

**VERSATILE VANGUARD VECTORS:
FROM VISIBLE VOICES TO VIRTUAL VORTICES
IN THE VAMPS, VERSIONS, AND VOYAGES OF
BRAZILIAN CONCRETE POETRY**

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RESUMO

Documentação e análise de aspectos musicais da prática e da influência da poesia concreta, desde suas fontes de inspiração cosmopolitas até musicalizações eruditas e composições populares experimentais.

Palavras-chave: poesia concreta; música experimental; Augusto de Campos.

ABSTRACT

Documentation and analysis of the musical aspects of the practice and influence of Brazilian concrete poetry, from its cosmopolitan sources of inspiration, to art-music settings and experimental popular-music compositions.

Keywords: concrete poetry; experimental music; Augusto de Campos.

An 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 curious that the very first deployments of this Joycean joy in explications 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 or to make clearer the simultaneous presence of semantic, sonorous and optical elements. By the end of 1955, in any case, their published elucidations would utilize the amalgamated term.² Indeed, "verbivocovisual" flowingly conveys what is at stake: the realization of a dynamic whole, of inseparable dimensions, the mutually effective fusion of vocabular, enunciative and ocular constituents. Some Joycean

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

scholars point out that the anti-normative writer par excellence was reprising the symbolist preoccupation with synaesthesia (concurrent appeal to more than one sense, metaphorical combination of normal sensory expectations), but 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, 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 *paulistana* poetics in the mid-1950s was the integration of the sense of sight (with all attendant ideational implications) into a crystallized totality of multisensorial signification. And further possibilities come forth when the retinal angles of concrete poetry are extrapolated onto aural planes, in arrangements for human voices, experimental compositions, instrumental implementations, concretist songs, and related 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 and influence of *poesia concreta* as invented in Brazil more than fifty years ago.



Declamation (recital) and musical settings comprise complementary parts of the concrete 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 1956/1957, 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 a claim to his paradigm of poet-inventor, as well as to the notion of bard. This first phase was called "organic" or "phenomenological." The creative texts were still verse-like but visuality 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 analyzed.³ Decades later some of the pieces would enjoy musical settings. Again, the emerging experiment 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.

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

MUSICA NOVA DO BRASIL
para coro a capella

Clases encomendadas pelo Instituto Nacional de Musica de UNIVARTE

1. Arminda Prado Três cânticos de amor muito do amor
2. Aylton Escobar Cantata para AD (dois vozes e guitarra de Laurito)
3. Bernaldo Duarte Belo Belo Musical Brasileira
4. Bruno Kiefer Aleluia Lusa Lusa
5. Carlos Alberto Pinto Fossada Os Sinos Manteo Brasileira
6. César de Hollanda Topografia do medo Movimento de Camargo
7. Claudio Santoro Ave Maria
8. Eritica Teresita Paes coral n.º 1 M. 20-Castela Numa
9. Ezequiel Malhe Arca de Noé Vinhos de Moisés
10. Ezequiel Malhe O Vento no carnaval 2000 Lullaby de João Neto
11. Ezequiel Malhe Cantata de São João Cordeiro de Almeida
12. Gilberto Mendes COM SEM SEM SEM Movimento de Camargo
13. Heronizildo Curral Moura Ede tempo de terra e de boi Canção Drummond de Andrade
14. Maria Vilela Invocação Mística
15. José Maria Brandão Cantata de tempo e espaço
16. José Maria Brandão Casarem em 2 tempos Musical Brasileira
17. José Maria Brandão Cantata de tempo e espaço
18. Mario Pittari Paveta Christiana Cruz
19. Murilo Sanyon Canção da primavera Maria Quinzina
20. Nestor de Hollanda Cantata: O Marcego Augusto dos Anjos
21. Noel do Valle Rosa rosas Carlos Drummond de Andrade
22. Rosalinda de Carvalho Brasileira
23. Rosalinda de Carvalho Cantata de tempo e espaço
24. Rosalinda de Carvalho Cantata de tempo e espaço
25. Rosalinda de Carvalho Cantata de tempo e espaço
26. Villy Cordeiro de Oliveira Paços da Paço Augusto dos Anjos

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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" (1956-1960) – the echoes of *Modernismo* are intended – that increasingly theoretical statements and manifestoes 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 potential 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 invocations of contemporary music (Boulez, Stockhausen et al.) may seem to be comparatively fewer, but some of the planning methods may have aided in subsequent adaptations for performance.

