

## The Calendar of Sound of Hermeto Pascoal (1996)<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** In this article I take an ethnomusicological look at the Calendar of Sound – *Calendário do Som* – a musical corpus made up of 366 compositions prepared on a day to day basis by the Brazilian composer, arranger and multi-instrumentalist, Hermeto Pascoal, during the period 1996 - 1997, and published in the year 2000. The *Calendário do Som* is a popular sacred work. Its 366 autograph scores, one for each day of the year, were composed as a birthday present for all human beings, including those born in leap years. Through the publication, Hermeto Pascoal wants to transmit a message of brotherly peace, as a musical antidote to violence, racism, social inequality and ecological imbalance in Brazil and in the contemporary world. In addition to the musical notation, the scores contain illustrations, commentaries and memories about his family or related to certain musicians, friends, characters, dates and places, either real or fictitious, thus exemplifying interconnected aspects of the career, personality and innovative musical system of Hermeto Pascoal.

**Keywords:** Ethnomusicology. Hermeto Pascoal. Brazilian popular instrumental music.

### I. THE HUMAN FAMILY

In 1996, on the eve of turning 60 years old,<sup>2</sup> the Northeastern Brazilian multi-instrumentalist, arranger, singer and composer, Hermeto Pascoal, known publicly in Brazil as the “wizard of sounds” (*bruxo*), began to receive “intuitive messages” urging him to compose one piece of music each day, for an entire year, as an act of devotion. According to the self-taught Hermeto Pascoal, these “intuitive messages” were coming from the “dom” (“gift”), a spiritual and divine figure that he believes to be his music teacher.<sup>3</sup> Thus, from June 23, 1996, until his birthday, on June 22, 1997, Hermeto<sup>4</sup> took on the mission of creating a new piece of instrumental music each day. Wherever he might be, in his house in the neighborhood of Jabour during the broadcast of a soccer game, or before a family party with his numerous children and grandchildren, or even in another country, after an evening concert with his Group,<sup>5</sup> Hermeto Pascoal had to compose and write the piece of music for that day.

<sup>1</sup> This article has been translated into English by Tom Moore, and was originally published in Portuguese by *Revista USP* (2009, n. 82, p. 164-188). I dedicate this work to the social scientist and anthropologist, Prof. Estevão Rafael Fernandes, to whom I am grateful for allowing me to attend his classes in the course on “Health and Disease among the Xavante Indians of Mato Grosso”, offered through the Graduate Program in Public Health of the National School of Public Health of Fiocruz, in 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Hermeto Pascoal was born on June 22, 1936, in Lagoa da Canoa, municipality of Arapiraca, Alagoas.

<sup>3</sup> See Pascoal, Hermeto 2000: 16-9, and Costa-Lima Neto, Luiz. 2011., on the way in which the esthetic experience and the spiritual experience are interconnected in Hermeto's musical system. See also, Nettl, [1983]2005: 27-42, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Edition.

<sup>4</sup> It is a common practice in Brazilian academic writing for extremely well-known public figures, such as Hermeto Pascoal, to be referred to by their first names.

<sup>5</sup> Composed at the time by the musicians Itiberê Zwarg, Márcio Bahia, Fábio Pascoal, Vinícius Dorin and André Marques.

Four years after the end of the task, in 2000, the hundred of written scores were then published in facsimile with the title of *Calendário do Som*.

In the footnotes and on the sides of the autograph scores in the work, the composer writes commentaries about his family, about musicians, important places and dates from his career, as well as other annotations and illustrations mixing musical symbols with surreal and abstract motifs. The hundreds of scores, commentaries and illustrations put down by Hermeto make the *Calendário do Som* a most valuable document. Like a puzzle, a gigantic mosaic, in this work the musical text and the musical context are related in a complementary way. Bringing together musical examples and annotations taken from *Calendário do Som*, besides interviews with the musician, I have elaborated a theoretical tool of ethnomusicological analysis interrelating the spoken word, writing and musical system of Hermeto Pascoal. I named this *continuum separação-fusão paradoxal*, made up of four successive phases: 1. *Separation*, 2. the *Melody or Embolada of opposites*, 3. the *Harmony or Polyphony of opposites* and, 4. *Paradoxical Fusion*, about which I will have more to say below.

In the note for no. 18: 40, a festive and syncopated dance in *B-flat major*, Hermeto compares the 366 musical compositions of the publication to daily “prayers”. Through them, he intends to pay homage to “all those celebrating birthdays in the world (...) including those born in leap years [on February 29],” with the intention of making human beings “love each other more more and more” (Pascoal, 2000: 17-8). Thus, like the concentric rings formed by those dancing the *ciranda*,<sup>6</sup> in his imaginary choreography the *Calendário do Som* goes outward from the individual to reach society, the planet and other galaxies.



