

Versatile Vanguard Vectors: from Visible Voices to Virtual Vortices in the Vamps,  
Versions, and Voyages of Brazilian Concrete Poetry Charles A. Perrone

A very alliterative and polyvalent neologism that the Noigandres group of São Paulo adopted from James Joyce really has proven to be quite a convenient term to begin to explain the original synthesis which they would seek to achieve with poesia concreta. Whatever the Irish word-wizard had in mind when he penned "verbivocovisual presentment" (Book II, Episode 3 of Finnegan's Wake), the poet-essayists of Perdizes—Augusto de Campos, Décio Pignatari, and Haroldo de Campos (subsequent references by first name)—recognized the condensed significance of the modifier, interpreting and elaborating upon it, idiosyncratically and profitably. It is interesting that the very first deployments of this Joycean joy in explanations of nascent concrete poetry by Augusto and Haroldo should have appeared in hyphenated form: "verbi-voco-visual." This editorial detail could suggest that the young theorists were simply attempting to highlight the triple feature, to make clearer the idea of the simul-tan-eous presence of semantic, sonorous and optical elements. By the end of 1955, in any case, their published elucidations would utilize the amalgamated term.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, "verbivocovisual" flowingly conveys what is at stake: the realization of a dynamic whole, of indivisible dimensions, the mutually effective fusion of vocabular, enunciative and ocular constituents.

Some Joycean scholars point out that the anti-normative writer par excellence was reprising, with his pretty portmanteau word, the symbolist preoccupation with synaesthesia (concurrent appeal to more than one sense, metaphorical combinations of normal sensory expectations). Yet both he and the Brazilian poetas concretos had more

in mind than just activating together, say, sight and hearing at a given moment. In poetry, since the birth of the genre in Europe in troubadour lyric, attention to the interplay of meaning in words and their sounds has been a constant. However, with the exception of a few outstanding occasions in the baroque age, visual situation was never really raised to the same conceptual level until the Mallarmé of Un coup de dés did what he did with typography, layout, and design-for-the-eye. The ideogrammatic method of Pound and the building-block attack of e. e. cummings, two of the other pillars of inspiration of Brazilian concrete poetry, are both largely posited on visuality too. With all this in mind, one might venture to say that what was most innovative in the neoteric paulistana poetics of the mid-1950s was the full integration of the sense of sight, with all attendant ideational implications, into a crystallized totality of multisensorial signification. And still further possibilities come forth when the retinal angles of concrete poetry are extrapolated onto aural planes, in arrangements for human voices, instrumental implementations, experimental compositions for small or large ensembles, concretist songs, and associated performances. While recognizing the primal contribution of the third component in verbivocovisual ideograms, then, the present writing will focus on a domain of the second: musical aspects of the practice, impact and influence of poesia concreta as invented in Brazil more than fifty years ago.

Declamation (recitation) and musical settings of concrete poems comprise complementary parts of the verbivocovisual project from its inception to the present. In overall terms, what the Campos brothers and associates wrought was certainly the most provocative and distinctive development in Brazilian lyric since the 1920s. Many believe



that after the iconoclasm and expressivity of high Modernismo, concretism has made the most significant mark in national poetry. In broad cultural vantage, the importance of poesia concreta is enhanced by its connections with the other arts. It is curious that—unlike the Modern Art Week of 1922 with its exhibitions of painting, lectures, poetry readings, and concerts (Villa Lobos)—the launch event of 1956/57, the *Exposição Nacional de Arte Concreta*, should have included fine arts and poetry side by side but no music (which would only come later). Concrete poetry in Brazil, as the poets themselves explain it, unfolded in three stages, and musical matters figure consistently along the way.

The first phase (1952-1956) encompassed the organization of an avant-garde collective and initial output. In The Cantos of Ezra Pound, the energetic emergent artists came upon an enticing reference to noigandres, a lexical item in a song by the Provençal troubadour Arnaut Daniel that had baffled romance philologists. In naming their group and review, the São Paulo poets adopted the word as an emblem of free artistic experimentation, and with the allusion to Daniel, whom Pound considered il miglior fabbro, and to Pound himself, the young Brazilians staked claims to his paradigm of poet-inventor, as well as to the status of bard. This first phase was called "organic" or "phenomenological." The creative texts were still verse-like but viscosity and phraseological dispersion began to come into play. It is generically consistent that the first identified poesia concreta should have been Augusto's poetamenos (composed 1953, published 1955), a portfolio marked by de-sentimentalization of lyrical impulses, line fragmentations, odd spatial dispositions, and polychromatic design. The multi-voice

sequence was modeled on Anton Webern's klangfarbenmelodie [tone-color-timbre-melody], whose application has been aptly studied.<sup>2</sup> Decades later some of the pieces would enjoy musical settings. Again, the emerging exploration in lyric, as a whole, had fundamental interdisciplinary links. Augusto proclaimed in 1955: "In synch with terminology adopted by the visual arts, and to a degree, by avant-garde music (concretism, concrete music), I would say there is a concrete poetry." He explained the foundation of such a poetry as an "irreversible and functional idea-generating sound-optical structuring [that] creates an entirely dynamic 'verbivocovisual' entity ... of ductile words capable of being molded and amalgamated into the shape of the poem" (Teoria 34). Another prototypical piece, "movimento" by Décio, would also have a consummated musical setting within the next decade.

