downbeats, (implied, if not explicitly performed) which is another typical characteristic of *choro*.

In general, this type of semi-rubato playing is commonly found in the melody, countermelody and *baixaria* parts and serves to give the contrapuntal texture a slight ebb and flow depending on the melodic phrasing. It is often a very subtle gesture and greatly appreciated when the musicians can perform it as an ensemble as well as individually. In fact, one of the primary functions of the countermelody and *baixaria* are to interweave these improvised “responses” (short, melodic fragments) to the melody in the melodic gaps or phrase endings where they will clash the least and yet contribute the most to creating an overall seamless contrapuntal texture. The actual learning of how, when and how much to include this type of nuance, which is largely improvised, is a matter of experience and much listening and it certainly has limits. André Juarez affirmed that a certain amount of expressive playing in *choro* can be good but warns that too much of it can make the music “unsophisticated” or *brega* (an aesthetic which is overly elegant and refined to the point of pretention; ridiculous or in bad taste).²

Rogério Souza emphasized the importance of listening to the great musicians of all styles and eras in order to learn their ‘language’ and the subtleties of their musical interpretation. Like Guinga, he feels that most foreigners lack familiarity with Brazilian music that comes from living with it (*falta convivencia*). In his experience, non-Brazilians are often adept at playing the
melodic element of Brazilian music but the *base* (literally ‘basis’, meaning the rhythm section of guitar, *baixaria*, percussion and perhaps acoustic bass or piano) is more problematic in terms of creating the proper *suingue*. He notes that many Brazilian artists will perform and record with non-Brazilian vocalists, wind, brass or solo string instruments but most often employ Brazilian musicians for this *base*.

Yet another aspect of the interpretation of *choro* lies with familiarity of the repertoire. Helvio Mendes noted that an understanding of the ‘language’ of *choro* is also important. According to Mendes, it’s not enough to know how to play just the rhythm, one must be familiar with the specific arrangements of many pieces and the commonly played breaks (*convenções*) in them that every *chorão* knows. The only way to learn these arrangements is to listen to a lot of *choro* played by the masters of the tradition. He compared this with the western classical orchestral tradition noting that it often contains subtle tempo changes, dynamics or other conventions that are not always explicit in the notation, but are understood by the musicians through their experience and familiarity with the repertoire.

In the past, a musician’s personal interpretation of these rhythms was often described as *ginga*, (from the verb *gingar*, to sway or rock back and forth in balance) indicating their particular placement of the rhythmic figure in a musical context. *Chorões* also the word *balanço* in the same way as a jazz musician would use “swing”, to indicate the proper feeling of a piece of music. Today, the terms “*suingue*” or “*molejo*” convey the same idea; a performance has *suingue* when its rhythmic and melodic phrasing is stylistically true and compelling.

It is also important to note that there are individual and regional variations of this sense of *suingue*. As such, there is not a singular and uniform “correct” expression of it but rather, there
can be multiple acceptable, interpretations and approaches found in the various geographic regions and communities of *choro* musicians throughout Brazil.

Ultimately, the choice of placement of the above-mentioned gestures within a performance of a *choro* composition is a matter of taste. As with any refined art form, a period of listening and playing, acclimatization and immersion into the music is necessary to absorb the subtleties of its expression. Juarez noted that his experiences playing in a variety of *samba* schools in Brazil greatly informed his approach to playing *choro*. He observed that the class of people who generally make up the core of the *samba* schools in Brazil come from a less affluent segment of the population and often travel in social circles which function outside of the ‘official’ economic or justice system there. Many of these people fit the description of a *malandro*. He suggested that the world of *choro*, while not quite as closely associated with these underground communities, still retains a sense of this *malandragem* (the quality of being a *malandro*) amongst the musicians and in the way they play the music. Ricardo Valverde, another vibraphonist based in São Paulo echoed this sentiment, using the word *malicia* (in this case, ‘slyness’ or ‘cleverness’) to describe this type of playful interaction amongst *choro* musicians. He emphasized that the musicians must have the quality of *malandragem* in their playing as it is essential to the *suingue* of *choro*. This is especially true for the *baixaria* which refers to the contrapuntal bass voice in a *choro* performance. *Baixaria* also has a second meaning of “lowness”, “baseness”, and sometimes “garbage”, and is often related to the concept of *malandragem*. Thus, like *malandragem*, it can be used in a serious manner as a criticism, and at other times as a playful compliment. This latter use is common when praising a musician’s improvisational abilities.
As mentioned in the introduction, vibraphonist Hendrik Meurkens is of the opinion that Brazilians are protective of their musical traditions and are not completely accepting of outsiders doing them, no matter how well they might be played. The issue of rhythmic interpretation seems to be central to this concern. A non-Brazilian playing their music sounds different to them. And many of my interviewees confirmed this belief that correct rhythmic interpretation (suingue) is often lacking in choro performances by non-Brazilians. Conversely, Meurkens mentioned that many Brazilian musicians have trouble playing swing rhythm as American musicians do, that they can reproduce the basic elements but cannot reproduce the feeling or “swing” which, like the choro rhythm, is a learned process of acculturation.

Ney Rosauro, an internationally known percussion performer and composer, and a Brazilian trained in the western classical tradition, feels that many traditional chorões (choro musicians) are not interested in any kind of fusion from outside the culture with their music. Meurkens also notes that Latin American music from Cuba and the Caribbean can approach American jazz in terms of phrasing and vice versa, that jazz can mimic and make musical reference to Latin and Afro-Latin jazz from that region in a convincing manner, but that the Brazilian way of phrasing is distinctly different.

Meurkens was harder pressed to define what that distinction is, but noted that it is obvious to an experienced listener whether a musician has that Brazilian sense of feel in their playing or not, and that he himself was only beginning to identify it. He suggested that the consistent lack of this important element by a foreigner playing Brazilian music might explain why Brazilians are protective of their style of playing and why they feel the American jazz influence to be a destructive one. He suggests that many Brazilians identify America as a negative influence across the board, and that this viewpoint is unwarranted as there are many
good aspects to America and American culture, but that it is almost stylish in Brazil to vilify America. Nevertheless, it is important to note that several musicians including percussionist and educator Luis Marcos Caldana suggested to me in interviews that numerous Brazilians have studied jazz and popular music in the United States and then returned to Brazil to work, having a significant impact on the way popular music is played in Brazil, in terms of repertoire as well as stylistic interpretations including melodic phrasing and improvisation. In any case, both sides affirm that it is imperative to spend time in a Brazilian cultural environment, in order to feel and play the music correctly. And clearly, Brazilians are brought up in a culture that is quite musically sophisticated and that influence has an effect on all Brazilians whether or not they go on to become professional musicians or to study music. It is a sensibility and musical intelligence that is learned at a young age, especially the sense of rhythm. I will return to this subject and the relationship between *choro* and jazz in the final chapter, “Summary and Conclusions”.
4.2 Improvisation in Choro: old school and new

While many of the figures notated in the preceding examples have been accepted into the *choro* repertoire as standard practice, it should be noted that modern *choro* musicians regularly improvise their own parts, depending on their skill and experience with the genre. Even the rhythm of the melody, and to a lesser extent, the melodic pitches themselves may be manipulated according to the performer’s own tastes. *Violão* player Rogério Souza confirmed that it is permissible to improvise in the performance of a *choro* composition but emphasized that the improvisation has to be in the same style as the melody of the piece, and hopefully as good as the melody (His comment reminded me of one of my early jazz instructors who always emphasized that the root of the word improvise is ‘improve’). Souza also mentioned that if one were to ask a traditional *chorão* to play the melody of a piece without improvising a solo three times, each rendition would be slightly different from the others and so, in his opinion, this suggests that at least a modicum of improvisation already exists in the tradition.

This practice differs from the American jazz style of spontaneous melodic improvisation around a harmonic progression in that the Brazilian approach is an improvisation of accompaniment and arrangement. One of the most well respected contemporary Brazilian musicians, Carlos Althier de Souza Lemos Escobar (b.1950), better known as Guinga, whose music often exhibits an influence of *choro* has stated,

American music tends to have a vertical structure: block chords at the base, with a melody floating on top. Brazilian music, primarily through the influence of choro, has a very highly developed counterpoint. It is written horizontally. You have several melodic
lines intertwining. And they can form a chord, but it is something very different from the block chords of American popular song (Guinga in Thompson 2001).

Another contemporary Brazilian musician, Sivuca (Severino Dias de Oliveira, 1930-2006), has affirmed: “There are choros in which there is improvisation. This improvisation is in our style, which is to say, for me, it is jazzistic, but it is jazz that is very private or particular, jazz tupiniquim [pertaining to Brazil], our jazz” (Garcia 1997:112).

Rennó affirms that one of the differences between choro and jazz is that the harmonic language of the former is simpler and more diatonic. This refers not only to the compositional style but also to the quality of improvisations in general within the genre, that there occurs or should occur less chromaticism than in a jazz piece. Meurkens agrees with this point and adds that in his opinion, triplets do not form part of the rhythmic language of choro. I however, came across a number of choro recordings in which the performers clearly employ the use of triplets, not as a relaxed variation of the Afro-Brazilian rhythm (an interpretation which is also quite common) but as a deliberate contrast to it. (see figure 4.9, and track 10 from CD).

Figure 4.9; m. 19-22 of “Doce de Coco” by Jacob do Bandolim, illustrating simultaneous triplet and Afro-Brazilian rhythms:
Meurken also suggests that there occurs more scalar type improvisation in *choro* than in jazz. He notes that playing behind the beat, as in much jazz and swing styles is not part of *choro* interpretation. Similarly, playing in front of the beat as is common in some Cuban jazz is also not within the *choro* style. He feels it is very important to be in the “pocket” (neither ahead of the beat nor behind it) of the 16\(^{\text{th}}\) note – 8\(^{\text{th}}\) note – 16\(^{\text{th}}\) note Afro-Brazilian rhythm in order to play *choro* correctly.

Another important quality of the style of improvisation in *choro* is the ability to ornament a melody with appoggiatura, grace notes, trills, glissandi and other decorations as well as through subtle variation of its rhythmic elements, rendering the melody recognizable and yet performed with a new or fresh reading. In some of these instances, depending on the instrument’s limitations, it may be necessary to adapt the style to the instrument (as mentioned in the Introduction) rather than the other way around. For example, the bending of a pitch or a true glissando are not technically possible on the keyboard percussion instruments because of their fixed pitch keys. Thus, it is up to the performer to develop a manner of implying or suggesting these gestures through some combination of rapid chromatic or diatonic scales, employing approaches to a note from an upper or lower neighboring pitch, as well as through the use of “ghost notes”.