Ex. 1 July, 10 – “Music no. 18: 40” - measures 1 – 8

## II. OPEN FORM: THE BEST EXIT IS THE AIRPORT

At the head of each score in the publication, Hermeto indicates the number of the piece, in addition to the day and the place in which it was composed and written down. In order to assist his vision, damaged by albinism, the self-taught<sup>7</sup> musician wrote the majority of the scores in the publication with a felt-tip pen, using liquid paper to correct any errors. In some scores the performer has to make an effort in order to identify the notes and chords written by Hermeto Pascoal, especially when these have been eliminated and re-written, but in the majority of the scores there are no correction and the writing leaves no doubts. In this sense, the comment made by Antônio Carlos Jobim (1927 – 1994) about Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887 – 1959) is also partially applicable to

<sup>6</sup> The *ciranda* or *cirandinha* is a type of music and a circle dance which is very popular in Brazil, brought by the colonizing Portuguese. See Marcondes, 1977: 193.

<sup>7</sup> Hermeto Pascoal was taught to read by the teacher Zélia Gaio, to whom he pays homage in piece number 317: 339. He learned to read and write music on his own.

Hermeto Pascoal: “someone who writes in ink is someone who doesn't make mistakes. I, for example, work with pencil and eraser. Sometimes, more with the eraser than with the pencil.”<sup>8</sup> Hermeto dedicates to Tom Jobim the pieces no. 79: 101 and no. 80: 102, from the *Calendário do Som*. These two pieces were composed by Hermeto Pascoal after a studio session with the singer Jane Duboc, in which the two recorded “Chovendo na Roseira” and “Desafinado”, by Tom Jobim. Hermeto paid homage to the *bossa-nova* composer by composing two variations: a *song-waltz* in 3/4 and a *samba* with jazzified harmony and blue notes. After playing and sing this samba several times, I noted to my surprise that the rhythm of its theme is a variation on the rhythm of the theme of “Chovendo na Roseira”, that is, in an ingenious way, Hermeto Pascoal utilized an originally ternary rhythm and fit it into a binary samba rhythm.

Through the headnotes written by Hermeto Pascoal for the scores in the *Calendário do Som*, we can verify that the compositions prepared between June 1996 and June 1997 were done at his house in Jabour, or in the cities where he played with his Group during this period, that is, São Paulo, Florianópolis, Buenos Aires, La Plata, Rosário, Montevideo, Lisbon, Porto, Boston and Nova York, as well as Ilha 3<sup>a</sup> in the Azores. It is important to note that during the creation of the *Calendário do Som*, as was the case during his entire career, Hermeto Pascoal divided his time between playing inside and outside Brazil. If it were only a matter of shows and discs in Brazil, Hermeto and the musicians from the groups which accompanied him would not have been able to support themselves financially. In the face of the competition in the cultural industry and of the transnational recording companies, along with the lack of government policies supporting popular instrumental music, the best solution for some Brazilian musicians unhappily still seems to be the airport.

The sentence “the best way out for the Brazilian musician is the airport” is attributed to Antonio Carlos Jobim. Ironically, Rio de Janeiro's international airport got the bossa nova composer's name. The country known internationally through the samba, carnival and the bossa nova song *Garota de Ipanema* (“Tall and tan and young and lovely, the girl from Ipanema goes walking, and when she passes, each one she passes goes ‘Ahhh’ – English lyrics by Norman Gimbel), is not, however, just a mythical tropical paradise, adorned by smiling black samba dancers and white girls deeply tanned by the sun on the beach of Ipanema, a district in Rio de Janeiro where the well-to-do classes live. These musical “picture postcards” were constructed during the 20th Century, in accordance with the political-economic history of Brazil. The samba was used by the populist government of Getulio Vargas (1930-1945, 1950-1954) as a symbol of national identity, with a view to promoting a “racial democracy” and the social integration of the country, while the bossa nova in turn appeared during the Juscelino Kubitschek government (1956-1961), being used as a musical icon of economic development and political stability.

It is said that the years 1996-1997, when Hermeto Pascoal was writing the *Calendário do Som*, belong to the period of his career when he spent the longest time without recording commercially, that is, from 1992 to 1999. This forced fallow period of seven years began at the time of the release of his CD *Festa dos Deuses*, in 1992, recorded for *PolyGram*. The recording company delayed the delivery of the CD, and as a consequence when the European tour intended to launch the disc took place (between September and November of 1992) the product was not available for sale. *PolyGram* also did not publicize the official show launching the CD at the Sala Cecília Meireles/RJ, nor made the CDs available to be sold at the Sala during the event. Hermeto Pascoal did not restrain his irritation during the show, and soon thereafter broke his contract with the powerful transnational recording company.