The second stage of concrete poetry was the most, so to speak, characteristic. These were the years of the spatially-syntaxed poetic minimalism most identified with the term concrete. It was during this so-called "heroic phase" (1956-60)—the echoes of Modernismo are intended—that increasingly theoretical declarations were issued, and "classical," "high" or "orthodox" concrete poetry was fabricated. The best capsule phrase to define the undertaking was Augusto's "tension of word-things in time-space," the musical qualities of which can be inferred to the degree that the "thing-ness" of words includes both their alphabetic incorporations and their momentary corporality as vocal enunciations, and in the sense that physical/tactile space is also ambience, an atmosphere in which sound events can occur. Joyce's notion of the interpenetration of time and space, which may be related to musicality, was also admired. In this most

intense stage, texts came to be composed according to rational, "mathematical" principles, and allusions to contemporary music (Boulez, Stockhausen et al.) may seem to become comparatively fewer, but some of the planning methods devised by the concrete poets may have aided in subsequent adaptations for performance.

Controversy and misunderstanding, not surprisingly, pursued the Noigandres group. Following a public debate in Rio de Janeiro (1957) about their strikingly anomalous poetics, a news magazine published a now notorious headline "O rock 'n' roll da poesia", a wholly inept metaphor of concrete experience during Brazil's so-called Golden Years. The only thing poesia concreta and rock 'n' roll had in common was reaction to them: they were scandalous, the establishment was shocked by them. In reality, the former was a highly complex and fresh formation forged from sources of the highest high culture of national and largely European extraction, while the latter was, at that point, a direct import from the USA and unabashedly low-brow urban popular culture, an entertainment novelty, scarcely esoteric. By the end of the decade, a musical manifestation that could indeed be compared to poesia concreta would make its mark: Bossa Nova, a sophisticated innovation that would impress listeners around the world in the 1960s, as would, proportionate to the status of its genre, concrete poetry. The third stage of concretism in Brazil, beginning about 1961, saw more flexible notions of creativity and invention, Invenção revista de arte de vanguarda being the invitingly open title of the next organ. This final phase witnessed both the articulation of social concerns and even more extreme challenges to the conventions of poetry (i.e. visual poetry per

se, semiotic poems, "verbal" art almost without words), as well as coalitions with other vanguard groups in literature and music.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and beyond, the principals of concrete poetry pursued performative options. As early as 1954, Augusto and Décio, with musician Damiano Cozzella, struggled to produce "oralizations" of proto-concrete texts (poetamenos). Décio recalls that the Ars Nova group performed select adapted texts, with recordings of Anton Webern's music playing, in the Teatro de Arena in São Paulo in late 1955 (Teoria 66). In 1955/57 a certain Willys de Castro elaborated some "partituras de verbalização" of several authors.<sup>3</sup> One interested analyst concludes that, reversing the historical dominance of sound over external structure as governing agent in the recitation of verse, with concrete poetry "a sintaxe visual passa a subordinar o som, o que obriga a uma verbalização do poema dentro de nova prática: não é possível mais 'recitar' tais poemas, todavia utilizando novas técnicas de uso da voz na música é possível sonorizá-los"<sup>4</sup> [visual syntax begins to subordinate sound, which calls for a new practice in the verbalization of poems: it is no longer possible to "recite" such poems; still, using new techniques of vocal utilization in music it is possible to sound them out]. The Sociedade Ars Viva— co-founded in 1961 by eager composers including Willy Corrêa de Oliveira— was an entity dedicated to performing "Música de Vanguarda" (or "Música Nova"), locally composed dissonant, aleatory and microtonal material, considered aggressive to ears accustomed to tonal melodies. The main vocal interpretations of concrete poetry would be done by the affiliated choral ensemble, the Madrigal Ars Viva, led by maestro Klaus-Dieter Wolff.

