

Various Artists

Outro Tempo: Electronic and Contemporary Music From Brazil, 1978-1992



A red circle contains the number '8.8'. Above the circle is a red upward-pointing arrow flanked by two red triangles. Below the circle is the text 'BEST NEW REISSUE' in red.

MUSIC FROM MEMORY • 2017

by **Andy Beta**
Contributor

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This ambitious compilation features wild blends of electronics, jazz fusion, new age drifts, new-fangled digital drum machines, and traditional Brazilian percussion placed into new, curious sounds.

FEATURED TRACKS:



“Corpo Do Vento” — Priscilla Ermel

Via SoundCloud

In 1985, Brazil’s repressive junta finally allowed for direct elections for a president for the first time since their military coup of 1964. For artists and musicians of all stripes, the censorship and repression experienced during that military reign came to be known as “vazio cultural” (cultural void). The most well-known example came with the 1968 arrest and subsequent exile of two stars of Tropicália, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. But for the artists who stayed in country, the regime’s censorship became increasingly Kafkaesque to navigate. Some artists resorted to recording without words so as to elude such censorship—see Milton Nascimento’s *Milagre Dos Peixes*—but it was only as the military’s stranglehold finally loosened that others began to rediscover their voices.

In the liner notes to *Outro Tempo*—a beguiling and dizzying assemblage of fourteen Brazilian experimental and fusion artists from around the time of that country’s thawing—producer John Gómez remembers happening upon Marco Bosco’s 1983 album *Metalmadeira* in a British thrift shop and finding a handwritten note within: “Dear Mr. Eno, I would like you to know about our work, we work with tapes and sounds of Nature.” Whether or not Mr.

Eno ever happened upon this music, in the instance of taking over thirty years for this work to drift to ears, each track feels like a message in a bottle. As guitarist Nando Carneiro states in the notes, musicians during this time “had to stay caught in a cage.” Emanating from a country increasingly isolated from the rest of the world, these artists put wild blends of electronics, jazz fusion, new age drifts, new-fangled digital drum machines, and traditional Brazilian percussion into a new, curious sound.

A trace of Nascimento’s wordless music echoes through Anno Luz’s “Por Quê,” as pan flutes get stretched into a cloud and a bright, fingerpicked guitar figure moves in and out of an analog synth haze. Carneiro’s “G.R.E.S. Luxo Artesanal” also aims for a similar space, wedding his nimble samba phrases to a programmed rhythm and a synth line that slowly becomes unmoored from the beat. Some four minutes in, he splices the tape and the guitar drifts into “O Camponês,” with Carneiro’s non-verbal accompaniment capping the piece with a poignant coda.

One of the sets more thrilling juxtapositions is between the hand percussion that’s underpinned Brazilian music for centuries and these stiff new electronic components. Most of these devices had to be smuggled into the country through bribed officials. But even culturally, there was hesitation to have such computers make facsimiles of the lithe Brazilian rhythms. It’s the tangy interplay of hand drum patter and percolating electronics that gives Cinema’s “Sem Teto” a soda-pop fizz, suggestive of the similar samba hybrids envisioned a hemisphere away by bands like Antenna.

And as the military regime fell asunder and artists regained their voices, so did the music begin to expand and change. The other dialogue flowing through *Outro Tempo* is between Brazilian artists as they began to interact not just with one another, but with the indigenous tribes in Amazonia endangered by rampant deforestation going on during that decade. Some

composers traveled to the jungle so as to better interact with these ancient sounds. Bené Fonteles' haunted "O M M" chants that sacred Hindu syllable, strikes chimes, and shakes rattles until it resembles the clatter of the rainforest, while Maria Rita couples her powerful voice with tribal percussion and electric bass on "Cântico Brasileiro No.3."

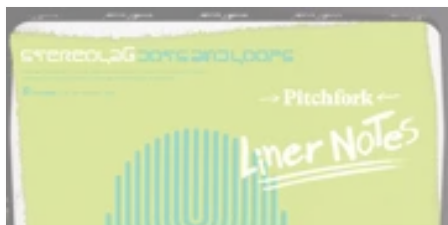
The most stunning compositions come from Priscilla Ermel, represented by the two longest cuts on the compilation. During the '80s, Ermel traveled into the rainforest to immerse herself in study of these vanishing indigenous forms, seeking to fuse it with her own sensibilities as a musician and composer. But rather than just conduct a simple integration of ancient and modern, she also reaches outside of her country for other timbres, suggesting a "world music" more holistic than such a tag implies. Across the nine-minute "Gestos de Equilíbrio," she interweaves guitar, synth, oboe and clay pot drums, but also makes foreign objects like the banjo, kalimba and Indian stringed-instrument the dilruba all sound right at home on her gently undulating ambient piece. Even more formidable is her 15-minute masterwork, "Corpo do Vento." Across a thundering battery of bombo and cultrun, Ermel breathes through ocarina, Chilean chirimia and Nepalese flute, giving the epic a ritualistic vibration. She judiciously adds piano and viola caipira and the middle section drifts into new age territory before returning to the drum-driven mesmerism of the final passage.

"They are portals through which stories, people, and cultures can be revealed," Ermel explains in the album's liner notes about how she perceives her music. And almost every track here resonates like a secret kept silent for decades. *Outro Tempo* opens up a portal for us in the present moment back to a time and place where —under the suffocating weight of a totalitarian state—a few brave musicians nevertheless could hear the sounds of a brighter world.



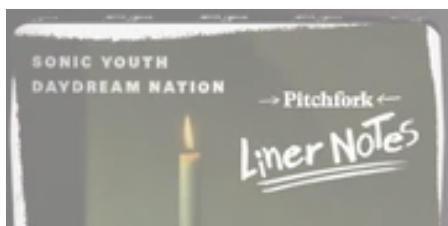
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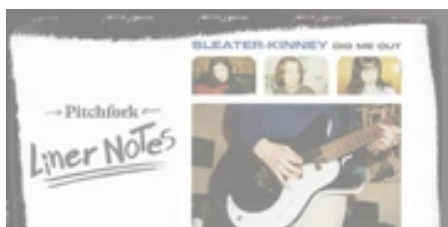
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