Thus, while going through a long period of commercial invisibility, Hermeto Pascoal composed the *Calendário do Som*. On one hand – seven years with no recording released under his name, on the other, 366 compositions produced in only one year. Although Hermeto always tries to maintain his good humor and joviality, in some of the pieces and annotations in the *Calendário do Som*, however, the composer seems to vent to the reader. This happens, for example, in a *chorinho*<sup>9</sup> in A minor, made for those celebrating their birthdays

<sup>8</sup> Tom Jobim cited by Cabral, Sérgio. 1997: 128.

<sup>9</sup> A genre which appeared in the later decades of the nineteenth century, initially as a syncopated style in which

on Sept. 7, Independence Day in Brazil. After finishing the composition, Hermeto notes on the score: “[I hope] that one day instrumental music has the place that it deserves, playing on the radio, and being respected” (no. 77: 99).



Ex. 2 September, 7 – “Music no. 77: 99” - measures 1 - 8

### III. “SANTO ANTÔNIO” AND “SÃO JORGE” PLAY IN THE BAND

The references found in the footnotes of the scores in the *Calendário do Som* show what a varied repertoire of folk, popular and classical styles is present in Hermeto's musical system: *calango* (no. 68: 90); *abooio* (no. 221: 243); *cirandinha* (no. 344: 366); *frevo* (no. 269: 291); “música de carnaval” (no. 232: 254; 234: 256); *baião* (no. 290: 312); *canção* (no. 259: 281); *serenata* (no. 75: 98, e nº 204: 226); *valsa* (no. 212: 234; 295: 317); *maxixe* (no. 51: 73); *choro* (no. 125: 147; 222: 244); *mambo* (no. 68: 90); *forró* (no. 273: 295; 356: 378); *samba* (no. 293: 315); *blues* (no. 290: 312); *jazz* (282: 304); *European art music* (no. 189: 211); and, finally, *marchas*, *dobrados* and other genres and rhythms played by the *bandas* of cities in the interior (no. 230: 252; 245: 267; 258: 280; 266: 288; 319: 341; 332: 354).

The relatively large quantity of annotations in the scores making reference to bands of cities in the interior confirms the importance of these musical groups in the training of young musicians in Brazil, and also, in the creation of an audience for instrumental music. Hermeto Pascoal did not play in the band in Arapiraca, during his childhood, but he never forgot the concerts and festivals at the bandstand and in the city squares. The bands literally “shaped his thinking”, influencing him, in the creation of various unconventional instruments. Among the instruments and sound objects created by Hermeto Pascoal, one of the most appreciated is a teakettle, into the spout of which the musician introduces a *bombardino* mouthpiece, and which can be played either empty or full of water. Hermeto uses it as a wind instrument, similar to the brass in an imaginary band.

We could think, by analogy, that in the annotations and pieces of the *Calendário do Som* Hermeto Pascoal alternates two types of sonority: with or without *mute*. The contrast can make itself felt through the type of genre or musical style chosen by Hermeto Pascoal in the *Calendário do Som*: softer or slower, in the case of the *canções*, *waltzes*, *serestas* and *baladas*; or relatively louder or quicker, as in the case of the *samba*, *marcha*, *choro* or *forró*. For example, in the annotations of the publication there appear various symbols associated with the feminine, for example: “*divine mother*” (slow *samba* no. 03: 25 and *ballad* no. 159: 181), *woman* and “*pregnant moon*” (*waltz* no. 303: 325), “*mother harmony*” (*waltz* no. 143: 165). I believe that, in Hermeto's

popular musicians played European dances such as the waltz, polka, mazurka, schottisch etc. *Choro* or *chorinho* literally means “cry” or “little cry”.

psychology, the symbols ‘mother-woman-moon-harmony’ are associated with his mother and with his family and with a *soft, muted sonority*, while the symbols ‘father-man-sun-rhythm’ are related to his father and to the public sphere of his personality and to a *loud, unmuted sonority*. For example, on the 1979 LP<sup>10</sup>, Hermeto Pascoal dedicates to his father and mother, respectively, the songs “São Jorge”<sup>11</sup> and “Santo Antônio”, the former a “warrior” saint, and the latter, a “marrying” saint. The weak or strong *intensity* of what is enunciated also depends on its emotional charge, as the annotation of no. 338: 360 confirms: “I wrote this piece thinking about when I was living a boarding-house. You should not keep the truth bottled up, but wait for the right time, and *put your mouth on the tube* for those who want to hear” [my emphasis]. The musical passage below, for instance, is part of a calm lydium modal ballad, dedicated in memoriam to Dona Vergelina Eulália de Oliveira, Hermeto Pascoal’s mother.