These considerations are not intended to suggest that there is a systematic or fixed Brazilian way of interpreting *choro*, but rather, a unique interpretive approach that continues to evolve. Guinga emphasizes that *choro* is very much a living tradition:

I believe only in the artist who has one foot in the future and the other foot in the past. It's enough if you use everything you have in a progressive manner. If a guy keeps playing *choro* the way it’s been played in the past, nothing will come of it. It's better to go to the
graves of Benedito Lacerda, Pixinguinha, and Jacob do Bandolim, exhume them and have them play. Listening to choro played exactly as before? This is horrible; I have no patience for this. You have to take what’s Brazilian, based on what it’s been, and think ahead. Without a foundation there’s nothing (Guinga in Thompson 2001).

4.3 Roles of the Baixaria and Countermelody

The seven-string guitar provides a contrapuntal bass line in most choro performances called *baixaria* that goes far beyond simply providing the roots of the passing harmony. The *baixaria* functions as an independent voice providing rhythmic and melodic counterpoint to the melody. Many Brazilian musicians suggested to me that the *baixaria* has more of a responsibility to outline the *choro batida* (rhythm) than the other voices and that its role is central to creating the *ginga* or swing of a *choro* composition.

Figures 4.10 and 4.11 illustrate parts typically played on this instrument, which usually fill in the spaces between the melodic phrases and sometimes overlap with them. Note that the *baixaria* phrases often resolve on chord tones other than the root.

Figure 4.10; m. 13-19 of “Ano Novo” by Rildo Hora illustrates a typical choro melody and *baixaria* relationship:  

![Diagram](image-url)
Figure 4.11; m. 6-14 of “Chorando pra Pixinguinha” illustrates a typical *choro* melody and *baixaria* relationship:

In many *choro* ensembles a secondary wind instrument or *bandolim* may provide a countermelody as a supporting counterpoint that can rival the lead voice in terms of its speed and rhythmic density. The following figure 4.12 is a typical example of the type of counterpoint between the melody and countermelody:

Figure 4.12; m. 30-37 from “Carinhoso” by Pixinguinha, illustrates a typical *choro* melody with countermelody:
In a situation where there is a second melodic voice, the guitar/ baixaria part is generally simplified so as to avoid making the resultant texture excessively dense yet still maintains an active participation in the counterpoint, as in figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13; m. 18-25 of “Paraquedista” by José Leocadio da Silveira illustrates a typical relationship between a choro melody, countermelody and baixaria:

Brazilian flautist and choro virtuoso Altamiro Carrilho has suggested that when improvising a countermelody to the melody, one should embellish the melody and reflect either the simplicity or complexity of the melody player’s improvisation. The counter melody should be played more rhythmically and should outline the harmony by using motifs that emphasize four sixteenths per beat, or combinations of eighths and sixteenths. Fernando Rocha suggests that the countermelody has to “complete” the melody.

As mentioned earlier, choro can be heard in concert performances and on recordings but is in its most natural setting in the roda de choro. These events function like jam sessions with a
set of standard pieces acting as a canon that players are expected to know. Improvisation by the lead voice in this setting is usually limited to eight or sixteen measures within a tune rather than over the entire form of a composition as is usual in a jazz performance. Subtlety and nuance are also valued in *choro* improvisation and players who dominate or show off their technique are often discouraged from participating in future *rodas*. A sense of cordiality also ensures that every musician who wishes to play will be accepted regardless of his or her ability on his or her instrument. I had the opportunity to witness this myself on several occasions when musicians of distinctly different levels of experience and technical ability would perform together, each receiving as much time as they desired to improvise on a composition. Ironically, the least experienced musicians often played much longer improvisations than the more talented performers.

There is no clear dividing line between the interpretive approaches of contemporary *choro* musicians and their counterparts of the *velha guarda* (old school) but rather, a continuum of styles and aesthetics that includes all of the techniques described above, in varying degrees. An artist’s specific combination and use of these elements would contribute to the definition of his or her particular musical vocabulary.

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1 From a personal interview in 2009.

2 From a personal interview in 2010.

3 Samba schools (*Escolas de Samba*) are large musical ensembles and social clubs found throughout Brazil and comprised of mostly percussion instruments. These groups parade through
the streets during the annual Carnaval celebration. For more on this topic, see Sergio Cabral, *As Escolas de Samba do Rio de Janeiro* 1996, Lumiar Editora, Rio de Janeiro.

4 Some of the more common meanings of malandro: double-dealing, idler, wily, cunning, crook, idler, lay-about, streetwise person.

5 From a personal interview in 2010, this opinion was also shared by Meurkens.

6 “Ghost notes” are notes within a larger melodic or rhythmic passage that are played at a much softer volume and which thereby assist in giving a specific direction or shape to the musical phrase.

7 from *Choro Songbook*, 2007, ed. Almir Chediak.

8 from *Choro Songbook*, 2007, ed. Almir Chediak.

9 from *Choro Songbook*, 2007, ed. Almir Chediak.

10 Tadeu Coelho and Julie Koidin “The Brazilian Choro” from *The Flutist Quarterly* (Fall 2005) p. 42-43.
Chapter 5: Adaptation and Analysis

In this chapter I will describe the instruments found in the keyboard percussion family and discuss their application to the various instrumental roles typically found in a *terno* ensemble together with the suggestions and preferences of a variety of *choro* practitioners. This will include the advantages and limitations of each instrument as it adapts to the melody, countermelody, *cavaquinho*, *baixaria* and guitar roles. Next, I will present a description and analysis of three *choro* arrangements for keyboard percussion ensemble as a demonstration of some of the possible manifestations and variations of *choro* pieces for this type of ensemble. I will then compare these arrangements to recorded performances of the same works by three *choro* groups with more typical instrumentation. The pieces are “Na Glória” by Ary dos Santos and Raul de Barros and arranged for keyboard percussion ensemble by Fernando Rocha; “Doce de Coco” by Jacob do Bandolim (Jacob Bittencourt), arranged for keyboard percussion ensemble by Mark Duggan; and “Enigma” by Garoto (Anibal Augusto Sardinha), arranged by Marcelo Fortuna and Radamés Gnattali, and adapted by Mark Duggan. Lastly, I will briefly describe, compare and contrast two *choro* works arranged for solo keyboard percussion: “Cheio de Dedos” by Guinga (Carlos Escobar) and adapted by Mark Duggan, and “Brejeiro” by Ernesto Nazaré and arranged by Ney Rosauro.
5.1 Introduction to the Keyboard Percussion Instruments

For the purposes of this study I have chosen to focus on the three most commonly used instruments from the keyboard percussion family: the xylophone, vibraphone and marimba. A fourth instrument, the glockenspiel, will also be addressed as it periodically occurs in the research material, although it is employed in percussion arrangements of *choro* somewhat less often owing to its extreme upper register and its tendency to blur notes together when played in rapid succession. Generally the glockenspiel is used as an added colour to an instrumental sonority rather than as a solo instrument or independent voice.

Despite the fact that there is no standardization among the various manufacturers of these instruments in terms of their frame size, key size or range, most of the currently available professional brands and models are adequate to realize the information contained herein. Other instruments which properly belong to this category such as tubular chimes and crotales tend to be used more sparingly and in a decorative fashion in order to highlight certain notes or chords in a piece of music rather than to delineate a constant melody or rhythmic/harmonic accompaniment. These instruments have an extremely long decay that allows notes played in rapid succession to blur together and obscure the melodic or harmonic movement thus making their usage impractical in the vast majority of *choro* repertoire. For this reason they have been excluded from the study. Other instruments belonging to the keyboard percussion family yet which are not nearly as commonly found, are the song bells and glass marimba. The former has bars made of metal in a relatively high range and has many of the timbral qualities of the glockenspiel yet with a warmer and more subdued tone, similar to a celeste. It also has a somewhat lower range than
the glockenspiel. The majority of information contained herein, which pertains to the glockenspiel, could readily be applied to the song bells.

The glass marimba is an extremely rare instrument with which I came into contact while researching the present study. Owing to the presence of the percussion group Uakti, which builds their own percussion instruments, and to several other instrument makers in the region, glass marimbas are commonly found in the city of Belo Horizonte in Brazil. The bars of the instrument are made of glass plates and have a sound that lies somewhere between the song bells and the vibraphone. Obviously, because of the material used, this instrument cannot be played acoustically at a loud volume. Its use seems to be an extremely isolated and regional phenomenon and it plays only a peripheral part in the literature and history of keyboard percussion instruments in general. Although much of the performance practice information in this study regarding the xylophone, vibraphone and marimba could be applied to the glass marimba as a solo instrument, because of its low volume and relative rarity I have chosen to exclude it.

5.2 Arranging Choro Works for Keyboard Percussion Ensemble

In this section I will discuss the various possibilities for employing the keyboard percussion instruments in each of the traditional instrumental roles found in *choro*: the melody, countermelody, guitar, *baixaria* and *cavaquinho*. Although it is sometimes omitted from a *choro* performance, depending on the instrumental ensemble and arrangement of the particular work, I have included the countermelody because its presence raises issues of timbre, instrumental
compatibility, density of texture within the arrangement, as well as considerations regarding its
improvisational role relative to the melody.

**Melody**

During my research I encountered a wide variety of approaches and opinions amongst the
percussionists themselves regarding the best use of keyboard percussion instruments in a *choro*
ensemble. Many have particular ideas about the roles of specific instruments in the ensemble
context while others, such as Luis Marcos Caldana, feel that the xylophone, vibraphone and
marimba are essentially interchangeable. While acknowledging that the extended lower range of
the marimba allows for more options in realizing the *baixaria*, he believes that any part can be
played on any of these instruments if it is in the hands of an experienced musician.

When making an adaptation of a piece of music in the *choro* style to a keyboard
percussion instrument, there is general agreement that it is important to have a clear idea of the
sound of the original instrument for which the piece was written or on which it was performed.
The next step is to choose the keyboard percussion instrument which would best reflect the
sound qualities and perform the function of that part within the entire arrangement in order to
best approximate a traditional *choro* sound and feeling. Percussionist Claudia Oliveira confirmed
to me that while playing *choro* on keyboard percussion instruments she often imagines the sound
of a traditional *choro* instrumentalist that she is attempting to imitate. For her, the process is a
more intuitive one and less associated with a specific technical practice. Daniela Rennó also
believes that there are not techniques specific to mallet instruments in playing *choro* and
emphasizes that in popular music, the feeling or “suingue” is more important than any given
 technique. Rather than attempting to mimic the traditional instruments found in *choro* ensembles,
however, she believes vibraphone and marimba should be played in a *choro* context to sound like
themselves to reflect the character of their timbre as modern additions to the genre. Oliveira’s conception then, is based somewhat on the imitation of traditional sounds while Renno’s is based on the sound of the keyboard percussion instrument itself which has the potential to bring something new to the music. Thus, Oliveira’s approach is one of adapting keyboard percussion to *choro* while Renno’s is one of adapting *choro* to keyboard percussion. Their differing musical experiences and performing contexts (Oliveira being from a more classically trained background and Rennó from the popular music side) may or may not play a role in their respective approaches to this issue.