In a topically-specific presentation abroad, one of the leaders of Ars Viva, Gilberto Mendes, stated outright that the work of Noigandres and Invenção "inspired us to create new music."<sup>5</sup> In scores, unprecedented graphic representations, cues taken from concrete poetry, sought to induce different performance too; for example, duration could be represented vertically and tonality horizontally, which would reverse normal use. The first concrete compositions were Mendes' own "nascemorre" (1960), a non-melodic montage over the classic poem by Haroldo; Rogério Duprat's "organismo" (1960), an orchestral interpretation of the kinetic poem by Décio; and "movimento" (1962) by Willy Corrêa, using the aforementioned poem by Décio. Mendes also composed "com som sem som," a setting of Augusto's exemplary "tensão" (cf. figures 1-2, cover of published score).

**COM  
SOM**

**SEM  
SOM**

GILBERTO MENDES

MÚSICA NOVA DO BRASIL  
para coro a capela



MEC/FUNARTE



para coro a capela

36

1. Almeida Prado **Três cânticos de amor** *texto do autor*
2. Aylton Escobar **Canto/ciranda (AO) chão** *Ilka Brunhilde de Laurito*
3. Brenno Blauth **Belo belo** *Manuel Bandeira*
4. Bruno Kiefer **Aleluia** *Lara Lemos*
5. Carlos Alberto Pinto Fonseca **Os Sinos** *Manuel Bandeira*
6. Cirlei de Hollanda **Topologia do medo** *Haroldo de Campos*
7. Claudio Santoro **Ave-Maria**
8. Emilio Terraza **Peça coral nº 1-M. 30** *Cassiano Nunes*
9. Ernst Mahle **Arca de Noé** *Vinicius de Moraes*
10. Ernst Widmer **O Vento no carnaval** *João Cabral de Melo Neto*
11. Fernando Cerqueira **Rola mundo** *Carlos Drummond de Andrade*
12. Gilberto Mendes **COM SOM SEM SOM** *Augusto de Campos*
13. Henrique de Curitiba Morozowicz **Em tempo de terra e de boi** *Carlos Drummond de Andrade*
14. Jaime C. Diniz **Invocação litúrgica**
15. José Penalva **Segredo** *Carlos Drummond de Andrade*
16. José Vieira Brandão **Cussaruim em 2 tempos** *Manuel Bandeira*
17. Lindembergue Cardoso **Chromaphonetics op. 58**
18. Mário Ficarella **Poema** *Gonçalves Dias*
19. Murillo Santos **Canção da primavera** *Mário Quintana*
20. Nestor de Hollanda Cavalcanti **O Morcego** *Augusto dos Anjos*
21. Raul do Valle **Rosa rosae** *Carlos Drummond de Andrade*
22. Reginaldo de Carvalho **Rezação**
23. Ricardo Tacuchian **Canção de barco** *Mário Quintana*
24. Ronaldo Miranda **Belo belo** *Manuel Bandeira*
25. Sergio de O. de Vasconcellos **Corrêa Na rebancêra do má**
26. Willy Corrêa de Oliveira **Passos da Paixão** *Afonso Ávila*

dun gu du ku tu ka tu ku    dun gu du ka tu ka t

ha

ha

PROJETO MEMÓRIA MUSICAL BRASILEIRA  
**PROMEMUS**

A  
NAR  
UNART  
FUNARTE  
UNART  
NAR  
A

Ministério da Educação e Cultura  
Secretaria da Cultura  
Fundação Nacional de Arte  
Instituto Nacional de Música  
Centro de Documentação

Critics, naturally, reacted against these pieces, but composers and performers pushed forward. The musico-concretist creation that merited most commentary on the part of Mendes was his "Vai Vem" (built on three separate texts by José Lino Grünewald), a microtonal and nonlinear composition with soloists, choral voices in crescendo ("vem") and harmonic support in decrescendo ("vai"). These assembled fragments constituted sound blocks, "musical events without the idea of melody." To the composer, quotations (of Mozart or any one else) seemed to be "authorized," and unusual effects (e.g. blowing through comb covered with silk paper, spliced tape, turntable) diversified the whole.<sup>6</sup>

The relationship of concrete poets and new-music makers can be followed in the pages of Invenção. The cover of number 3 (yr. 2, 1963), promises "Nova Música Brasileira / Manifesto," a statement that appeared under the rubric "música nova" and with a first line—"compromisso total com o mundo contemporâneo" [complete commitment to the contemporary world]—reminiscent of the first line of the last paragraph of the "plano-piloto para poesia concreta" (1958): "responsabilidade integral perante a linguagem" [integral responsibility before language]. Half of the eight signatories added think pieces about innovative music in the early 1960s. Invenção number 4 (yr. 3, 1964) has the quite visual scores of "movimento" and "nascemorre," with parts for voice, percussion, and tape music. The final issue, in turn, number 5 (yr. 6, 1967), features Mendes' treatment of Augusto's renowned "cidade-city-cité" (1964), which would be declaimed by the poet himself on a singer-songwriter's LP in the early 1970s.<sup>7</sup> The main bridges between art-classical-concert music (what Brazilians call