Ex. 3 November, 28 – “Music no. 159: 181” - measures 1 – 8

As music no. 80:102 exemplified, in which Hermeto Pascoal transposes the ternary meter of the waltz-jazz melody *Chovendo na Roseira*, by Antônio Carlos Jobim, into a binary samba meter, in various annotations and pieces in the *Calendário do Som* these contrasting sonorities, genres and personas are juxtaposed, as, for example, in the “samba-canção” composed on March 8, International Women’s Day (no. 259: 281), in the “modern-regional” (no. 321: 343) or in the “waltz-choro” (no. 282: 304). The musical mixture suggests a psychological reading: in symbolically uniting, *mother and father*, the *son* arises, that is, the individual Hermeto Pascoal, whose trademark is “to be influenced by the entire world, so that everything is always a mix, that’s the way that it’s good” (no. 316: 338).

#### IV. THE PARADOX AS TONIC

This broad spectrum of Brazilian and international styles and genres caused Hermeto Pascoal to define his musical system in a paradoxical way, as is customary for him, noting in the *Calendário do Som* that he composes “Brazilian universal music.”<sup>12</sup> His musical system problematizes the polarity between national and cosmopolitan, to the extent that he opens himself to influences from the entire world, but, simultaneously, refuses to negate his roots.<sup>13</sup> This attitude shines through in Hermeto’s compositions through the sudden way in which he introduces, systematically, new rhythmic figures and chords, sometimes completely modifying the

<sup>10</sup> See discography.

<sup>11</sup> I note that in popular Afro-Brazilian syncretism this saint corresponds to the warrior Orixá Ogum.

<sup>12</sup> See Pascoal, 2000, op. cit., commentary annotated in the score for piece number n°. 301, p. 323.

<sup>13</sup> See Reily, 2000: 8.

style, always in search of the unusual. In addition to this, frequently the introductions, interludes and codas of his pieces are sudden contrasts, provoking surprise, shock, or suspense, three trademarks of Hermeto's *rhapsodic* musical style.

I believe that the search for the unusual can also be seen in his discourse, especially in the way in which he links and superimposes, in an improvised way, the contrasts in the creation and in the expression of his thinking. Let us look at, for example, a passage taken from a recent interview with Hermeto Pascoal:

There are lots of people who are 18 years old playing old, square things. These people who play *chorinho*, regional music, MPB, begin to play like old men, looking like old men. If you are born today you need to be well-informed. The guy is born and listens to Pixinguinha. The music is pretty, and has those square chordal accoutrements. If the guy is born today and they don't tell him that this is old music, it's just the same as if he sees an old building without knowing that it is old. Not that old things are bad. But the new is being born so old (Yoda, 2006).

This passage gives the impression that, sometimes, Hermeto Pascoal himself is surprised by what he says, as if the construction and the oral expression of his thinking were themselves the fruits of improvisation. The citation exemplifies the pleasure with which Hermeto plays with words and constructs his sentences deliberately attracting opposite poles, “new” versus “old”, as the following passages illustrate: ‘Young people’ who play ‘old, square things’, or ‘the guy is born’ and ‘listens to **Pixinguinha**’ and, finally, ‘the new is being born so old’. As in the *stretto* of a fugue, in which the entries of the subject and the counter-subject are closest together, Hermeto Pascoal gradually brings together the contrasts represented by the words “new” and “old”, until they are superimposed (in “the new is being born so old”). As the final product of this process, a third concept is thus born, the “new-old”, the result of the approximation and paradoxical amalgamation of the two initial contrasts. I will label here these four successive phases as 1. *Separation*, 2. *Melody or Embolada of opposites*, 3. *Harmony or Polyphony of opposites*, and 4. *Paradoxical Fusion*. In the *embolada* [mixed], a Northeastern musical genre, a pair of singers creates fast, improvised and rhymed verses. The words are alliterated, losing their semantic value and acquiring value as pure sound.<sup>14</sup> In a similar fashion, in the *melody of opposites* Hermeto Pascoal links and brings together the opposing terms and gradually obliterates their differences. When the melodic *embolada* brings the contrasts together to the point of superimposing them, harmonically, the *polyphonic of opposites* and the *paradoxical fusion* (the “new-old”) takes place. Through polyphony, two or more different melodies are combined in counterpoint. By analogy, in the *polyphonic of opposites* Hermeto Pascoal superimposes disparate objects, causing them to bang together, thus creating a new entity, a *chord*. In this way, the *separation*, the *melody* and *harmony of opposites* and the *paradoxical fusion* form a single conceptual *continuum*. The focal point of this *sociomusical texture*, towards which *melody* and *harmony* converge, is the *paradox*. It is the *tonic*.