While all of the various melodic parts of a traditional *choro* piece such as the melody, countermelody, *cavaquinho* and *baixaria* could be played on any of the keyboard percussion instruments, most of the people I spoke with felt that some offer better results than others owing to the instruments’ natural qualities of tone color, range and sustaining qualities. While the melody may be played on any of these, it is not usually performed on glockenspiel because the extreme resonance on that instrument tends to blur the clarity of the generally fast moving *choro* melodies. Only once in my research did I encounter a *choro* arrangement which had the melody played alone by the glockenspiel: a very formal and slower moving arrangement of “Chorinho Natalino” by José Viera Brandão, recorded by Mauro Senise and Jota Moraes.¹ Most performers I spoke with preferred the xylophone or vibraphone often excluding one instrument from consideration for the very same reasons that another person preferred it. For example, Fernando Rocha feels that the xylophone is the best mallet instrument to realize a *choro* melody because of the higher range of the instrument; its brilliant timbre and smaller bar size allow for more fluid interpretation of the often fast and technical *choro* melodies. He also mentions that the pedal on the vibraphone tends to blur some of the notes together which can negatively affect the rhythmic phrasing. Rennó, however, feels the vibraphone to be better in realizing the melody in *choro*
because of the instrument’s ability to sustain notes. Both Denilson Bianchine Alves and Wellington Cláudio Vidal stated that xylophone is the best keyboard percussion instrument to realize a *choro* melody because of the characteristic sound. Wellington feels it has a connection to American ragtime because of this, and especially the style of novelty ragtime played on xylophone.  

**Countermelody**

Most musicians I spoke with felt that either xylophone, vibraphone or glockenspiel could be used to provide a countermelody in a *choro* performance although several mentioned that a xylophone used in this way might be less effective in its supporting role to the melody because its bright and staccato timbre could distract the listener from the melody voice and even confuse the listener if the melody voice was also played on a xylophone. The point most emphasized in relation to the countermelody had less to do with the instrument than with the interpretation of its role as a supportive voice to the melody (a topic explored in more detail in chapter 3 “Interpretation”). Rocha suggested the that pairing of clarinet and flute playing the melody and the countermelody parts, a practice common in typical *choro* ensembles, is realized very well by substituting the vibraphone and marimba as the melody and countermelody because these two latter instruments also have very similar articulations and sonoric qualities, and yet distinct timbres. Thus, it seems that the vibraphone or marimba is the preferred countermelody.

**Baixaria**

I found general agreement that the *baixaria* voice would be best represented on the keyboard percussion instruments by the marimba. This is largely due to the extended range of the instrument, which has a lower register than most other keyboard percussion instruments. In the
past twenty years, the five-octave marimba has become commonplace among percussion groups and in university programs further entrenching its role as a bass voice in a variety of styles of chamber music. Many Brazilian percussionists also mentioned that the warmer tone and softer articulation available on the marimba make it more suited to the baixaria, guitar and countermelody roles in choro rather than as a lead melody instrument. In this way, it is often compared to the Brazilian violão (acoustic guitar) or sete cordas (seven-string acoustic guitar) which are commonly used to play the harmonic/rhythmic accompaniment and bass parts in choro but which rarely play the melody in an ensemble context. These instrumental parts are intended to blend together to provide a rhythmic and harmonic bed for the melody and countermelody. As such, marimbas are well suited to play these roles in a keyboard percussion arrangement of choro.

Rennó affirms that the baixaria can also be played on the vibraphone as long as a specific arrangement is used which ensures that this voice remains below the others. This would place the melody and countermelody parts in a slightly higher register than usual but would still allow for a functional arrangement.

**Guitar**

I use the term guitar in this context to refer to the role played by the Brazilian six stringed violão (an acoustic guitar with nylon strings) in a traditional choro ensemble and to differentiate it from the seven-stringed version of the instrument that normally plays the role of baixaria. As mentioned in chapter 3 “Performance Practices”, the guitar part in a traditional choro ensemble is responsible for providing a combination of harmony, rhythmic support and occasional melodic fragments, usually improvised, as the performer sees fit to introduce into the performance of a piece. As the common sound and supportive function of these two instruments in their traditional
roles serve to create a seamless sonic blend and texture within the *terno*, it seems obvious that the role of the guitar in any mallet ensemble arrangement which attempts to reproduce a the traditional roles of the *terno* instruments would be best provided by the marimba, especially given that the *baixaria* part would also be best realized on it. However, according to Rennó, Rocha and others, the vibraphone can function just as well in the guitar role in an arrangement in which the voices are more equally balanced and carry equal melodic weight. Its distinct timbral quality, as well as its ability to sustain pitches, makes it well suited to cover the guitar’s usual function. An example of this is presented below in my adaptation of “Enigma”, arranged for xylophone, vibraphone and marimba corresponding to melody, guitar and *baixaria* roles (appendix B, example B.3, and appendix G, track G.3).

**Cavaquinho**

Whereas the melody, countermelody and *baixaria* parts of the traditional *choro* are all monophonic voices within a contrapuntal texture, the *cavaquinho* part presents a very different element. Its role is primarily rhythmic and harmonic in providing a background or “bed” of almost steady sixteenth notes (along with the *pandeiro*) upon which the counterpoint of the other voices rests. In all of my research I have never once encountered a recording or arrangement of *choro* in which the *cavaquinho* role was performed by a keyboard percussion instrument. All of the written arrangements I encountered simply omitted this part, leaving the sixteenth note rhythm to be generated by an accompanying *pandeiro*, *rêco-rêco* (gourd scraper) or by the rhythmic counterpoint of the supporting voices. Mauricio Carrilho’s arrangement of “Pinguim” is a good example of this style of *choro* arrangement. (For the full arrangement of this work, see appendix B, example B.4 and appendix F, track F.8). Originally scored for brass band, (which traditionally would not have been accompanied by *pandeiro*) the forward motion of the piece is
sustained by the composite rhythm of the four supporting voices. In my adaptation of this work for keyboard percussion, I have orchestrated all the voices for marimba except the lead trumpet that most often carries the melody, which has been given to the vibraphone (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1, m. 1-8 of “Pinguim” by Ernesto Nazaré, arr. Mauricio Carrilho and adapted for keyboard percussion ensemble by the author:

Pinguim
When presented with the idea of one of the keyboard percussion instruments playing the *cavaquinho* part in a *choro* ensemble most percussionists I spoke with acknowledged it to be possible but cautioned that it would require a performer with an intimate understanding of the genre to achieve the proper “suingue” and that it would require a great deal of technique to execute the close-voiced chords rapidly and continuously as the *cavaquinho* does in a typical *terno* performance. Perhaps because of these daunting considerations, I did not come across a single arrangement of *choro* for keyboard percussion that utilized the xylophone in this manner.

In my adaptation of “Doce de Coco” by Jacob do Bandolim, (see appendix B, example B.2) scored for the traditional *choro* instrumental parts of melody, *cavaquinho*, guitar and *baixaria*, I have given the *cavaquinho* part to the xylophone. This arrangement is a composite from several sources including notation of the melody and some harmonic movement from Almir Chediak’s *Choro Songbook*, with some supporting parts and *baixaria* drawn from a 1964 recording of the piece by Altamiro Carrilho and Regional led by Canhoto (track 10 on CD). I chose this recording as it demonstrates a variety of the accompanying rhythms that are normally heard on the *cavaquinho* and which are adaptable to the xylophone. The *cavaquinho* rhythms used in this arrangement include sixteenth note offbeats, triplets, the “Afro-Brazilian” rhythm, three and four note chords played as continuous sixteenth notes, and occasional melodic responses to the melody as per the arrangement.

Of all these devices, the use of continuous sixteenth notes to play a three or four note chord is the most difficult to adapt to the xylophone as it is technically challenging to execute at faster tempi or even moderate tempi for any length of time. This technique applied directly to the xylophone often loses much of the *suingue* characteristic of its performance on a *cavaquinho*.

Below, I present a solution to this problem that makes it technically possible to play this typical accompanying rhythm on the xylophone for any length of time, while at the same time making it
easier to find the *suingue* by creating a movement that more closely mimics the rhythmic strum of the *cavaquinho*. The solution, outlined in greater detail below over a musical phrase of two chords, consists of a sequence of a rapid alteration of the notes in the chord played by the left and right hands combined with the full chord played by both hands on certain beats, as seen in figure 5.2:

Figure. 5.2; possible interpretation of *cavaquinho* part on a keyboard percussion instrument:

L = left hand
R = right hand

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\text{Am} & R & R & & & R & R & E^7 \\
& L & & & & & L & L
\end{array}
\]

This and the following examples are presented with the intention of demonstrating sticking options for the keyboard percussionist in re-creating the *cavaquinho* part in a *choro* performance. The choice of chord voicings, however, is another issue. While the *cavaquinho* offers limited options in this respect owing to its construction with only four strings and relatively short neck, keyboard percussion instruments are capable of playing chords with a greater variety of chord permutations and inversions containing much wider and varied intervals. However, in order to best reproduce the tight, rhythmic feel and function of the *cavaquinho* in *choro* performance, I believe the best results are achieved by employing close-voiced chords on the keyboard percussion instrument. The particular voicings chosen would depend on the musical context of a specific piece, with special attention to the avoidance of harmonic clashes
with the melody and other contrapuntal voices in the arrangement, and to the creation of a smooth and logical voice leading from chord to chord.

Another consideration that I have omitted from this discussion is the choice of mallets used. I have had the most success in reproducing the *cavaquinho* part on the xylophone with the use of hard rubber mallets, as they serve to blend better with the other instruments in the ensemble and aid in avoiding the brittle quality often heard from the instrument when played with harder mallets. At the same time, they are able to achieve something of the strident sound quality expected from the *cavaquinho*. The choice of mallets in any given situation, however, is dependent on a number of variables including the particular mallets used by the other performers in the ensemble, the quality and make of the instruments played, and the acoustic properties of the performance space. For this reason I believe it is enough for the performer to be cognizant of the musical function of his or her instrument within the *terno* and to choose mallets appropriate to that role.

