

# Lied und populäre Kultur/ Song and Popular Culture

Jahrbuch des Deutschen  
Volksliedarchivs Freiburg

herausgegeben von  
Nils Grosch und Fernand Hörner

56. Jahrgang – 2011

Original und Kopie  
Original and Copy



Waxmann  
Münster / New York  
München / Berlin

the case of Phil Spector) in the larger social worlds of musical genres and eras in which they operated. He masterfully draws from their experience the constant question of Jewishness and its relation to a black-white binary within different societies. He deserves credit for distinguishing the circumstances of Anglophone countries in the West and invites testing of the »whitening« thesis in other European countries, particularly those with consciousness of black music and social categorization of racialized blackness. Stratton reminds scholars relegating blackface and racialization to a distant, unenlightened past of the scholarly challenge of viewing subtle, but profound, meanings of blackness and Jewishness (and their implications of marginalization) into the contemporary, global age.

Simon J. Bronner, Pennsylvania State University

Stroud, Sean: *The Defence of Tradition in Brazilian Popular Music. Politics, Culture and the Creation of Música Popular Brasileira*. Aldershot: Ashgate 2008. IX, 215 S., ISBN 978-0-75466-343-0.

This book is the result of Sean Stroud's doctoral research, with which he earned a PhD from King's College London in 2005, under the supervision of Professor David Treece. Since then, Stroud has continued his studies in the same field: Brazilian popular music.

How does Sean Stroud approach this subject, both specific and general at the same time? This might well be the wrong question, as the book presents a multiple approach, combining several scientific disciplines such as musicology, mass culture, cultural studies, music history, history of politics, history of ideas, and even sociology and anthropology. However, calling his method a »polyhedral approach« is not a new idea: Sean Stroud's book has been reviewed twice, and both Lisa Shaw, in the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, No. 41, 2009, pp. 183–184, and Marcos Napolitano, in *ArtCultura, Uberlândia*, v. 10, No. 17, July–December. 2008, pp. 245–249, pointed out this same feature in two well-informed and extremely lucid opinions on Stroud's work and his field of research.

The book in question is divided into seven chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion. Stroud begins his Introduction by presenting the aims and methodology of his work. He offers some preliminary thoughts on Brazilian Popular Music (henceforth, MPB), taking the pioneering works of the Brazilian Modernism in the first decades of the 20th century as a starting point, marked by the prominent figure of Mário de Andrade. Stroud also alludes to the problematic issues of MPB, and to some concepts which will be used and sanctioned throughout his book, such as »tradition«, »quality« and »authenticity«.

Chapter I is devoted to musical nationalism, as opposed to foreign »cultural invasion«. After a (too) short historical outline of such a fertile subject, Stroud precipitates the reader into the history of Brazilian musical nationalism since the 19th century and analyses the changes that have affected this notion up to the recent past. He goes on to consider the characters and institutions that have directly contributed to the creation and development of Brazilian musical nationalism.

Chapter II is entirely devoted to the »invention« of MPB, a symbol of Brazilian musical pride since the 1960s. It also points out the most important matters related to this phenomenon, that is: the significant status achieved by MPB and the contribution of the music industry and of the Brazilian press to its success.

In Chapter III, Stroud thoroughly analyses the role of television, one of the most important instruments of mass culture, and emphasises the significance of singing contests and TV soap operas (the Brazilian *novelas*) as the main vehicles of MPB and Brazilian popular music in general.

The following chapter, on the other hand, describes the policies implemented by the music industry in Brazil and the pressure of musical globalisation, regarding a capitulation to external influences which are not present in the origins of Brazilian music. Stroud concludes that, despite the most important music companies in Brazil being under the control of foreign investors, no loss of cultural models has been suffered or, at least, musical models have remained intact. On the contrary, an interesting synthesis has emerged.

Chapter V is devoted to the efforts deployed by the Brazilian State in the field of Brazilian popular music since the 1960s, especially to the measures taken during the military dictatorship (the *Política Nacional de Cultura*, *FUNARTE*, or the *Projeto Pixinguinha*), which represent the regime's position with regard to culture and to the need to develop tastes and aesthetic values. Paradoxically, this resulted in the promotion of national popular music.

However, there are other political factors, besides the governmental intervention, that affect the promotion of Brazilian popular music: in chapter VI Stroud examines some private companies (related to the left-wing opposition during the dictatorship years) in order to compile and study Brazilian folklore.

This different way of understanding the meaning of »popular« – based upon the value of the knowledge and cultural legacy of rural communities – engaged several research groups in the quest for popular music, with the purpose of drawing a musical map of the vast Brazilian lands. Sean Stroud summarises the history of these musical expeditions, from Mário de Andrade's *Missão de Pesquisas Folclóricas* (1938) onwards, and discusses some concepts attached to this idea of popular music.

The last chapter, No. VII, follows the lead of its predecessor and completes the chronological history of these musical expeditions up to the present, adding a few personal thoughts about the latest projects of this kind developed in Brazil: *Música do Brasil* (2000), by Hermano Vianna, who advocates an anthropological approach and is concerned with cultural mediation as animation, and *Rumos Itaú Cultural Música* (2000–2001), which gives a regionalist point of view, pursuing the preservation of »traditional« music. *Rumos Itaú Cultural Música* is, as *Música do Brasil*, a programme concerned to map Brazilian music, not only traditional music, but mainly »music with

its roots based in tradition«. Its most important aim was to find musicians and performers in other places away from the great Brazilian musical centres.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, the Conclusion allows us to recall, after such an avalanche of (often disorganised) information, the main point of the subject: the debate about the rise and fall of MPB, a symbol of musical nationalism, and the insistence on the defence of Brazilian popular music, in a wider sense, as it is advocated throughout the book.