música erudita) and innovative popular music were composer-arrangers Júlio Medaglia and Rogério Duprat, who worked with the cohort of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. Their brief but tremendously influential movement known as Tropicália or tropicalismo cultivated, as has been exhaustively documented, close ties with concretism, especially via its critical re-appraisal of Modernist provocateur Oswald de Andrade. Augusto's edited volume concerning Bossa Nova and Tropicalism has become a classic of contemporary cultural criticism, itself the subject of reception-based studies.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning circa 1970, there appear in Brazilian popular music numerous settings of texts by the principal concrete poets. Two examples of music-for-concrete poem are Caetano's ingenious version of "O pulsar" by Augusto and Marcus Vinícius' setting of "lygia fingers" from poetamenos.<sup>9</sup> Yet more intriguing material may be found in the results of the impression of concrete poetry on original composition. With 1968 Tropicália songs as points of departure, the vanguard spirit and inventiveness of the concrete poets were present musically throughout the 1970s and later. Songwriters concerned with invigorating and renovating the craft used, in conjunction with musical devices, many linguistic techniques that concrete poetry brought into vogue or added to the Brazilian poetic repertory. In songs by Veloso, Gil, Tom Zé, Belchior, Marcus Vinícius, Walter Franco, and others, there are non-discursive structures, geometric shaping of text (and concomitant peculiar print designs of song texts on LP jackets, inserts or lyric sheets), syllabic decomposition of words, an emphasis on paronomasia and juxtapositions, and other poetic twists that can be linked with the legacy of the verbivocovisual project. The first album by Belchior, from the Northeastern state of

Ceará, is a veritable vanguardist endeavor, with an imperative of novelty evident in the album art and the compositions themselves.<sup>10</sup> Such phenomena confirm epochal interarts affinities through songwriters' contact with (ultra-)modern poetics and demonstrate to what extent concrete poetry had a significant extra-literary role in the shaping of contemporary Brazilian arts.

(1º lugar no IV Festival Universitário da M. P. Brasileira)

e eu ando sou bem moço  
pra tanta tristeza  
deixemos de coisas  
cuidamos da vida  
senão chega a morte  
(ou coisa parecida)  
e nos arrasta moço  
sem ter visto a vida  
ou coisa parecida  
ou coisa parecida  
ou coisa parecida  
**aparecida**



*belchior*

o cemitério é geral  
a morte nos faz irmão  
tu nessa idade não sabes  
tudo é sertão e cidade  
tudo é cidade e sertão  
campina grande /vereda geral  
ehi villa ehi cidadão  
campina grande /vereda geral  
ehi civilização

*belchior*

quantas barcas sobre as águas  
marcas de mortos no chão  
quanto sangue derramado  
na palma da minha mão...

ave maria  
mãe do pessoal  
junteti as economias  
pra gastar só nos maus dias  
e gesto hoje a'final  
ai! meu senhor dono da casa  
acorde, pois o sol quer te dizer  
que a morte fez metade do caminho  
abre que sou seu vizinho  
sua pra me responder  
que homens são esses  
que andam guerreando  
de noite e de dia  
padrãozoso avernaria  
pelo sinal do pão noosso  
de cada dia e que cu  
me livro dos inimigos  
assim na terra como no céu



## Perrone VVV p. 14

A DATE/TIME	B DATE/TIME
NR( )	NR( )
• Batmacumba (gil - Veloso) 1968	
• Acri / Inico (Duarte - Veloso - Duprat) 1969	
• de palavra em palavra (Veloso) 1972	
• JULIA / Moreno (Veloso) 1972	
• Relance (Novis - Veloso) 1973 gal	Costa
• Quilombo (Bosco - Blanc) 1973	
• Cademaru (Tom Ze - A. Campos) 1973	
• mote e glosa / Manguina (Belchior) 1973	
• dias dias / Pulcin (Veloso - Augusto) 1975/1983	
• mamãe d'água (Walter Franco) 1973	
• Lysia fingers (A. Campos - Marcos Vinício) 1976	
• Asa, Lva lva lva (Veloso) 1975	
• Jampa (Veloso) 1978	
• Tudo está dito (Garnati - Augusto) 1986	
cf. article in LAMR/	
Revista USP	



Visible Voices: Concretism, Visual Poetry, and Brazilian Popular Music.  
Charles A. Perrone, University of Florida