While there are a variety of permutations of the above-mentioned sequence of left hand-full chord-left hand-right hand (or right hand-full chord-right hand-left hand, etc.), I have chosen this one for the following reasons: this permutation allows the full chord stroke to fall on the second sixteenth note of each quarter beat, the pulse normally emphasized in the Afro-Brazilian rhythm. It also allows the upper notes played by the right hand to maintain a steady pulse on the second and fourth sixteenths of each quarter beat (sixteenth-note off beats), which are also important to articulate in *choro* and commonly found in the repertoire, according to Caldana and virtually all the musicians that I interviewed. The notes played by the left hand on the first and third sixteenths of each quarter should be articulated more gently, at a lower dynamic, sometimes called “ghost notes”, which aids in achieving the *suingue* feeling. These ghost notes mimic the
“dead” strums that occur on the *cavaquinho* when the strings are strummed while muted to provide a percussive sound without a defined pitch.

Some of the musicians that I interviewed suggested that a true dead stroke (a stroke in which the mallet strikes the key and remains on it, thereby muting the sound and producing less of an identifiable pitch) could also be used to mimic some of the dead strums in the *cavaquinho* part. While this technique functions well in slower pieces, it becomes a serious technical challenge, and eventually impossible at medium and faster tempi. Another drawback with this technique is that in order to successfully achieve the dead stroke, one must apply extra pressure on the keys, which in faster tempi can sound as an accent, achieving the exact opposite intended effect of a ghost note. An acceptable variation of this idea might be to perform the first example with the above-mentioned ghost notes nearer to the nodal point of each key, thereby minimizing their resonance and volume and while increasing their percussive effect.

On a triad or other three-note voicing, the sticking from the first example could be maintained as in figure 5.3:

Figure 5.3; *cavaquinho* part on a keyboard percussion instrument as a triad:

![Triad Diagram](image)

Or simply with three mallets as in figure 5.4:

Figure 5.4; *cavaquinho* part on a keyboard percussion instrument as a triad with three mallets:
or alternatively as in figure 5.5:

Figure 5.5; *cavaquinho* part on a keyboard percussion instrument as a triad with three mallets, variation:

The appropriate choice among these options would depend on the voice leading restrictions, density and particular performance demands of the passage as well as the comfort of the performer. It should be noted that the latter two examples would have a thinner sonority than the first.

When the part moves to the Afro-Brazilian rhythm as in measure 23, the left hand/right hand sticking is maintained as in figure 5.6:

Figure 5.6; *cavaquinho* part on a keyboard percussion instrument as the Afro-Brazilian figure:
This serves to maintain the sense of “suingue” in keeping with the continuous sixteenth note pattern. Figure 5.7 shows another option:

Figure 5.7; cavaquinho part on a keyboard percussion instrument as the Afro-Brazilian figure, variation:

![Diagram](image)

This latter version also maintains the Afro-Brazilian rhythm but is more difficult to make “swing” as it places higher technical demands on the left hand.

As the cavaquinho would normally provide a variety of rhythms, mostly improvised in response to the soloist’s interpretation of the melody (as illustrated in the example of “Doce de Coco”), I am not suggesting that this first pattern is a blanket replacement for the cavaquinho voice throughout any choro arrangement, but rather, that it form the basis and starting point for any xylophone interpretation of a cavaquinho part in choro. Afterward, all possible variations and permutations of the sticking and chord voicing illustrated in figure 5.2 must be explored and internalized by the mallet performer in order to be best equipped to improvise in a similar manner within whatever musical requirement a choro performance or roda de choro might demand.
5.3  Analysis

5.3.1  “Na Glória”

The first ensemble work is an arrangement by Fernando Rocha of a classic choro work “Na Glória”, composed by Raul de Barros and Ary dos Santos and arranged for glockenspiel, vibraphone, xylophone and two marimbas by Fernando Rocha (see appendix B, example B.1 and appendix G, track G.1). It utilizes a variation of rondo form commonly found in choro compositions of AABBACA, with each single letter name section having a length of sixteen measures as well as a two-measure coda at the end of the entire piece. The A section is in the key of F major, the B section in its relative minor, D minor, and the C section in the subdominant key of Bb.

This arrangement for percussion quintet is unusual in that it employs the glockenspiel as a coloristic effect to highlight certain fragments of the melody. The majority of arrangements I have encountered do not use this instrument. In this arrangement the xylophone carries the melody throughout while the upper and lower marimba voices function as the guitar and baixaria parts from a typical terno. The marimba passages in each subsequent restatement of the A section are virtually identical, with only slight rhythmic variations to distinguish them.

The vibraphone is employed in several different ways – at times as an alternate guitar voice supplying harmony and rhythmic support such as in figure 5.8:

Figure 5.8; m. 1-4 of “Na Glória” by Raul de Barros arr. Fernando Rocha, illustrates the guitar voice orchestrated for the vibraphone:
Later in the piece, the vibraphone is orchestrated in a more pianistic manner by using longer sustained chords that outline the harmony as in figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9; m. 51-54 of “Na Glória” illustrates a pianistic use of the vibraphone:

Each of the vibraphone and two marimba voices provide an occasional, brief and typical counter melody or “response” to the xylophone melody as in the marimba 1 voice which doubles the melody in m. 15 and then provides the response in measure 16 as seen in figure 5.10:

Figure 5.10; m. 15-16 of “Na Glória” illustrates melodic responses in marimba voices:

This type of response fragment can also be seen in figure 5.11 in the marimba 2 voice, on the second beat of measures 4 and 8:
Figure 5.11; m. 4-8 of “Na Glória” shows melodic response in the marimba 2 voice (in the baixaria role) in m. 4 and 8:

The response fragment also appears in the vibraphone and marimba 1 voices in measure 56 and 58 (figure 5.12):

Figure 5.12; m. 55-58 of “Na Glória” shows melodic response in the vibraphone voice (in the guitar role):

None of the voices play the cavaquinho role from a traditional terno ensemble, but rather, the sustained pulse of the piece is generated by the composite rhythm of all the parts together. As
such, this example is similar to the military band style arrangements first popularized by Anacleto de Medieros around the turn of the 20th century. As with the military band style of *choro*, this arrangement does not allow for any improvisation but rather, it is intended to be performed exactly as written.

The version of “Na Glória” by Raul de Barros, (track 9 on the accompanying CD), is performed in the same key as the Rocha arrangement with the melody played on trombone. The Barros version uses a slightly elongated form of AABBAACCAA in contrast to the Rocha arrangement. On the first repeat of the A section, m. 1-4, one can hear the soloist improvise a distinctly different line before returning to the melody for the remainder of the section. He also does this on the first repeat of section C. The third and fourth repetitions of section A are completely improvised by an alto saxophone soloist, somewhat like a jazz performance. The final two A sections are also completely improvised except for the final 8 measures which return to the melody.

The most distinctive difference between this performance and the keyboard percussion arrangement, other than instrumentation, lies in its extensive use of improvisation. The Barros version also displays a greater sense of *suínque* or groove in terms of the rhythmic feel of the ensemble as a whole and in the improvised dialogue and short melodic interjections by all members of the performing group.

5.3.2 “Doce de Coco”
This piece was composed by Jacob do Bandolim, arranged by Altamiro Carrilho and adapted for mallet quartet by Mark Duggan for a quartet of vibraphone, xylophone and two marimbas (see appendix B, example B.2 and appendix G, track G.2). It has an ABBAB structure in which each single letter name section is comprised of two thirty-two measures, each of which are subdivided into two sixteen measure parts. The second half of each section contains both variations of the material in the first half as well as new musical material and thus, the composition could also be viewed as having the structure AA’BB’ BB’AA’BB’, with each single letter name section comprised of sixteen measures. This arrangement also has a four-measure introduction, a commonly employed convention with this composition, before the melody begins.

Harmonically, this piece is atypical of most choro works in that both the A and B sections are in the same key. The harmonic variety of the work occurs within each section as the melody and accompaniment move away from the tonic to briefly refer to other key areas before returning to the opening tonality. The first half of the A section is in the key of G major (measures 3 – 18). The second half of this section, beginning measure 19, presents a variation of the theme in G minor before returning to G major in measure 29:

Figure 5.13; m. 3-5 of “Doce de Coco” by Jacob do Bandolim, arr. Mark Duggan, illustrates the melodic theme in a major key:

![Major Key Example]

Figure 5.14; m. 19-21 of “Doce de Coco” illustrates the melodic theme in a minor key:
Section B also begins in G major but with new melodic material and a different harmonic sequence than was heard in the A section. As seen in figures 5.15 and 5.16, each half of section B begins with the same melodic and harmonic material with slight variations:

Figure 5.15; m. 35-42 of “Doce de Coco”, second theme:

Figure 5.16; m. 51-58 of “Doce de Coco”, second theme variation:

Figures 5.17 and 5.18 show the second half of section B and B’ as they move through distinct harmonic sequences; the first through a rapid cycle of fifths at measures 46 – 50,

Figure 5.17; m. 46 – 50 of “Doce de Coco” showing cycle of fifths harmonic movement:
and the second with a brief resolution on the relative minor key of E minor before a I – VI – ii – V7 sequence which leads back to the introduction material.

Figure 5.18; m. 59-65 of “Doce de Coco” showing harmonic movement:

In this arrangement, the lyrical melody has been given to the vibraphone because of its ability to sustain the melody notes of longer duration. As with the percussion arrangement of “Na Glória”, this adaptation employs the two marimbas in the roles of baixaria and guitar. After the rather static opening sequence in measures 3 – 10, the baixaria (second marimba) provides a monophonic bass voice which supports the harmonic movement and occasionally answers the melody with short melodic fragments at various points as seen in figure 5.19:
Figure 5.19; m. 23-26 of “Doce de Coco”, illustrates *baixaria* (second marimba) responses:

The guitar voice (first marimba) provides a combination of harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment, as in figure 5.20:

Figure 5.20; m. 19 – 24 of “Doce de Coco”, first marimba:

The guitar (marimba) voice also supplies counter melodic fragments, in response to the principal melody, as found in measures 12, 14 and 17 as seen in figure 5.21:

Figure 5.21; m. 12-18 of “Doce de Coco”, illustrates counter melodic fragments in the first marimba voice:
Figure 5.22 shows all three supporting voices, the two marimbas and the xylophone, as they form a rhythmically unison response to the melody found in measures 59 – 61 which is a convention commonly employed with this composition and found in many recorded versions.