I present this conceptual *continuum* in the table below:

1st phase	2nd phase	3rd phase	4th phase
Separation (notes)	Embolada (melody)	Polyphony (harmony)	<b>Paradoxical Fusion</b>
A # B	A + B	AB	<b>C (A = B)</b>

*Table 1 – From separation to paradoxical fusion*

<sup>14</sup> See Travassos, Elizabeth, 2001: 89-103

The *paradoxical fusion* seems to be an unconscious mechanism present both in the musical system of Hermeto Pascoal, and in his personality, in a wide-ranging way. It appears, for example, in the 17 references to food noted by Hermeto Pascoal in the *Calendário do Som*.<sup>15</sup> The gastronomic list includes the following items: fish, red wine, shrimp, greens, manioc, *imbuzada*, sweet potato, beef, corn, *quentão*, beans, bananas, oranges, taffy... I believe that there is a cultural and synesthetic relation<sup>16</sup> between the musical system of Hermeto Pascoal and food. For example, in the score for no. 208: 230, the composer notes that he used the cavaquinho, "not the one you eat, but the one you play", punning with the double meaning of the word "cavaquinho", which names both the four-stringed instrument brought to Brazil by the colonizing Portuguese, as well as a fried sweet widely appreciated in the Brazilian Northeast. In no. 231: 253; in turn, Hermeto Pascoal *embolou* [mixes], in the same sentence, the foods and musical genres of the Caribbean (Cuba) and of Brazil, rhyming: "this music is a mixture of mambo in two, with chorinho and beans with flour and rice ("*Esta música é uma mistura de mambo em dois, com chorinho e feijão com farinha e arroz.*") In mixing musical and culinary genres Hermeto creates a new recipe, "music-food", a multi-sensual and multi-ethnic delight.<sup>17</sup>

## V. IMMIGRANT HARMONIES AND IMPROVISATIONS

To return to the term "Brazilian universal music", coined by Hermeto Pascoal in the *Calendário do Som* in order to define his musical system, I believe that it is important to go more deeply into some of its aspects in the light of the notions of the *melody* and *harmony* of opposites. Hermeto Pascoal states that Brazil is "universal" due to its mixture of Amerindians, Europeans and Africans. In this sense, the "universal" musical system of Hermeto Pascoal would be a broadening of the already wide frontiers of Brazilian music. In bringing together and superimposing the continents in a symbolic way, Hermeto creates a new territory, the imaginary boundaries of which include, through the *Calendário do Som*, all the human beings on the planet. However – returning to the reality of daily life – Hermeto Pascoal only survives thanks to the income earned by shows outside Brazil, and in addition, his records are not found in the stores and his instrumental music is rarely played on commercial radio in Brazil. Working from his example, it would be appropriate to ask up to what point ethnic groups, social classes and regions are really integrated in the Brazilian *sociomusical texture*. Has there been a democratic, *polyphonic fusion*, or on the contrary, have ethnic, social and musical contrasts remained relatively unchanged?

I intend to answer this question over the course of this article, it being appropriate, for the moment, to cite two annotations taken from the *Calendário do Som*. For example, in score no. 315: 337; Hermeto Pascoal annotates: "I wrote this music thinking about the *morro* with its energy and its people, always struggling against everything and everyone. Those who think that the *morro* has no voice are not losing anything through hoping. Long live the *morro*, always!" One finds that commencing in the Getúlio Vargas government and intensifying during Juscelino Kubitschek's, there was a massive migration of the rural population to the big cities of the Southeast region in search of better jobs.<sup>18</sup> In the quote mentioned above, the word 'morro' can be considered to be a synonym of "favela", designating the urban communities of the Southeast (the richest region in the country) inhabited by immigrants from the Northeast and by low-income workers, mostly black and mixed-race (*mestiços*).

The commentary noted by the immigrant from Alagoas, Hermeto Pascoal, resident of the neighborhood of Jaboté, in the suburbs of the city of Rio de Janeiro, is a testimony from someone who knows well the reality

<sup>15</sup> See the annotations on the scores for pieces number 82: 104; 83: 105; 152: 174; 208: 230; 230: 252; 231: 253; 233: 255; 274: 296; 279: 301; 280: 302; 289: 311; 298: 320; 299: 321; 337: 359; 345: 367; 356: 378.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion concerning synesthesia from the ethnomusicological point of view, see Merriam, Alan, 1964: 85-102.

<sup>17</sup> For an inter-relation between classical-romantic composers and cooking, see Nettl, Bruno, 1995: 24-5.