(Gilberto Gil-Caetano Veloso):

batmacumbaieié batmacumbaoba  
batmacumbaieié batmacumbao  
batmacumbaieié batmacumba  
batmacumbaieié batmacum  
batmacumbaieié batman  
batmacumbaieié bat  
batmacumbaieié ba  
batmacumbaieié  
batmacumbaiei  
batmacumba  
batmacum  
batman  
bat  
ba  
bat  
batman  
batmacum  
batmacumba  
batmacumbaiei  
batmacumbaieié  
batmacumbaieié ba  
batmacumbaieié bat  
batmacumbaieié batman  
batmacumbaieié batmacum  
batmacumbaieié batmacumbao  
batmacumbaieié batmacumbaoba

(On *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis*, Philips R 765.040L, 1968)

"Júlia/Moreno" (Veloso)

uma talvez júlia  
uma talvez júlia não  
uma talvez júlia não tem  
uma talvez júlia não tem nada  
uma talvez júlia não tem nada a ver  
uma talvez júlia não tem nada a ver com isso  
uma júlia  
um quiçá moreno  
um quiçá moreno nem  
um quiçá moreno nem vai  
um quiçá moreno nem vai querer  
um quiçá moreno nem vai querer saber  
um quiçá moreno nem vai querer saber qual era  
um moreno

[a maybe Julia-has-nothing-to do-with this / a perhaps Moreno won't-even-want-to know-what the story was]

"Dadá" (Veloso-Gil)

A DEUS  
DEUS A  
AFRODITE  
DE TI  
TI VE  
VI DA  
DA DA  
A DEUS

"Relance" [Glance] (Veloso-Pedro Novis)

[illegible]

Haroldo de Campos "nascemorre" [birth-death]

se  
nasce  
morre nasce  
morre nasce morre  
renasce remorre renasce  
remorre renasce  
remorre  
re  
re  
desnasce  
desmorre desnasce  
desmorre desnasce desmorre  
nascemorrenasce  
morrenasce  
morre  
se



[illegible][illegible]

"Mamãe d'água" [Water mother] (Walter Franco)

agora é tarde eu vou dormir  
 agora é tarde eu vou  
 agora é tarde  
 agora

"I love you a lot more  
 but now it's late I'm going to sleep"

"Pulsar" Augusto de Campos "Tudo está dito"

TUDO everything  
ÉINFI is infi  
NITO nite

Visible Voices: Concretism, Visual Poetry, and Brazilian Popular Music.  
Charles A. Perrone, University of Florida

Of all the songs that can be related to poesia concreta, the most celebrated (and critically discussed) has been "Batmacumba" (Gil & Veloso). Having made presentations about the popular music of Brazil over the last thirty years or so, on three different continents, this writer can affirm that no other song has elicited the curiosity and interest that "Batmacumba" has. What is the particular appeal of this unusual tune? The piece unfolds intriguingly as a smart combination of subjects from different domains, from the arcane textualization of concrete poetry to the pop culture of comics (Batman) and "yeah-yeah-yeah" music, mixed with congas and a generic term for Afro-Brazilian cult worship (macumba). Varied culturemes overlap in a superimposition of verbal, aural and (implied) visual signs that—with multiple refrains, a single melodic phrase, and a sequentially shrinking and expanding line of words—breaks away from regular linear syntax and recursiveness.

The original album (Tropicália ou panis et circensis, Philips R765 040L, 1968) had no lyric sheet, so the K/bat-wing "shape" of the song had to be imagined in acoustic images. The "concreteness" of the lyric was set by means of a bi-triangular transcription by Augusto, which did not circulate in Brazil until its appearance in Balanço da bossa e outras bossas.<sup>11</sup> Years later, the editor of Gil's complete lyrics offered a different version with capital B and the letters k and y, better to suggest the foreign element.<sup>12</sup> Here, another alternative is proposed, with symmetry changed by transcribing five additional iterations of the refrain at the beginning and at the end of the song text to reflect the actual utterances on the recording.



Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbao  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumba  
Batmakumbayêyê batmacum  
Batmakumbayêyê batman  
Batmakumbayêyê bat  
Batmakumbayêyê ba  
Batmakumbayêyê  
Batmakumbayê  
Batmakumba  
Batmakum  
Batman  
Bat  
Bá  
Bat  
Batman  
Batmakum  
Batmakumba  
Batmakumbayê  
Batmakumbayêyê  
Batmakumbayêyê ba  
Batmakumbayêyê bat  
Batmakumbayêyê batman  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakum  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumba  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbao  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá  
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá

While "Batmacumba" is a rather well known "popular vanguard" item, another composition with essential ethno-historical substance, one of the first collaborations of brilliant independent artists not usually thought of in connection with experimentalism, is a rare instance that merits scrutiny for its formal constitution and Afro-Brazilian tenor. Singer-guitarist-composer João Bosco and lyricist Aldir Blanc wrote "Quilombo" (1973), a quasi-narrative about runaway slaves in colonial times preparing to defend their community. The song builds in a calculated process of lexical selection and fusion:

cama	arruma a cama	arruma a cama
cama	arruma a cama	arruma a cama
cana	apanha a cana	apanha a cana
cana	apanha a cana	apanha a cana
trama	arruma a trama	arruma a trama
trama	arruma a trama	arruma a trama
tranca	arromba a tranca	arromba a tranca
tranca	arromba a tranca	arromba a tranca
zanga	atiça a zanga	atiça a zanga
zanga	atiça a zanga	atiça a zanga
fogo	ateia fogo	ateia fogo
fogo	ateia fogo	ateia fogo
ponta	afia a ponta	afia a ponta
ponta	afia a ponta	afia a ponta
canto	apruma o canto	apruma o canto
canto	apruma o canto	apruma o canto

os soldados vem buscá  
os escravos do sinhô  
é preciso se cuidá  
cum ataque do invasor

garra pá lutá  
fossa pá cavá  
lenha pá acendê

ramo pá cortá  
fio pá tecê  
arco pá fazê

pedra pá jogá  
faca pá amolá  
água pá ferve

vamos disfarçar	vamos preparar	vamos devolver
eh camacana eh	camacana eh	camacana eh
eh tramatranca eh	tramatranca eh	tramatranca eh
eh zangafogo eh	zangafogo eh	zangafogo eh
eh pontacanto eh	pontacanto eh	pontacanto eh

(insert, João Bosco, n/t, RCA 103 0062, 1973)

In the wake of the short-lived effervescence of Tropicalism (1967-1969 in a strict definition), the conceptual leader of the movement remained the artist with the closest ties to the concrete poets. Augusto's now historic placard "VIVA VAIA" (1972) was inspired by and dedicated to Caetano. At a 1968 song festival in Brazil, the singer-songwriter sang an abrasive electrified anti-chant called "É proibido proibir" [Prohibiting prohibited]. Upset listeners, more accustomed to acoustic fare, attempted to hoot the singer off the stage, but Caetano shouted out to defend freedom of speech and expression, targeting censors and hypocrites. This courageous stand convinced Augusto of Caetano's singularity. Upon return from exile, the latter released the album Araçá Azul (Philips 6349 054, 1972), a playful project of musico-poetic experimentation that has been interpreted as an "implicit homage" to Oswald de Andrade, the concrete poets and Sousândrade.<sup>13</sup> This last reference is to the most radical of Brazilian

Romantic poets, whose work was revived by the Noigandres poets. Caetano created a madrigalesque setting for one of his most vibrant verses: "gil-engendra em gil-rouxinol" [gil-engenders in gil-nightingale], which is phrased in different and alternating registers, accentuating, from varying perspectives, the sound structure of the literary citation, which inevitably alludes to Gilberto Gil as well. On the 25<sup>th</sup>-anniversary album Tropicália 2 (Polygram 518 178, 1993), the pair included such titles as "Rap popcreto" (with multiple splices of the word quem [who]) and "Dadá," with a sort of afro-concrete text.

Where concretist tunes are concerned, perhaps the biggest splash has been made by Caetano's renderings of Augusto's "O pulsar" (1975), recordings of which have been included in his collected poems (1979, 1986, 2001 editions) and on the singer's debut solo album in the USA (Nonesuch 1986). But the song's presentation in a show at a theatre in Buenos Aires may have had the greatest impact of all. The author of the most in-depth study of the Brazilian concrete poets, Gonzalo Aguilar, discloses that having seen Caetano perform "O pulsar" in 1985 was "uma verdadeira revelação" [a true revelation], moving him to seek out all the production of Augusto and colleagues.<sup>14</sup> In Aguilar's elaborate analysis of poesia concreta, the alliance with Tropicália—which despite all its intellectual input was a true phenomenon of mass media—helped to lessen the modernist punch of concretism and contributed to its dissolution *qua* late avant-garde. One of the reasons that Noigandres-Invenção wound its way down as an articulated project of erudite nature was the opening up to popular music and Tropicalism, the entry into the realm of urban popular culture.<sup>15</sup>

In the span c.1967-c.1987, an exceptional distinction evolved in Brazilian popular music, as songwriters continuously invoked literary creeds. Utilization of poetic heritage took various forms and produced diverse effects. Compositions based on models from all historical periods and styles (from medieval to postmodern) comprised only a fraction of the contemporary landscape of song, and those with concretist features made up a special subset. Yet such instances were among the most creative and stirring moments of vocal repertoires of those years. Sonic reflections of concretismo—in Tropicália, immediate successors, and experimental threads of the rise of national rock in the 1980s—are sufficient to constitute a zestful anthology or compilation. Since the 1990s there have been further series of settings of different texts by concrete poets (including various versions of varied provenance, as well as fragments of Haroldo's galáxias), in addition to notable compositions and recordings whose execution and/or graphic representation summon concretist ancestors.