Figure 5.22; m. 59-61 of “Doce de Coco”, illustrates an arranged “response” in the supporting voices:
The xylophone has been given the role of the *cavaquinho* and its normal function in a typical *terno* ensemble. As such, it almost never occurs in a melodic function (the only exception being the above-mentioned convention in m. 59 – 61), but rather, employs a variety of rhythmic accompaniment patterns common to the style of *cavaquinho* in *chôro*. The first, seen in figure 5.23, occurs in the introduction and first eight measures of the melody on the second and fourth sixteenth note of every quarter beat.

Figure 5.23; m. 3-6 of “Doce de Coco” illustrates a *cavaquinho* accompaniment pattern adapted to xylophone:

The second is a triplet figure which occasionally omits the first beat of the grouping as found in measures 11 – 12, 19 – 22 (figure 5.24), 37 – 38 and 53 – 54.
Figure 5.24; m. 19 – 22 of “Doce de Coco”, illustrates a *cavaquinho* triplet pattern adapted to xylophone:

As noted earlier, this figure creates a strong rhythmic tension as the rhythms of the other voices are based on duple divisions of sixteenth or eighth notes.

Another rhythmic pattern found in the *cavaquinho* voice (xylophone) is the Afro-Brazilian figure of sixteenth – eighth – sixteenth (see chapter 3 “Performance Practices” and chapter 4 “Interpretation”) that is usually repeated several times in sequence. Examples of this rhythm occur in measures 23 – 36 and 39 – 46 (figure 5.25).

Figure 5.25; m. 23-26 of “Doce de Coco”, illustrates the Afro-Brazilian rhythm adapted to xylophone:

Figure 5.26 shows a fourth pattern of a sequence of constant sixteenth notes often with an accent on the second sixteenth of each grouping of four, or on the second and fourth sixteenth of each grouping of four as in measures 13 – 18.
Figure 5.26; m. 13-16 of “Doce de Coco”, illustrates a constant sixteenth note pattern adapted to xylophone:

![Sixteenth Note Pattern](image)

Figure 5.27 shows yet another variation occurring as the second, third and fourth sixteenths of each grouping of four with the first left silent.

Figure 5.27; m. 67 – 68 of “Doce de Coco” illustrates a variation of a *cavaquinho* accompaniment pattern adapted to xylophone:

![Cavaquinho Pattern](image)

This work is typical of the kind of arrangement used by a *terno* ensemble and upon repetition of each section, each voice would normally employ some kind of limited improvisation to vary their part rhythmically and or melodically while maintaining the harmonic structure of the composition. Further discussion of this practice can be found in chapter 3 “Performance Practices” and chapter 4 “Interpretation”.

The version of “Doce de Coco” recorded by Altimiro Carrilho and regional Canhoto (track 10 on the accompanying CD) utilizes the same key as the arrangement for percussion ensemble with a slightly altered form of ABABA and an extended coda over which the soloist improvises. As with “Na Glória” in the previous example, the flute soloist alters the rhythm of the melody in subsequent repetitions of each section and even improvises entire passages that are quite distinct from the original melody (for example, m.17-20 of the second A section, from track 10; also m. 9-12 of the second B section from track 10). These improvisations, however, are never longer than a few measures in length, before the soloist returns to some recognizable

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form of the original tune. The soloist also adds frequent appoggiatura, and other ornaments to decorate and differentiate each repetition of the melody.

5.3.3 “Enigma”

This version of “Enigma” by the guitarist Garoto (Anibal Augusto Sardinha) was arranged by Radamés Gnattali and Marcelo Fortuna, and adapted for keyboard percussion trio of xylophone, vibraphone and marimba by Mark Duggan (see appendix B, example B.3, and appendix G, track G.3). It represents a more contemporary and formalized work while still retaining many of the typical characteristics of *choro*. The piece has an ABBA structure in which the A section is eighteen measures in length, divided into two phrases of ten and eight measures respectively, while the B section is sixteen measures in length. The work also contains a three-measure coda.

Along with the irregular phrase lengths, this work is more elaborate harmonically than the previous examples. While the A section can be said to generally revolve around the key area of Bb and the B section around its subdominant Eb in a similar fashion, each section contains a variety of harmonic substitutions, deceptive and elongated harmonic cadences as well as an extended harmonic language which only briefly touches on the actual tonic of Bb in the A section on the downbeats of measures 7 and 19. The composer, Garoto, was a guitarist who worked with Carmen Miranda and spent some time in the United States in the 1940s. “Enigma” exemplifies his work in exploring and exploiting the harmonic similarities between jazz and *choro*. 
This piece is arranged in a contrapuntal style with each voice given equal prominence and opportunity to carry the melody at various stages and at times with multiple melodies occurring simultaneously. In order to distinguish the individual voices I have chosen to orchestrate each voice with a distinct instrumental timbre rather than to create a homogenous texture by using for example, three marimbas or three vibraphones. Also, while the three parts function as independent lines, some retain elements of traditional *choro* techniques as described above. For example, the lowest voice, which I have given to the marimba, displays elements of a guitar role with chordal accompaniment in figure 5.28, measures 8 – 10:

Figure 5.28; m.8-10 of “Enigma” by Garoto and arranged by Marcelo Fortuna, illustrates the typical guitar accompaniment role adapted to marimba:

Figure 5.29 illustrates the marimba voice utilizing the Afro-Brazilian rhythm in measures 29 – 30:

Figure 5.29; m. 29 – 30 of “Enigma”, Afro-Brazilian rhythm on marimba:

At other points, this voice participates as an equal partner in the overall counterpoint contributing melodic fragments in the anacrusis and at measures 18 -19 as in figure 5.30:
Figure 5.30; m.18-19 of “Enigma”, illustrates a countermelody on marimba:

![Countermelody on Marimba](image)

The marimba’s primary role however, in this arrangement, is to function as *baixaria*, providing a contrapuntal bass voice which outlines the harmony.

Similarly, the middle voice given to the xylophone periodically demonstrates characteristics of the *cavaquinho* role by outlining the Afro-Brazilian rhythm and other typical *cavaquinho* accompaniment patterns in a four voiced chord such as found in figure 5.31, measures 19 – 23.

Figure 5.31; m. 19-23 of “Enigma”, illustrates the *cavaquinho* role adapted to xylophone:

![Cavaquinho Role Adapted](image)

The vibraphone in this arrangement is the main melody carrier in this arrangement but occasionally functions as harmonic support when one of the other voices has melodic material as in figure 5.32, measures 58-60,

Figure 5.32; m. 58-60 of “Enigma” illustrates the vibraphone part as harmonic support for the melody played by the xylophone:
The version of “Enigma” recorded by Raphael Rabello and Radamés Gnattali (listed as “Enigmático” on their version, track 11 on the accompanying CD) has the same basic form of ABBA as the percussion arrangement. However, in this piano and violão version, the instruments each take turns playing the melody in section B, with the violão first at m. 20-27 and m. 36-43, and later the piano, m. 28-35 and m. 44-51. In the percussion arrangement, the vibraphone plays the entire melody in section B.

While this latter version is completely composed and without any improvised solo sections, it contains an extensive use of rubato phrasing throughout, with some phrases having a slight accelerando and others a ritardando. These serve to give the entire work a more formal and “classical” sensibility and move it away from the suingue usually heard in performances of popular choro. At the same time, the harmonic idiom is more complex than traditional choro and borrows more from the language of jazz than either “Na Glória” or “Doce de Coco”.

5.4  Choro on a Solo Keyboard Percussion Instrument

5.4.1 “Cheio de Dedos”
The solo guitar form of *choro* is an excellent starting point when adapting *choro* compositions to a solo keyboard percussion instrument. The standard approach to arranging, contrapuntal writing and chord voicing on the guitar is often directly applicable to the marimba and vibraphone. Arrangements for vibraphone often require octave adjustments owing to its higher register and to the lack of a low “E” on most standard vibraphones. Also, five and six note chords on the guitar must be adapted to four voices on solo keyboard percussion instruments, or performed as an arpeggio. Apart from this, many guitar compositions can be performed as written on vibraphone or marimba. “Cheio de Dedos” by Guinga is a good illustration of this in a contemporary composition with *choro* influences arranged for vibraphone (see appendix B, example B.5 and appendix F, track F.12). The only change I made in this arrangement was to raise the low “E” found in measures 29 - 32 by an octave. Otherwise, the piece is completely playable on a standard vibraphone.

An important consideration when adapting guitar pieces for vibraphone regards the use of the pedal. Many compositions for guitar include passages that allow one or more open strings to resonate while others are dampened or move to a second pitch. This effect is sometimes possible on the vibraphone through a combination of pedaling and stick dampening. Its applicability in any given case depends on the particular demands of the passage and is sometimes not possible to replicate on the vibraphone. An example of the use of stick dampening occurs in my arrangement of “Cheio de Dedos” in m. 41. While the pedal is pressed down to allow the lowest pitches in the C major seven chord ring through, the upper melodic note descends chromatically and each previous note is muted with a mallet to allow the moving voice to be articulated clearly (figure 5.33).

Figure 5.33; m. 41 of “Cheio de Dedos” illustrates a passage which requires “stick dampening”: 
“Cheio de Dedos” begins with a nine-measure introduction, which is included as part of the structure giving the piece a form of: introduction-AABB repeated, followed by a brief coda. It contains unusual phrase lengths with the A and B sections lasting 14 and 21 measures respectively. Both the A and B sections have a single measure of 3/4 within a longer phrase of 2/4, which is another unusual characteristic for a choro piece. Harmonically it is more chromatic than a typical choro composition with the A section centered on a C minor tonality and the B section centered on the relatively unrelated tonality of E minor.

“Cheio de Dedos” employs the Afro-Brazilian rhythm only occasionally and relies on a steady stream of sixteenth notes in the melody to maintain its rhythmic motion.

Figure 5.34 illustrates a section of the melody as primarily a combination of scalar and arpeggiated material with few wide intervals.

Figure 5.34; m. 32-36 of “Cheio de Dedos” illustrates a melody made of scalar and arpeggiated lines:

The piece also employs the use of full chord sequences, requiring both hands to play in rhythmic unison as seen in the introduction, m. 1-3 and 5-8, figures 5.35 and 5.36:
Figure 5.35; m. 1-3 of “Cheio de Dedos” shows a chordal passage requiring the use of four mallets at the same time:

![Figure 5.35](image1)

Figure 5.36; m. 5-10 of “Cheio de Dedos” shows a second chordal passage requiring the use of four mallets at the same time:

![Figure 5.36](image2)

This also occurs at certain arrival points in the melodic and/or rhythmic phrases as at m. 21, 22, 40 and 42, figures 5.37 and 5.38

Figure 5.37; m. 21-22 of “Cheio de Dedos” illustrates another use of all four mallets simultaneously:

![Figure 5.37](image3)

Figure 5.38; m. 40-42 of “Cheio de Dedos” illustrates yet another occurrence of all four mallets simultaneously:

![Figure 5.38](image4)

These elements combine to create a seamless integration of the left and right hands when adapted for a keyboard percussion instrument, in contrast to the following example of “Brejeiro”, arranged for solo marimba.
5.4.2 “Brejeiro”

“Brejeiro” is a *choro* by Ernesto Nazaré originally composed for solo piano in the late 19th century (see appendix B, example B.6 and appendix F, track F.13). This version, arranged for solo marimba by Ney Rosauro, is in a more classical style than “Cheio de Dedos”. The arrangement is more pianistic than the previous example, in that the melody is always played by the right hand while the bass and supporting functions are always found in the left hand as seen in figure 5.39. The piece is essentially two-voice counterpoint throughout, never employing the use of all available mallets as a four-note chord.