<sup>18</sup> The first Brazilian favelas appeared on the hills in Rio de Janeiro at the end of the nineteenth century. They were initially settled by soldiers who had fought at religious war of *Canudos*, as well as by recently freed former slaves.

of the peripheries of the large cities on the Rio-São Paulo axis. In another annotation, the musician confides:

In composing this music I often remembered my little house that I bought with the sweat of my body and of the Sun. I had to play four days of Carnaval at the Clube Jequitimar in Santos, São Paulo; I played with a *surdão* from the drums, and then switched off with piano, all this simply to pay the down payment [on the house] (...) I finished paying, only God knows how, but this is all to say that it was all in vain, because they took my house, and even made a false deed. It was in São Miguel Paulista, Vila Mara, Rua Adriano Seabra, number 19 (no. 291: 407).

As is the case with other compositions made in earlier periods of Hermeto Pascoal's career,<sup>19</sup> none of the manuscript scores in the *Calendário do Som* have key signatures. In Hermeto's musical system – and in his life – the (harmonic) changes and the modulations are constant, in almost every measure, as is illustrated by the annotation at the foot of no. 143: 165; made for those celebrating their birthdays on November 12: "I composed this music in the twelve major and minor keys. Long live mother harmony!" Hermeto writes musical accidentals as the notes of the melody and the chords well forth from his imagination during composition. To sum up, Hermeto does not use key signatures because he never knows beforehand what he will compose, since for him "it is necessary to compose and write as if improvising, and to improvise as it were written."<sup>20</sup> In this way, improvisation affects both the form in which Hermeto creates and constructs his oral discourse, as well as his musical writing, for Hermeto improvisation fulfills an *existential status*.

## VI. TEXTURES OF THIS WORLD AND OF THE OTHER

Hermeto writes first the melodies and then the harmony, but, in fact, while he was writing the melody, at the same time, he was mentally composing the harmony, using his internal hearing. This can be demonstrated with the annotation of no. 190: 212: "This was a hell of a lot of work, because I composed [the melody] with the cavaquinho thinking of a harmonization. When I got to the piano a completely strange harmony came to me." The majority of the pieces in the *Calendário do Som* were written in systems of two staves, that is, the melody on the upper staff, and the harmony on the staff below, using chord symbols. In some pieces, Hermeto wrote, above the chord symbols, the rhythm with which the chords ought to be played (no. 173: 195; 214; 236; 328: 350), while in others, he noted the notes and the rhythms of the harmony directly on the staff, in the manner of classical music (no. 58: 80; 160: 182; 189: 211; 213; 235; 342: 364).

Even when Hermeto Pascoal composes something tonal or modal, he can modulate, modify the measure, rhythm, style or the harmony, even superimposing tonalities and modes, and abandoning traditional chord symbols, instead writing two superimposed chords (no. 74: 96; 121: 143; 190: 212). This is a style of musical notation created by Hermeto, in which the lower part of the chord symbol indicates the lowest note of the chord and some other interval to be played by the left hand, while the upper part of the symbol indicates another superimposed chord, major, minor, augmented or diminished, containing as well, sixths, sevenths, ninths, etc., to be played by the right hand. This kind of writing, with two chord symbols, is systematically used in the *Calendário do Som* and makes possible dissonant harmonic combinations such as polychords and clusters, even going as far as atonality. Hermeto Pascoal's musical grammar has as its model his precocious experimentation with inharmonic sounds from pieces of metal and other unconventional sound sources during his childhood, as well as drawing on the musicality of speech, and animal sounds. In his maturity, Hermeto made alterity his paradigm for sound, affirming the esthetic equivalence between noise and musical sound, and

<sup>19</sup> See Costa-Lima Neto, Luiz, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> According to the statement by Jovino Santos Neto, in an interview with me in 1997.

declaring that “the atonal is the most natural thing that exists.”<sup>21</sup>

The musical example that follows demonstrates the system of double ciphering created by Hermeto Pascoal. Below the melody and the ciphers, I have written the crypted chords for the score, modulating enharmonically two notes of the third chord.