As mentioned by the author in his Introduction, »one of the primary intentions of this book is to identify the influence of those actors in delineating the parameters of Brazilian popular music, and more particularly the construction of a tradition within the wider sphere of popular music as a whole, i.e., Música Popular Brasileira (MPB), the socio/cultural/musical movement that has dominated the artistic scene in Brazil since the mid 1960s.« (pp. 1–2) Nonetheless, this central issue bifurcates into two main subjects, more or less independent, that can be traced both along the seven chapters of the book and in Stroud’s discourse: on the one hand, his research tries to explain how and why MPB has come to achieve such a remarkable role in the Brazilian cultural scene from the 1960s on, despite some contradictions denounced by the author, such as MPB’s insignificant sales volume; on the other hand, Sean Stroud’s work is anchored to the attempt to provide the idea of a »tradition« in Brazilian popular music with solid foundations. It is not my intention to question the notion of »tradition«, although the idea itself is easily problematic, as it could interfere with the author’s thesis. As a matter of fact, Stroud believes that, since the Modernist Movement of the 1920s, »tradition« has been defended in different moments of Brazil’s recent history in different ways and by different actors such as the Brazilian music industry, TV and Government initiatives, among others.

The book’s methodology is its most controversial aspect. As the author says: »My approach within this study is to provide a historical narrative of the rise and fall of MPB, with a specific emphasis on the manner in which popular music interacts with political and social factors. For this reason I do not provide any textual or musical analysis of the music under discussion.« (p. 7) Although I can understand that, at some points, quoting literary and musical sources is not necessary (for instance when Stroud approaches the role of the music industry or the State’s intervention in his consideration of music as a cultural phenomenon), I believe that musical categories as sensitive as the ones mentioned transversely in this book (as well as the problematic concepts of popular music, traditional, authentic, *popularesca* or even *brega*, with the subjective and impressionistic meaning that some carry) would require paying more scientific attention to the fulcrum of this study, music – let it not be forgotten – which has a particular language and a metalanguage.

However, we must not underestimate the contribution of *The Defence of Tradition in Brazilian Popular Music* to the understanding of the relationship between Brazilian popular music and its political, cultural and social environment – that has been exten-

---

45 See, for further information about aims, expectations and results, the project web site [http://www.itaucultural.org.br/index.cfm?cd\\_pagina=2691](http://www.itaucultural.org.br/index.cfm?cd_pagina=2691), accessed 06.07.2011.

sively modified in the last decades. On the contrary, this work, the result of an honest research backed with excellent bibliography and remarkable direct sources (not so much for musical sources, though), sketches a line of thinking surprisingly exempt and apart from the mainstream path in the scene of Brazilian popular music so far, which is worth mentioning. It would be desirable, and I sustain that desire, that further research should undertake the leads hinted at in Stroud's work, and tackle, complete, and revise accurately the many theoretical problems that appear in the book.

I would like to raise two final questions related to musicology (although other disciplines could also be mentioned) brought about by my reading of this book. In the first place, I would consider the revision of the concept of MPB nowadays important enough to give rise to a particular study, but Stroud dedicates only a few short paragraphs to it. How can we musically define MPB? Which are the common features (concerning its poetical and musical language) of the corpus canonically classified as MPB? Is it now a crystallised music genre? What happened to the political dimension assumed by MPB during the dictatorship years? Did other popular genres assume this dimension instead of MPB? Or is the idea itself of MPB that must be updated by welcoming non canonic interpreters and songs? Finally, I must disagree with the use of subjective classifications such as *brega* or *authentic music*, which are mere impressionistic terms, to classify a music genre, because there are certainly enough musical and literary trends to mention and define these musical styles. From the musicological point of view, it is definitely an interesting path and Stroud's work is a good starting point.

Sandra Boto, Lissabon

Suppan, Wolfgang: *Steirisches Musiklexikon*. 2. völlig überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt 2009. XII, 804 S., ISBN 978-3-20101-888-3.

In dreierlei Bedeutung könne von der Musik eines Landes die Rede sein, schreibt Viktor Zuckerkandl, als *Schauplatz* für Musik, als *Quelle* insofern, als Menschen manches, was sie zu sagen hätten, nicht anders als in Tönen sagen könnten und schließlich als *Schöpfung* im doppelten Sinne: »Musik als Schöpfung des Landes, das Land als Schöpfung der Musik«<sup>46</sup>. Einen Textausschnitt davon stellt Wolfgang Suppan programmatisch der neuen Auflage des *Steirischen Musiklexikons* voran (S. V). Suppan arbeitete ab 1963 am Deutschen Volksliedarchiv in Freiburg und wurde 1974 als Ordinarius für Musikethnologie an die damalige Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst nach Graz berufen. Seit nunmehr fünf Jahrzehnten prägt er solcherart Musikethnologie und Volksliedforschung und setzte am Grazer Institut für Musikethnologie damals neue thematische Akzente: Neben europäischer und vergleichender Volkslied- und Volksmusikforschung oder Anthropologie der Musik gehörte dazu auch die landeskundliche Musikforschung in der Steiermark.

---

46 Zuckerkandl, Viktor: Das Österreichische in der Musik. In: *Speculum Austriae*. Hg. von Otto Schulmeister. Wien 1957, S. 524–553.