Figure 5.39; m. 9 - 12 of “Brejeiro” by Ernesto Nazaré and arranged by Ney Rosauro illustrates a pianistic approach with the melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left:

![Musical notation](image)

A six-measure introduction, which builds the underlying rhythm of the piece, precedes an AABBA version of the composition which presents the A section in C major and the B section in the dominant key of G major – typical harmonic structure for a traditional *choro*. The melodic phrases are all 4 or 8 measures in length and mostly diatonic and scalar in character. The typical Afro-Brazilian rhythm occurs periodically in the melodic rhythm as in m.19-20 in figure 5.40, but in the left hand accompanying part it occurs only once in the entire work, in m. 18 from the same example.
Figure 5.40; m. 18-20 of “Brejeiro” illustrates the Afro-Brazilian rhythm in both the left and right hand parts:

On the repetition of the A section Rosauro orchestrates the melody an octave higher from when it was first heard and indicates it to be played as dead strokes for variation:

Figure 5.41; m. 15-16 of “Brejeiro” illustrates the use of dead strokes in the melody (indicated with a “+” above the note):

The preceding material illustrates several of the more commonly found styles of *choro* arrangements for keyboard percussion instruments and, with the exception of the xylophone/cavaquinho role in “Doce de Coco”, demonstrates their typical orchestrations. The most commonly found approaches by far, are those that mimic the military band style arrangements (sometimes with a chordal, guitar-like accompaniment in one voice) or that are created for a solo instrument, usually vibraphone or marimba. Outside of substituting the melody voice with a keyboard percussion instrument, as is seen in “Apanhei-te Cavaquinho” (example A.6 and heard on track 6), arrangements employing these instruments in any of the other various roles found in the *terno* are relatively uncommon.
Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

The use of keyboard percussion instruments in *choro* is a practice that is slowly but steadily growing. As described in chapter 2, “Histories”, it is a regular part of the percussion programs of the universities of most urban centres in Brazil and can also be found in many percussion programs of academic institutions and conservatories in Canada, the United States and Europe as more arrangements of this style of the genre are published and made available to the general public. A number of non-Brazilian percussionists have created their own arrangements of *choro* works for keyboard percussion such as “Choro #1”, “Choro #3” and “Choro #9” by Augusto Marcellino and arranged by Gordon Stout from the United States, and “Os Oito Batutas” and “Um a Zero” both by Pixinguinha and arranged by Asaf Roth from Israel. While most of the university percussion instructors with whom I spoke acknowledged the differences between the way *choro* is played in the academic setting and the way it is performed “in the street”, all defended its inclusion in their programs as a necessary educational tool for both cultural and technical reasons. Meanwhile, many vibraphone and marimba players in the field of popular instrumental music in Brazil continue to include *choro* compositions in their repertoire.

Despite the growing amount of printed material available on the subject of *choro*, some areas of the genre require greater study. I believe there is more research needed in the comparative analysis of *choro* with jazz. Since the time of their respective beginnings in the styles of *choro* and ragtime, Brazilian instrumental music and American jazz have evolved to encompass very different approaches, sounds and philosophies not only in the purely musical realm but from a social and political perspective as well. Why has jazz been accepted as a worldwide phenomenon, practiced in a traditional or hybrid form by a variety of musical
cultures, while *choro* has not? A bit of comparative musicology in these areas would no doubt yield some useful information.

A second area needing more research is found in the stylistic differences that separate *choro* from jazz. The insistence of most *choro* traditionalists that *choro* is definitely not jazz suggests that there are qualities in the music itself, or in how it is interpreted that link the two and which require greater understanding. A parallel study might also consider the sociological and political motivations for such statements as the one above and delve more deeply into the implications for notions of musical identity in general in Brazil.

Also necessary is a more exhaustive study of the history and general use of keyboard percussion instruments in Brazil. The information presented in this paper is introductory at best and leaves many questions surrounding the past and current uses of these types of instruments outside of the major urban centres of Brazil as well as their possible use in regional or folkloric styles, both historically and currently.

Yet another area that could be investigated further lies in the interpretation of the *cavaquinho* part on keyboard percussion instruments. While I have outlined one possibility in chapter 5 “Transcription and Analysis”, as illustrated in the ensemble arrangement of the piece “Doce de Coco”, there are undoubtedly other approaches and techniques that could be employed to accurately reproduce this instruments’ role in a *choro* group on a keyboard percussion instrument.

Possibility for further research also lies in more detailed study of the subtleties and variations of the rhythmic elements that define the specific *suingue* of *choro*. For example, investigation into distinctions between regional variations or individual performers’
interpretations might yield insight into the specificities of a particular manifestation of *choro* on one hand, and the rich diversity of *choro* practice on the other. While developing the methodology to do this would certainly be a huge undertaking, the possible benefits to researchers, educators and performers, not only in the field of Brazilian popular music but in all forms of “groove” or “feel” based music in which a specific rhythmic interpretation is considered essential, would be incalculable.⁵

While the polemic as to whether traditional or contemporary forms of art are more representative of the society is always a part of any discussion of Brazilian culture, the artists’ proclivity to mix and match all styles and forms seems to guarantee the continued existence of “tradition” within the innovation and innovation within tradition. Hermano Vianna’s idea, first mentioned in chapter 1 of this study, regarding the Brazilian tendency to blend multiple styles and traditions with newer innovations, thereby insuring that the culture is never in stasis, raises an important point relative to the newly introduced keyboard percussion instruments in the world of *choro*. In *Música do Brasil* Vianna emphasizes the importance of *brincadeira* (playfulness) in Brazilian culture practice:

The error of many well-intentioned preservationists is to think that to save a *folguedo* [a generic name for the numerous spirit festivals traditionally celebrated in Brazil] from the threat of disappearing it is necessary to isolate it from the rest of the world, keeping by force its ‘veracity’ or ‘authenticity’. The opposite approach might be more advantageous: it is necessary to guarantee circulation, to facilitate contacts between the *brincadeiras* (games or playfulness) and the rest of the world. In other words, the “preservationist” has to act as a *palhaço* (clown or jester).

*[O erro de muito preservacionista bem intencionado é achar que para salvar um folguedo da ameaça de desaparecimento é necessário isolá-lo do resto do mundo, mantendo à força sua “verdade” ou “autenticidade”. A atitude contrária seria mais*
proveitosa: é preciso garantir a circulação, facilitar os contatos entre as brincadeiras e o resto do mundo. Em outras palavras: o “preservacionista” tem que atuar como um palhaço\(^6\) (Vianna 2008).

Sean Stroud sees Vianna’s theory of *brincadeira* in Brazilian national culture, as one that urges those concerned about the preservation of regional forms of culture, including popular music, to act as a direct link between that culture and mainstream society rather than attempt to construct a protective shield around it. Vianna concludes that regional forms of popular music are far more resilient than may have been previously thought and that they are robust enough to withstand the ‘threats’ of technological progress and globalization (Stroud 2008:177).

In a post concert discussion with a variety of *choro* artists at SESC Consolação in São Paulo, accordionist Toninho Ferragutti opined that the use of new instruments and instrumental ensembles in the world of *choro* is always lucrative, musically speaking. While cautioning that musicians whose training is unrelated to the genre must be careful not to “play” (*brincar*) with *choro*, as it is a serious thing, he feels that as long as the practitioners have a solid basis of understanding of the tradition and it’s component parts of melody, harmony and style of accompaniment, that nothing essential would be lost.\(^7\) He suggested that the weight of the tradition sometimes makes it appear as if *choro* is somewhat impenetrable and can be played on only the characteristic instruments of the genre, but in reality it is open for any musician to participate.\(^8\)

Ferragutti’s use of the verb *brincar* (to play or to joke) here is used in a slightly different sense than Vianna’s in the above quotation. Ferragutti is cautioning those unfamiliar with *choro*
conventions not to “mess with” the music until they have developed a deeper understanding of it, presumably because there is a “right” way and a “wrong” way to do it, according to him. Vianna, on the other hand, is encouraging a certain playfulness with Brazilian musical traditions not only to ensure their survival but perhaps to emphasize that what must be preserved is the spirit and process of playful enjoyment rather than the products or traits of a given “tradition”.

Every one of the percussionists that I interviewed for this study who performed choro on these ‘non-authentic’ instruments shared the belief that they were extending the tradition of choro rather than contributing to its demise. And all noted that the elements of brincadeira and malandragem are essential to its Brazilian character. Vibraphonist André Juarez is one of the leading exponents of choro played on keyboard percussion instruments in Brazil and he leaves no doubt as to his position on the issue of instrumental innovations within the genre:

I really don’t care if somebody says that I’m not playing the tradition because I don’t play with only bandolim and cavaquinho and flute. Fuck him. I play vibraphone, I’m 46 years old and I’ve been doing this for thirty years. I’m Brazilian, I like choro and I’m going to play it. If you don’t like it you can move and change the channel. This is what I do.9

Jaurez’s statement is nothing new in the ongoing discussion within Brazilian musical circles over what is recognized as “Brazilian” music. According to researcher Joana Sariva, Tom Jobim was quoted in Paratodos magazine in 1956 on the subject,

I can’t agree with the identification by some people of Brazilian music being from a specific period and the consequent negation of another kind of Brazilian music from another specific period… [Brazilian music] is an amalgam of all the influences we’ve received and assimilated and made ours by its contact with the furious reality that is Brazil.
[O que não posso concordar é com a identificação de alguns com a música brasileira de um determinado período e a negação consequente de outra música brasileira de outro período determinado… [música brasileria] é uma amalgama de todas as influências recibidas e assimiladas, tornadas nossas pelo contato com a furiosa realidade brasileira]¹⁰ (Jobim in Sariva 2008:93)

In the university environment, it may be that the practice of performing choro on these instruments, introduced through the European classical tradition, is just the latest step for the genre in becoming integrated into the world of erudite music. Brazilian popular music forms from the early and mid-nineteenth century such as the lundu and maxixe originated among the slave and working classes and gradually worked their way into the theatres, concert halls and salons until they were accepted by the upper classes, often in a simplified or altered form. It seems that a similar course is underway with choro as it becomes more and more codified, institutionalized and “fixed” as a historical musical style while at the same time becoming more familiar to audiences and musicians from all genres. Regarding the more recent development of keyboard percussion in the world of choro, perhaps it is Vianna’s palhaço who is playing the xylophone and in doing so, helping to keep the tradition very much alive.