*Ex. 4 December, 29 – “Music no. 190: 212” - measure 6*

Top Staff: G major (B-flat) - B-flat 6, G 6, F# 4 5 7, D# 9, A# 4 5 6 - 8
   
 Bottom Staff: A major (C-sharp) - C-sharp

Most of the scores in the *Calendário do Som* do not provide indications of tempo, dynamics, articulation or character. I do not believe, however, that these omissions are by chance, or the result of inattention on the part of the composer. Two annotations support my opinion: in the score for no. 99: 121; for example, Hermeto Pascoal annotates: “I don’t like to talk about the style of the music, nor about the rhythm, so as not to influence the worthy performer. Get by!”, while in the score for no. 221: 243; Hermeto indicates that the rhythm of this piece may be played *rubato* or *a tempo*. In simply suggesting musical styles, rhythms, or tempos<sup>22</sup>, Hermeto Pascoal tries to establish a “dialogical” or “polyvocal” performance with the performer.<sup>23</sup>

The composition is not understood by Hermeto as simply the emanation of one person, but rather as a collective construction of various voices. Thus, he offers the performers the possibility of musical choice in the *performance*, and so, in a certain way, makes them co-authors of his compositions. It is important to note that one of the greatest qualities of Hermeto Pascoal is his capacity to lead and bring together musicians. His leadership, however, is anti-hierarchical, since Hermeto does not want to be joined by mechanical instrumentalists, mere reproducers of scores. In this way, all the ensembles and groups which accompany him are necessarily provisional, since Hermeto teaches his musicians to play their instruments well, to learn other instruments, and at the end of the process, to become arrangers and composers as well. The objective of his “school”, although Hermeto refuses the title of “teacher”, is to let the musicians develop, and take flight with their own wings, beginning solo careers.

With the objective of developing musically the readers and performers of the *Calendário do Som*, various pieces in the collection are technical studies, as shown by the following commentaries by Hermeto Pascoal: “a very quick waltz, just to test the soloists” (no. 295: 317), “a kind of chord, but with modulations” (no. 61: 83), “a [measure of] five [beats], very full of chords, and thus needing attention” (no. 200: 222), “for you, one more in 7/4 [because] I think it's time to get used to playing *chorinho* in seven” (no. 224: 246), and,

<sup>21</sup> In an interview with me taking place in 1997, see also Costa-Lima Neto, Luiz, 2011, 2015, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> See Santos Neto, Joyino de, 2001: 5.

<sup>23</sup> The concepts of dialogical performance and "polyvocality" were presented in Graham, Laura R., 1995, 137: 174, with respect to the processes of oral and musical communication of the Xavante Indians in central Brazil.

finally; “this music is very erudite and full of modulations (...) careful with the left hand!” (no.189: 211).

The musical example below, a modulatory *study*, demonstrates the *separation-fusion continuum*. Every four bars the rhythmic compression gradually increases, going from the quarter-notes and eighth-notes of the right hand (*separation*, c. 1 - 4), to sixteenth-notes (*mixed*, c. 5 - 8) and from these to the semiquavers of the left hand in a polyrhythm with the semiquavers of the right hand (*polyphony of opposites*, c. 9 - 13), until the melodic rise of c. 14 - 16 and the subsequent relaxing, partially reached by the final dissonant chord, a dominant B in the third inversion, with the 9<sup>th</sup> added, augmented 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> (*fusion*).



Ex. 5 December, 28 – “Music 189: 211”

But the dialogue which Hermeto Pascoal establishes with performers in the *Calendário do Som* has yet another facet. Through “polyvocality”, the composer and the performer become depersonalized, both becoming co-participants with the “dom”, that is, with God. The music makes it possible for them to share the same “spiritual” family. In the musical system of Hermeto Pascoal religious and esthetic experiences are inextricably interconnected. For example, in the score for no. 324: 346; Hermeto Pascoal annotates: “My compositions are like *daydreaming*. In this music I made a great journey by Jipe on the road of red clay with plantations on both sides of the road” [my emphasis]. To initiate the *paradoxical fusion* Hermeto Pascoal leaves the conscious state and through intuition, composition and improvisation enters into a trance-like state to get in touch with the unconscious and with the “other-self within”<sup>24</sup>, called by the composer as ‘gift’ or ‘God’, as the table below shows:

<sup>24</sup> The concept of the “other self” or of the “other-self within” was created by the English ethnomusicologist John Blacking (1928-1990). “The other self is the memory or prospect of self in the experience of transcendence.” See Sager, Rebecca, in Reilly, Suzel Ana (org.), 2006: 143-169.

1st phase	2nd phase	3rd phase	4th phase
Consciousness # Inconsciousness	Consciousness + Inconsciousness	Consciousness - Inconsciousness	<b>“Other-self within” (“gift” or “God”)</b>
Reason	Intuition	Composition (“daydreaming”)	<b>Improvisation Trance</b>
Performer # Composer	Performer + Composer	Performer - Composer	<b>Creator</b>
Separation (notas)	Embolada (melody)	Polyphony (harmony)	<b>Paradoxical Fusion</b>
Cotidian World	“Santo Antônio” Mother	“São Jorge” Father	<b>Hermeto Pascoal Son</b>
A # B	A + B	AB	<b>C (A = B)</b>