Renowned poet-performer Arnaldo Antunes—starting with the triple-format Nome (1993, video-book-CD)—has been the main inheritor of the concrete mantle (cf. his multimedia website). Cid Campos, solo and with Augusto, has produced rousing verbally-driven musical material.<sup>16</sup> Select productions by poets and poet-musicians around the country demonstrate both a generalized influence of the days of Invenção and more specific employment of concrete lore. Ricardo Corona of Curitiba, for example, pointedly merged the names of a rebellious author (presented in Brazil by Augusto, cf. fig. 5) and of icons of film, science, and rock music in "AVALANCHE" (figure 6).



Makely of Minas Gerais published and recorded "canções de ouvir com os olhos"  
[songs to hear with your eyes] in his eccentric ex-centric way.<sup>17</sup>

## Danaide

(Mecânica) Espécie de roda hidráulica que dá um movimento de rotação à corrente de água no sentido em que se quer //

(Botânica) Género de rubiáceas // (Mitologia) Cada uma das cinquenta irmãs condenadas a encher um tonel sem fundo //

(Zoologia ) Família de insetos lepidópteros diurnos //

(Figurativo) Tonel das Danaides, saco roto, poço sem fundo, trabalho perdido, coisa a que não se vê fim (alusão mitológica // Do latim Danaís

Dic. Caldas Aulete

1. Rodador (rodadavida)  
(Letra: Makely e Estrela Leminski / Música: Makely)

vinhadadoro  
vipepepe

Voz: Maíra  
Viola Nylon, Aço e Viola Percussivo: Makely  
Viola Aço: Antônio Amara  
Percussão de Tampo: Renato Vilaça

One might venture to say that, at the semi-centurion point past the launch of concrete poetry in Brazil, one just don't know what might grace one's ideas, eyes and ears with verbivocovisual verve.

Among the Noigandres poets, music has clearly been most essential for Augusto. He has doubled marvelously as a critic of non-mainstream composers (cf. Música de invenção [1998], essays about experimental modern and ultramodern figures) and has said that music for him has been an indispensable "nutrition of impulse."<sup>18</sup> Without interruption, his output has been marked by an especially palpable interaction of words as signifying carriers, graphic dimensions, and tones. Through the 1990s and into the next millennium, he has kept up admirably with computational advances swirling around him. For Augusto and those with similar interests, information technology has enabled incursions into electronic and virtual realms that were mere dreams of concrete poetry in the 1950s, including animations with sound tracks.

For all concerned with what poesia concreta proposed—the not-so-common conjugation of instruments, words, voices, and what the eyes may behold—it can only be gratifying to have witnessed, to have seen, heard, felt and experienced, the arc of a trajectory from the potential and promises of initial engagements with the "verbivocovisual" to the diverse realizations and successes of a concretized project with multifarious related projections.

\_\_\_\_\_November 2007\_\_\_\_\_

Charles A. Perrone, Professor of Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian Literature & Culture, University of Florida; author of Brazil, Lyric, and the Americas (University Press of Florida, forthcoming 2009); Seven Faces: Brazilian Poetry Since Modernism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Masters of Contemporary Brazilian Song:



MPB 1965-1985 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989); Letras e Letras (da Música Popular Brasileira) (Rio de Janeiro: Elo Editora, 1988; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Booklink, 2008).

---

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Augusto de Campos, Décio Pignatari, and Haroldo de Campos, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Teoria da poesia concreta (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1975 [1965]), pp. 17 ff; subsequent reference in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Claus Clüver, "Klangfarbenmelodie in Polychromatic Poems: A. von Webern and A. de Campos," Comparative Literature Studies 18. 3 (1981), 386-398.

<sup>3</sup> João Bandeira, "—a poesia na Exposição Nacional de Arte Concreta" in concreta '56 a raiz da forma (São Paulo: MAM, 2006), 140-141; the last page reproduces a score by Júlio Medaglia for "oralization" of poems by Ronaldo de Azeredo, Haroldo, and Augusto.

<sup>4</sup> Alvaro de Sá, "espaço, linguagem e tempo na poesia concreta." Revista de cultura vozes 71.1 (1977), 76; special issue Concretismo:

<sup>5</sup> Gilberto Mendes, "Brazilian New Music and Concrete Poetry," lecture delivered at the University of Texas, Austin, March 9, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Related recordings include: Gilberto Mendes, n/t, London EMI Odeon (31 C 063 422709, 1979)— with "Motet em ré menor" (1966, ="beba coca cola"), "nascemorre" (1963), "vai e vem" (1969)— and Madrigal Renascentista (w/ Gilberto Mendes et al.), n/t (FUNARTE MMB 79.014, 1979), including "com som sem som."