１ Mauro Senise and Jota Moraes, 2005 Tempo Caboclo, Biscoito Fino Records BF596.

² For more information on the use of xylophone in ragtime see “The Xylophone in Acoustic Recordings” by William Cahn, 1979, William L. Cahn Publishing.

³ From a personal interview in 2009.
“Stick dampening” is a vibraphone technique wherein the pedal of the instrument is left open allowing some pitches to resonate while others are muted with a mallet. A more detailed and practical explanation of this and other vibraphone dampening techniques can be found in “Vibraphone Technique: Dampening and Pedaling” by David Friedman, Berklee Press Publications, 1973.

Gerischer 2006 has begun such work on Bahian samba but there is tremendous possibility for building on her foundational work.


Curiously, Ferragutti cautions by using the very same word, *brincar*, that Vianna identifies as an essential element in maintaining Brazilian culture.

From a public interview, SESC Consolação, São Paulo, September 13, 2010.

From a personal interview with the author.

*Paratodos* magazine, no. 9, September 1956, p. 7.
Bibliography


Bibliography of Musical Examples


Referenced Discography


Appendix A - Transcriptions of Selected Choro Recordings with Keyboard Percussion
A.1 “Cessa Tudo”

Composed by Jacob do Bandolim and arranged by Radamés Gnattali. Transcribed from the recording *Epoca de Ouro – Jacob e Seu Bandolim*, 1959. (The percussion line in this transcription is a guide only and not a literal rendition of what is played on the recording.)

Cessa Tudo

Jacob do Bandolim
A.2 “Tico Tico no Fubá”

Composed by Zequinha de Abreu. Transcribed from the recording Percussão em Festa, 1960 recorded by the group Os Saxsambistas. (The percussion line in this transcription is a guide only and not a literal rendition of what is played on the recording.)
Fl. | 58
Alto Sax. | Em7  E60  Dm7  G7  C
Ten. Sax. |  
Tbn. |  
Xyl. |  
Vib. |  
E. Gtr. |  
A. Bass |  
Pan. |  

 chords: Em7  E60  Dm7  G7  C
Fl.  
Alto Sax.  
Ten. Sax.  
Tbn.  
Xyl.  
Vib.  
E. Gtr.  
A. Bass  
Pan.
A.3 “Nervosinho”

Composed by Nestor Campos. Melody and bass transcribed from the recording Dick Farney e seu Quinteto, 1954.

Nervosinho

Nestor Campos

Xylophone/ guitar

Acoustic Bass

Xylophone/ guitar

Acoustic Bass

To Coda

To Coda

A. Bass

A. Bass

A. Bass

A. Bass

A. Bass

A. Bass
A.4 “Requebrando”

Composed by Mario Teresópolis/Guido Medina. Melody and bass transcribed from the recording *Pernambuco e Seu Conjunto*, 1957.

Requebrando
A.5 “Mimosa”

Composed by Hendrik Meurkens. Melody and harmony transcribed from the recording *New York Samba Jazz* recorded by Hendrik Meurkens, 2007.

Mimosa

Hendrik Meurkins

Vibraphone

\[ j = 108 \]

Piano

\[ D^\text{maj7} \quad Em^7 \quad F^\text{dim7} \quad Gm^7 \quad F^\text{maj7} \]

Vib.

\[ F^\text{maj7} \quad A^\flat^9 \quad Gm^7 \quad D^7/F^\# \quad Gm^7 \quad C^{13}(b9) \]

Pno.

\[ F^\text{maj7} \quad B^\text{b7} \quad B^\text{b7} \quad B^\text{b7} \quad F/C \]
Vib. | Pno.
---|---

60

Em7 | A7 | Dm7 | G7(sus4) | G7 | Cmaj7

65

Fmaj7 | B9 | E7 | Am9 | Gm7 | C7
A.6 “Apanhei-Te Cavaquinho”

Composed by Ernesto Nazaré. Melody and harmony transcribed from the recording *Canja* recorded by André Juarez, 2006.

Apanhei-te cavaquinho

Ernesto Nazaré

\[\begin{align*}
&\text{§} \\
&D^7 \quad \text{G} \quad B^7 \quad \text{Em} \\
&6 \quad \text{C} \quad C^\# \quad \text{G/D} \quad \text{Am} \quad D^7 \quad B^9 \quad \text{G/B} \quad D^7 \\
&11 \quad \text{G} \quad B^7 \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{C} \quad C^\# \quad \text{G/D} \quad E^7 \\
&16 \quad \text{Am} \quad D^7 \quad \text{G} \quad \text{D^7} \quad [2.] \quad \text{G} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{F^\#} \\
&21 \quad \text{B^7} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{B^7} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{C^\#m7(b5)} \quad \text{Bm} \quad \text{F^\#} \\
&26 \quad \text{B^7} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{B^7} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{F^\#} \quad \text{B^7} \quad \text{E^7} \\
&31 \quad \text{Am} \quad \text{F^\#m7(b5)} \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{Em/D} \quad \text{Am^6/C} \quad \text{B^7} \quad [1.] \quad \text{Em} \quad [2.] \quad \text{Em} \quad \text{D^7} \quad \text{D.S al Coda} \\
&36 \quad \text{G} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{D^7} \quad \text{G^7} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{E^7} \\
&42 \quad \text{Am} \quad \text{D^7} \quad \text{G^7} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{D^7} \quad \text{G^7}
\end{align*}\]
Appendix B - Choro Arrangements for Keyboard Percussion
Ensemble and Solo Instrument

B.1 “Na Glória”

Composed by Ary dos Santos and Raul de Barros, arr. Fernando Rocha for two marimbas, xylophone, vibraphone, glockenspiel.
B.2 “Doce de Coco”

Composed by Jacob do Bandolim, arr. Altamiro Carrilho/Canhoto, adapted M. Duggan for two marimbas, xylophone, vibraphone.

Doce de Coco
B.3 “Enigma”

Composed by Garoto, arr. Rádames Gnattali/Marcelo Fortuna, adapted, Mark Duggan for marimba, vibraphone and xylophone.

Enigma - mallet trio

Garoto
arr. R. Gnattali/
Marcelo Fortuna
B.4 “Pinguim”

Composed by Ernesto Nazaré, arr. Mauricio Carrilho, adapted Mark Duggan for four marimbas and vibraphone.

Pinguim

Ernesto Nazaré
arr. Mauricio Carrilho/
adapted M. Duggan

\( j = 88 \)}
B.5 “Cheio de Dedos”

Composed by Guinga, adapted Mark Duggan for vibraphone solo.

Cheio de Dedos

Guinga
B.6 “Brejeiro”

Composed by Ernesto Nazaré, arr. Ney Rosauro for marimba solo.
Appendix C - Selected Choro Recordings with Keyboard Percussion

“Cessa Tudo”, “La Vem a Bahiana”, Da Cor do Pecado”, Serra da Boa Esperança” from *Epoca de Ouro*, RCA-Jacob e Seu Bandolim em HI-FI Victor, 1959; Xuca-Xuca - vibraphone


“Tico Tico no Fubá” from *Percussão em Festa*, Plaza, no date-believed early 1960s, recorded by Os Sax Sambistas Brasileiros; José Claudio das Neves – vibraphone, xylophone

“Requebrando”, “Ginga de Urubu” from *Em Ritmo de Dança*, Polydor, LPNG 4.005, recorded by Pernambuco e Seu Conjunto; Sylvio - vibraphone

“Nacional” from, *Garoto*, MIS, released 1979, rec. c. 1944; Luciano Perrone - vibraphone

“Chorinho Pra Ele” from *30 anos de História*, independent release, 2006, recorded by Grupo Percussionista de Câmara de Tatuí

“Mimosa” from *New York Samba Jazz Quintet*, Zoho Music, ZM 200701, 2007, recorded by Hendrik Meurkens; Hendrik Meurkens - vibraphone

*Sax Sambando*, Plaza, 1960, Os Sax Sambistas Brasileiros; José Claudio das Neves – vibraphone, xylophone

“1 x 0” from *Mistura*, Vujamusic, VMCD002, 2002, recorded by Vuja dé; Mark Duggan - marimba

“Apanhei-te cavaquinho” from *Canja*, Por do Som, ATR 37015, 2006, recorded by André Juarez; André Juarez - marimba

*Gato Preto*, Por do Som, 2010, recorded by André Juarez

“A Meia Luz” from *Viva a Música*, 1960, recorded by Breno Sauer; Breno Sauer - vibraphone
Appendix D - Interview Subject Biographies

Denilson Bianchine Alves is a Brazilian percussionist and professor of percussion at the Universidade Católica de Brasília (Catholic University of Brasilia). He also directs the percussion group “Percussividade”.

Luis Marcos Caldana is a graduate of the Conservatório de Tatuí. As a percussionist he has performed throughout Brazil and internationally in Mexico, Hungary and the United States. Caldana also organized and hosted the first three Encontro Internacional de Percussion events (International Percussion Conventions) ever held in Brazil. He is currently timpanist with the Orquestra Sinfônica and director of the percussion program at the Conservatório de Tatuí and also teaches at the Escola Livre de Música in Itapetininga.

Beto Caldas is Brazilian marimba and vibraphone artist based in São Paulo. He teaches vibraphone at the Escola de Música Tom Jobim (Tom Jobim School of Music) and has also taught drumset at the DRUM expert school, Song Expression at Faculdades Metropolitanas Unidas, and percussion at College Santa Marcelina. As a performer Caldas plays vibraphone in and directs the instrumental groups “+Brasil” and “Diadema Jazz Band”. Has has also performed with the salsa band “Son Caribbean”, and “Sax Sobre as Arvores”. Caldas studied percussion with Claudio Leal, Roberto Siol and Claudio Stephan.

Arthur Dutra is a vibraphone player who works in both Rio de Janeiro and New York City. He is a graduate of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica in Rio de Janeiro and the City University of New York, where he studied with Mike Mainieri. Dutra has released a solo album, titled Projeto Timbatu, and has worked with MPB artists such as Lenine, Moska, Vanessa da Mata, and collaborated with artists such as Guinga, Zé Nogueira, Mário Adnet, Roberto Menescal, Marcos Suzano, Jorge Helder, Jurim Moreira and Lula Galvão.