Controversy and misunderstanding, not surprisingly, pursued the poets. Following a public debate in Rio de Janeiro (1957) about the neoteric poetics, a

news magazine published a now notorious headline "*O rock 'n' roll da poesia*", a wholly inept metaphor of concrete experience during the so-called Golden Years. The only thing *poesia concreta* and rock 'n' roll had in common was that they were scandalous, that 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. 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, "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 sought to carry out 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 musical group performed select adapted texts, with music of Anton Webern's music playing, in the Teatro de Arena in São Paulo in late 1955 (*Teoria* 66). In 1955 / 1957 a certain Willys de Castro elaborated some "partituras de verbalização" of several authors.⁴ One interested analyst concludes that, reversing the historical dominance of sound over external structure in the reciting 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"⁵ [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, rather 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Alvaro de Sá, "espaço, linguagem e tempo na poesia concreta." *Revista de Cultura Vozes*, 71: 1 (1977), 76; special issue Concretismo:

A DATE/TIME	B DATE/TIME
NR()	NR()
• Batmacumba (gil - Veloso) 1968	
• Acrílico (Duarte - Veloso - Duprat) 1969	
• de palavra em palavra (Veloso) 1972	
• JÚLIA/moreno (Veloso) 1972	
• Relance (Novis - Veloso) 1973	gal Costa
• Quilombo (Bosco - Blanc) 1973	
• Cademaru (Tom Ze - A. Campos) 1973	
• mote e glosa / Máquina (Belchior) 1973	
• dias dias / Poesia (Veloso - Augusto) 1975/1983	
• mamãe d'água (Walter Franco) 1973	
• Lysia fingers (A. Campos - Marcus Vinícius) 1976	
• Asa, Lua lua lua (Veloso) 1975	
• Jampa (Veloso) 1978	
• Tudo está dito (Dacri - Augusto) 1986	
cf. article in LAMR/ Revista USP	

In a typically-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."⁶ The use of new graphic representations, cues taken from concrete poetry, sought to induce new performance too; for example, duration could be represented vertically and tonality horizontally, which would reverse the normal practice. 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 classic "tensão" (cf. figure 1, cover of published score). Critics, naturally, reacted against these pieces but composers and performers pushed forward. The 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 micro-tonal and non-linear composition with soloists, choral voices in crescendo ("vem") and harmonic support in decrescendo ("vai"). These assembled fragments constituted sound blocks, "musical events with out the idea of melody." To the composer, quotations (of Mozart or any one else) seemed to be

⁶ Gilberto Mendes, "Brazilian New Music and Concrete Poetry," lecture delivered at the University of Texas, Austin, March 9, 1983.

"authorized," and unusual effects (e.g. blowing through silk paper-covered comb, spliced tape, turntable) diversified the whole.⁷

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) includes the very 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.⁸ 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 led by 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.⁹

⁷ 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."

⁸ For a more complete account of the numerous treatments of this inventive poem, see Charles A. Perrone, "Performing São Paulo: Vanguard Representations of a Brazilian Cosmopolis." *Latin American Music Review* 23.1 (2002), 60-78. See also: "VIVA VAIA Para entender Augusto de Campos VIA EUA," in *Sobre Augusto de Campos*. Ed. Flora Sussekind and Júlio 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.

⁹ Augusto de Campos et al. *Balanço da bossa: antologia crítica da moderna música popular brasileira* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1968). The 2nd 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 relativize 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

concrete poem are Caetano's ingenious version of "O pulsar" by Augusto and Marcus Vinícius' setting of "lygia fingers" from *poetamenos*.¹⁰ Yet more intriguing material may be found in the results of the impact of concrete poetry on original composition. With 1968 Tropicália songs as points of departure, the vanguard spirit and inventive practice of the concrete poets were present musically throughout the 1970s, and beyond. 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 verbivocovisual legacy of concrete poetry. The first album by Belchior, from the Northeastern state of Ceará, is a veritable vanguard project with an imperative of novelty evident in the album art and the compositions themselves.¹¹ Such phenomena confirm epochal interarts affinities through songwriters' contact with contemporary poetics and demonstrate to what extent concrete poetry had a significant extra-literary role in the shaping of contemporary Brazilian arts.

¹⁰ For extensive discography of texts by concrete poets set to music 1960-2007, see Cid Campos' research file of 45 rps, 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-UFGM) 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).

¹¹ 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.

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 esoteric textualization of concrete poetry to the pop culture of comics (Batman) and "yeah-yeah-yeah" music, mixed with congas and the generic term for Afro-Brazilian cult worship (*macumba*). Varied cultural references enter into a superimposition of verbal, aural and (implied) visual signs that – with multiple refrains and a sequentially shrinking and expanding melodic line – breaks away from regular linear syntax and recursivity. The original album (*Tropicália ou panis et circensis*, Philips R765 040L, 1968) has no lyric sheet, so the K/bat-wing "shape" of the song had to be imagined in acoustic images. The "concreteness" of the lyric began to be known via a bi-triangular transcription by Augusto, which did not circulate in Brazil until *Balanço da bossa e outras bossas*.¹² 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.¹³ Here, a third version is proposed, another alternative symmetry transcribing five additional iterations of the refrain at the beginning and at the end to reflect the actual utterances on the recording.

¹² The article by Augusto de Campos containing the transcription appeared in 1969/ 1970 in Spanish and German, and was cited in the USA before publication in Brazil.

¹³ Carlos Rennó, ed. *Gilberto Gil Todas as Letras* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996), p. 98. Gil here discusses composing together with Caetano, fully aware of creating ties to concrete poetry, Oswald de Andrade, pop culture and folk religion.

Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá
Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá
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Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaobá

If "Batmacumba" is a rather well known "popular vanguard" item, another composition of the early 1970s with Afro-Brazilian substance, one of the first collaborations of independent artists not usually thought of in connection with experimentalism, is a rare instance that merits scrutiny for its formal constitution. Singer-guitarist-composer João Bosco and agile lyricist Aldir Blanc wrote "Quilombo," a quasi-narrative about runaway slaves in colonial times preparing to defend their community. A calculated

process of lexical selection and fusion allows polydirectional interpretation:

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

*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*

<i>vamos disfarçar</i>	<i>vamos preparar</i>	<i>vamos devolver</i>
<i>eh camacana eh</i>	<i>camacana eh</i>	<i>camacana eh</i>
<i>eh tramatranca eh</i>	<i>tramatranca eh</i>	<i>tramatranca eh</i>
<i>eh zangafogo eh</i>	<i>zangafogo eh</i>	<i>zangafogo eh</i>
<i>eh pontacanto eh</i>	<i>pontacanto eh</i>	<i>pontacanto eh</i>

(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.¹⁴ 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 25th-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.



¹⁴ Antônio Risério, "O nome mais belo do medo", *Minas Gerais Suplemento Literário*, 8:360 (21 July 1973), 4-5.

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 New York (Nonesuch 1986). But a show at a theatre in Buenos Aires may have had the greatest impact of all. The author of the most complete and 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.¹⁵ 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 – contributed to the dissolution of concretism qua late vanguard, helping to evaporate its modernist punch. The opening up to popular music and Tropicalism, and the entry into the realm of urban popular culture, was one of the reasons that Noigandres-Invenção wound its way down as an articulated project of "erudite" nature.¹⁶

In the span c.1967-c.1987, an exceptional distinction evolved in Brazilian song through invocations of literary creeds. Actual reference to poetic heritage takes various forms and produces diverse effects. Compositions based on models from all historical periods and styles (from medieval to ultramodern) comprise only a small fraction of contemporary urban popular music, and those with concretist features are just a special subset. Yet such instances are among the most creative and stirring moments of recent vocal repertoires. Sono-reflections of *concretismo* – from Tropicália, through *pós-tropicalismo* and certain 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 compositions/recordings execution and/or graphic representation of which invoke concretist legacies. Renowned poet-performer Arnaldo Antunes – starting with the triple format *Nome* (1993, video-text-CD) – has been the main inheritor, willy nilly, of the concrete mantle (cf. his personal website). Cid Campos, solo and with Augusto, has produced rousing verbally-conscious musical material.¹⁷ Select productions by poets and poet-musicians around the country demonstrate both a generalized influence of the days of *Invenção* and more specific utilizations of concrete lore.¹⁸ Ricardo Corona (figure 5) pointedly merged the name of a rebellious author (presented in Brazil by Augusto) and icons of film, science, and rock music. Makely of Minas Gerais published and recorded "canções de ouvir com os olhos" [songs to hear with your

¹⁵ Gonzalo Aguilar, "Balanço" (Entrevista). *Revista da Biblioteca Mário de Andrade* 62 (2006), 41.

¹⁶ See especially "Concretos en el trópico" and "Fin del concretismo," final segments of chapter two of Gonzalo Aguilar, *Poesia concreta brasileira: las vanguardias en la enrucijada modernista* (Buenos Aires: Beatriz Viterbo, 2003); Portuguese version (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2005).

¹⁷ 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).

¹⁸ Cf. Marcelo Sandmann & Benito Rodriguez, *Cantos da palavra* (MBSP 01, n/d [1998]), locally produced in Curitiba.

eyes] in his eccentric ex-centric way.¹⁹ One might venture to say that, at the semi-centurion point past the launch of concrete poetry in Brazil, you just don't know what might grace your ideas, eyes and ears with verbivocovisual verve.

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

**bidadoro
da vida**

Voz: Maísa
Viola: Nylon, Aço e Violão Percussivo: Makely
Violão Aço: Antônio Amara
Percussão de Tampo: Renato Viraça

Danaide
(Mecânica) Espécie de roda hidráulica que dá um movimento de rotação à corrente de água no sentido em que se quer // (Botânica) gênero 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. Caidas Aulete

¹⁹ Ricardo Corona, *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 6 from CD booklet.

Among the Noigandres poets, music has clearly been most essential for Augusto, who has doubled as a critic of non-mainstream composers (cf. *Música de invenção* [1998], essays about experimental modern and ultra-modern figures) and has said that music for him has been an indispensable "nutrition of impulse."²⁰ 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 with audio and computational advances swirling around him. IT (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 interested in what *poesia concreta* proposed – the common or not-so-common conjugation of words, voices, instruments, and what the eyes may behold – it is gratifying to have witnessed, to have seen and heard, a trajectory from the promises and potential of initial engagements with the "verbivocovisual" to the realizations of a concretized project and multiple related projections.

²⁰ Interview by Carlos Adriano, *Cult* 17 (December 1998), 4-11.