<sup>7</sup> For a more complete account of the numerous artistic interpretations of this unique poem, see Charles A. Perrone, "Performing São Paulo: Vanguard

---

Representations of a Brazilian Cosmopolis." Latin American Music Review 23.1 (2002), 60-78. On related cases, see: "VIVA VAIA Para entender Augusto de Campos VIA EUA," in Sobre Augusto de Campos. Ed. Flora Sussekind and Júlío Castañón Guimarães (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa / 7letras, 2004), 209-218, and "ABC of AdeC: Reading Augusto de Campos." Review: Latin American Literature and Arts 73, Special issue: Brazilian Writing and Arts (Dec. 2006), 236-244.

<sup>8</sup> Augusto de Campos et al. Balanço da bossa: antologia crítica da moderna música popular brasileira (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1968). The 2<sup>nd</sup> expanded edition, Balanço da bossa e outras bossas (1974) contains a diversified second section with multiple reflections of the relationship between concrete poetry and popular music. Cf. two studies of the importance of this book, of how it helped to shift critical paradigms and to make relative the split of "erudite" and "popular" music per se: Santuza Cambraia Naves, "A canção crítica," in Claudia Neiva de Matos et al., eds. Ao encontro da palavra cantada— poesia, música e voz (Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras-CNPq, 2001), 289-98; and Claudia Neiva de Matos, "O Balanço da bossa e outras coisas nossas: uma releitura," in Paulo Sérgio Duarte & Santuza Cambraia Naves, eds. Do samba-canção à Tropicália (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará-FAPERJ, 2003), 80-91. See also Carlos Rennó, "Poesia literária e poesia de música: convergências." In Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira, et al., eds. Literatura e música (São Paulo: Senac-Itau Cultural, 2003), 49-71, which considers phenomena from medieval troubadours to versions of Broadway tunes, with some special attention to Augusto.

---

<sup>9</sup> For extensive discography of texts by concrete poets set to music 1960-2007, see Cid Campos' research file of 45 rpms, LPs and CDs, at the official site of the exhibition: <http://www.poesiaconcreta.com>.

See also Marcelo Dolabela, "Ouvindo Augusto— dados para uma discomusicografia de Augusto de Campos", in Dossiê 50 anos da poesia concreta, special issue of o eixo e a roda: revista de literatura brasileira (FALE-UFMG) 13 (2006), 203-213; this is a chronological listing of the poet's works related to music (liner notes, poems/translations of his recorded by himself/ others, visual poems on LP covers, versions recorded by him or third parties.

<sup>10</sup> For discography and examples of compositions by MPB artists with concretist features 1968-1984, see: Charles A. Perrone, "From Noigandres to 'Milagre da Alegria': The Concrete Poets and Contemporary Brazilian Popular Music." Latin American Music Review 6.1 (1985), 58-79; reprint in trans. (with some additions) as "Poesia concreta e tropicalismo." Revista USP 4 (1990), 55-64.  
<http://www.usp.br/revistausp/n4novo/charles.html>. Cf. figure 2, 3 and 4: contents of an MPB-PC sound anthology, examples of "visible voices," and lyric sheet of Belchior LP.

<sup>11</sup> The article by Augusto de Campos containing the transcription appeared in 1969 and 1970 in Spanish and German; it was cited and reproduced in the USA before publication in Brazil.

<sup>12</sup> Carlos Rennó, ed. Gilberto Gil Todas as Letras (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996), p. 98. Gil here discusses composing the piece together with Caetano,

---

fully aware of creating ties to concrete poetry, Oswald de Andrade, pop culture and folk religion.

<sup>13</sup> Antônio Risério, "O nome mais belo do medo", Minas Gerais Suplemento Literário 8:360 (21 July 1973), 4-5.

<sup>14</sup> Gonzalo Aguilar, "Balanço" (Entrevista). Revista da Biblioteca Mário de Andrade 62 (2006), 41.

<sup>15</sup> See especially "Concretos en el trópico" and "Fin del concretismo," final segments of chapter two of Gonzalo Aguilar, Poesia concreta brasileña: las vanguardias en la enrucijada modernista (Buenos Aires: Beatriz Viterbo, 2003); Portuguese version (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Augusto de Campos & Cid Campos, Poesia é risco (Mercury 526 508-2, 1995); Cid Campos, Fala da palavra (n/n, 2004), No lago do olho (Dabliu DB0104, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Ricardo Corona, CD ladrão de fogo (medusa et al. LF 39, n/d [2001]). Makely, excêntrico (Belo Horizonte: selo editorial, 2003); Maísa Moura & Makely Ka, Danaide (SM 002-1, n/d [2005]), figure 7 from CD booklet.

<sup>18</sup> Interview by Carlos Adriano, Cult 17 (December 1998), 4-11.

---