André Juarez is a vibraphonist, arranger and conductor based in São Paulo. He is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music (Boston), UNESP (São Paulo State University), and UNICAMP (Campinas State University). Juarez is active in both popular and classical music fields and has performed throughout Brazil and Europe as well as in Japan and the United States. He has
commissioned and premiered many works including *Concerto for Marimba, Vibraphone and Strings* by Almeida Prado, *Concerto for Marimba* by Ernst Mahle and *Concerto for Vibraphone and Orchestra* by Edmundo Villani-Côrtes. Juarez also leads two popular music groups, the “Andre Juarez Quartet” and “Gato Preto”, an ensemble dedicated to choro.

**Ugo Marotta** is a Brazilian conductor, composer, pianist and vibraphonist based in Rio de Janeiro. He performed and recorded with many luminaries of the bossa nova scene in the 1960s including Eumir Deodato, Roberto Menescal, Maysa, Sylvia Telles, Carlos Lyra and Marcos Valle. Marotta currently works as arranger and producer for film, television and commercial recordings in Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro.

**Hélvio Mendes** is a freelance percussionist based in São Paulo, Brazil. He has performed with Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro da Paz (Belém), Orquestra Sinfônica de Ribeirão Preto and Orquestra Bachiana Jovem among others. He has also been a member of PIAP, the percussion group from the Art Institute of the University of São Paulo and in 2010 participated in a month-long tour of the United States and Canada.

**Hendrik Meurkens** is a harmonica and vibraphone player. Originally from Germany, Meurkens worked in Rio de Janeiro in the early 1980s before re-locating to New York City. His repertoire includes a mixture of jazz, samba, bossa nova and choro pieces. Meurkens has released 15 albums as leader and appeared on dozens more. He has also performed with artists such as Charlie Byrd, Jimmy Cobb, Ivan Lins, Monty Alexander, Claudio Roditi, Astrid Gilberto, Ray Brown, Paquito D’Rivera and James Moody.

**Jota Moraes** is an active composer, arranger, pianist and vibraphonist based in Rio de Janeiro. He was born in 1948 in Caçapava, São Paulo and began his career when he was 12 years old playing vibraphone in “The Brothers’ Quartet”. He works in a variety of popular music styles such as samba, jazz, rock, pop and MPB and has performed and recorded with many established Brazilian artists including Caetano Veloso, Elis Regina, Maria Bethânia, Chico Buarque, Gonzaguinha, Paralamas do Sucesso, Legião Urbana and Raul Seixas. Since 1982 Moraes has been a part of a very successful instrumental music group in Brazil, “Cama de Gato”.

**Cláudia Oliveira** is an international percussion performer and educator based in Belém, Brazil. She is a graduate of the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) in São Paulo and the
Universidade do Estado do Pará (UEPa) in Belém. From 1997 – 2002 Oliveira was a member of the Mexican percussion group “Tambuco” with whom she recorded four CDs and participated in numerous concerts and international festivals including performances in Italy, Germany, France, United States, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela and Colombia. Oliveira is the founder and artistic director of the “Festa do Ritmo”, an annual percussion festival which includes concerts, masterclasses and workshops in Belém and is also the artistic director of the Amazonian percussion group “TACAP”.

Daniela Rennó is a popular music vibraphonist based in Belo Horizonte and co-leads a group with drummer Márcio Bahia. Their repertoire is a mixture of contemporary jazz and funk with Brazilian influences, including *choro, samba* and *baião*. Rennó also performs with “Duo Noise”, as a freelance artist, composes music for film and television, and operates Studio Acústico, a recording studio in Belo Horizonte. She has recorded with Alda Rezende, Uakti, Toninho Horta and Ló Borges.

Fernando Rocha is professor of percussion at Minas Gerais Federal University (UFMG), in Brazil. He holds a Doctor of Music from McGill University, a Master’s Degree from UFMG, and a Bachelor’s Degree from São Paulo State University. His doctorate studies were focused on the performance of pieces for percussion and electronics. Rocha has premiered percussion works by composers such as Lewis Nielson, Jacob Sudol (USA), Almeida Prado, Sérgio Freire, Maurício Dottori (Brazil), Nicolas Gilbert, Brian Cherney, D. Andrew Stewart, Geof Holbrook (Canadá). As a solo and chamber music performer, he has appeared in music festivals in Brazil, Argentina, USA, Portugal, France and Canada including the Focus Day at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC/2005), the 9th International Conference on Digital Audio Effects (DAFX-2006), the Roots and Rhizomes, Percussion Conference at University of California, San Diego (2007), “Percussive exchanges” in Montreal and the Sound Symposium, in Newfoundland.

Ney Rosauro is a Brazilian percussionist, composer and pedagogue based in Miami, USA. He has written more than 50 compositions and method books for percussion and his Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra is the most popular percussion concerto of all time having been performed over 1,200 times worldwide. He has released 9 CDs and has performed in Brazil, Cuba, México, Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Puerto
Rico, Switzerland, Austria, Luxemburg, Poland, Belgium, Croatia, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden, England, Scotland, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, China, Japan and USA. From 1987 until 2000 Rosauro directed the Percussion Department at the Federal University of Santa Maria, RS in Brazil. From 2000 until 2009 he was director of Percussion Studies at the University of Miami, FL in USA. Currently he is a freelance artist and composer.

**Jorge Sacramento** is professor of percussion at the Federal University in Salvador, Bahia (UFBA). He performs in the group “Janela Brasileira” and has organized a variety of performance projects dedicated to percussion ensemble interpretations of choro including a tribute to the music of Pixinguinha in 2003, and a tribute to the music of Valdir Azevedo in 2004 and 2009. The percussion group at UFBA also performs arrangements of other Brazilian popular music and contemporary percussion repertoire by international composers.

**Rogério Souza** is a Brazilian guitarist based in Niteroi, Brazil. One of the leading interpreters of choro and samba, Souza has performed with Paulinho da Viola, “Época de Ouro”, “Nó em Pingo d’Agua” and Ivan Lins among others. He has released a variety recordings with Ronaldo do Bandolim including *Retrato Brasileiro, Epoca do Choro* and *Orquidea* as well as a solo project titled *Violão Brasileiro*. Along with Mario Sève and Dininho, Souza was a principal organizer behind the publication of the *Choro Songbook* published by Editora Lumiar in 2007.

**Marilene Trotta** studied piano and percussion at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) and has performed with the University Symphony Orchestra and percussion group. Trotta currently works at the Centro de Formação Artística da Fundação Clovis Salgado (CEFAR) in Belo Horizonte where she teaches percussion at the school of Music, Rhythm and Dance. She also leads “Grupo de Choro do Cefar”, a percussion ensemble that performs mainly choro and samba repertoire.

**Ricardo Valverde** is a percussionist and vibraphonist originally from the Bahia region of Brazil who currently works in São Paulo. He has recorded with a variety of MPB, choro and samba performers including “Grupo Cochichando”, “Regional Naquele Tempo” and pianist Silvis Goes. In the world of choro, Valverde is a disciple of Luiz 7 Cordas one of the most important choro musicians of his generation who has worked with many well-known Brazilian music artists.

**Wellington Cláudio Vidal** studied percussion and drumset with Ney Rosauro and Zequinha Galvão at the Escola de Música de Brasília (School of Music, Brasília) and is a graduate of the University of Brasília. Vidal performs with the Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Nacional (National Theatre Symphony Orchestra) in Brasília and is professor and coordinator of the percussion program at the Escola de Música of Brasília.
Appendix E - Further Resources

The following is a list of websites containing information regarding the history of choro, performance locations in Brazil, study materials and keyboard percussion performers.

Choro Music

www.choromusic.com

A combination of historical information about choro and its principal composers as well as resources regarding the purchase of printed choro scores and recordings.

Agenda do Samba e Choro

http://www.samba-choro.com.br/

This site contains a detailed list of choro clubs and performances by choro musicians in most urban centres in Brazil.

Acari records

www.acari.com.br

This is a record label devoted to choro artists and releases.

Choro Music Blog

www.choro-music.blogspot.com

A variety of information posted by choro aficionados including video clips, transcriptions, historical information and online discussions.

All Brazilian Music

www.allbrazilianmusic.com
Contains a history of choro under ‘Genres’ as well as detailed biographical information on many choro musicians from all eras.

Andre Juarez
www.andrejuarez.com
The official site of vibraphonist André Juarez.

Arthur Dutra
www.myspace.com/arthurdutra
The Myspace site of vibraphonist Arthur Dutra.

Beto Caldas
www.myspace.com/458550676
The Myspace site of percussionist Beto Caldas.

Daniela Rennó
www.myspace.com/danielarenn
The Myspace site of vibraphonist Daniela Rennó.

Fernando Rocha
www.fernandorocha.net
The official site of percussionist Fernando Rocha.

Jota Moraes
www.myspace.com/jotamoraes
The Myspace site of vibraphonist Jota Moraes.
Hendrik Meurkens

www.hendrikmeurkens.com

The official site of vibraphonist Hendrik Meurkens.

Ney Rosauro

www.neyrosauro.com

The official site of percussionist Ney Rosauro.

Ricardo Valverde

www.myspace.com/ricardovalverde

This is the Myspace site of vibraphonist Ricardo Valverde.
Appendix F – Audio Examples

F.1 - Cessa Tudo (Jacob do Bandolim)

F.2 – Nervosinho (Dick Farney Quintet)

F.3 – Tico Tico No Fubá (Os Saxsambistas)

F.4 – Requebrando (Pernambuco e Seu Conjunto)

F.5 – Mimosa (Hendrik Meurkens)

F.6 – Apanhei-te Cavaquinho (André Juarez)

F.7 – Chorinho Pra Ele (Grupo de Percussão de Tatui)

F.8 – Pinguim (University of Toronto percussion group)

F.9 – Na Glória (Raul de Barros)
F.10 – Doce de Coco (Altimiro Carrilho)

F.11 – Enigmático (Rádames Gnattali and Raphael Rabello)

F.12 – Cheio de Dedos (Mark Duggan)

F.13 – Brejeiro (Mark Duggan)
Appendix G – Video Examples

G.1 – Na Glória

Choro Arrangements for Keyboard Percussion Ensemble
Doce de Coco

(Jacob do Bandolim; arr. Altimiro Carrilho and adapted M. Duggan)
Enigma

(Aníbal Augusto Sardinha; arr. Radames Gnattali/ Marcelo Fortuna and adapted M. Duggan)