Table 2 – From separate self to self-transcendence

“All my compositions start with an idea and end with a change of style. Why? I answer: because the *music is universal and omnipotent has no borders*, nor any prejudice. The real music is like life and nature and love that cure the pain.” (272: 294) [my emphasis]. For Hermeto Pascoal, music is a ritual. In this sense, the annotations and musical compositions of the *Calendário do Som* are daily rituals of initiation, which attempt to go beyond the quotidian to enter the virtual and eternal time of the ‘omnipotent’. Through ‘universal music’ the human being becomes the *creator*. According to Hermeto Pascoal’s “musical cosmology”, the human being, the nature, the animals, the spirits, the stars and the planets are all parts of one single ecosystem. The imbalance of this harmonious and divine ecosystem is caused by the intrusion of certain *dissonant* elements, as shown by the two following annotations: “Money is the cause of the arrogance and the rotteness” (nº. 167: 397), and; “Hey, do not take anymore oranges, you already got your hands full, leaves some for the others. It’s better to listen to some groovy music. Let’s do it” (nº. 233: 255).

## VII. RITORNELLO OF THE FUTURE: CIRCULAR TIME

The styles of waltz and *choro*, mentioned above by Hermeto, relate him to the *choro* musicians of the beginning of the last century, such as Pixinguinha and others, who played, at their *choro* sessions, in a syncopated way, various European dances such as waltz, polka, mazurka, schottische, etc. Hermeto dedicates to Pixinguinha no. 305: 327; composed on April 23, the birthday of the flutist, and now celebrated as National Choro Day in Brazil. The composition is a modulating waltz, and its chromatic melody written for the tessitura of the flute, becomes atonal in the final measures. At the bottom of the score, Hermeto Pascoal annotates: “Today there is a party in heaven - it’s the birthday of the great master Pixinguinha!”

The instrumental ensembles of *frevo*, the *cirandas* of Recife (no. 344: 366) and “the different voice and guitar of Edu Lobo” (no. 250: 272), are also present symbolically in the *Calendário do Som*, as well as the maestros, popular arrangers - and classical composers – César Guerra-Peixe, Duda, Joaquim Augusto, Clóvis Pereira and Radamés Gnatalli. These were remembered by Hermeto Pascoal in no. 257: 279; a *frevo* in *F major*, written for instruments in *B-flat*, for example, the trumpet or tenor sax, instruments typical of the ensembles playing *frevo*, and of the big bands. The ensembles and orchestras directed by these maestros had a profound impact on Hermeto Pascoal, beginning when the adolescent musician arrived in Recife, in 1950, at age fourteen, beginning his immigration from Lagoa da Canoa to the great urban centers of Brazil and the world. Hermeto told me in an interview that he used to go to listen to the rehearsals of the orchestra of Rádio Jornal do Comércio in Recife, and would sit all the way at the back of the auditorium in order to appreciate, marveling, the arrangements and instrumental timbres of the woodwinds, brass, strings and percussion. Really, the orchestral sonorities of the radio stations of Recife, Caruaru, João Pessoa and Rio de Janeiro echoed in the memory of Hermeto Pascoal for more than twenty years, and in his first two discs under his own name - recorded

respectively in 1972 in the USA, and in 1973, in Brazil - Hermeto composed and arranged for big band and orchestra of tuned bottles, as well as playing various melodic and harmonic instruments in a virtuoso and original way.

Other important chronological references from Hermeto's career, mentioned in the *Calendário do Som*, have to do with professional experiences from his youth, when he was a hired pianist at bars and nightclubs in Recife, Rio de Janeiro (1958-1961) and São Paulo (1961-1967, no. 163: 185), when he was a flutist in the regional ensembles of Pernambuco do Pandeiro, Fafá Lemos and Copinha (1958-1961, no. 278: 300) and when he was performer, arranger and composer for the *Sambrasa Trio*, the *Som Quatro* (1964) and above all, in the *Quarteto Novo* (1967, no. 288: 310). This would be the basis to which later Hermeto Pascoal would add other instruments such as, for example, drumset, guitar, cavaquinho<sup>25</sup>, the tenor saxophone, trumpet, flugelhorn<sup>26</sup> and the *safo*, a Japanese string instrument, defined by Hermeto as "a cross between a *berimbau* and a typewriter."<sup>27</sup>

At the bottom of no. 348: 370; Hermeto Pascoal refers to a concept of great importance to his musical system, the "sound of the aura". Along with sounds from unconventional sources, and animal sounds, "sound of the aura" is part of the same group of related atonal sound events, with their origin in his childhood. It clearly demonstrates how Hermeto's musical system incorporates unconventional sound elements taken from nature and daily life. In "sound of the aura", the rapid variations of pitch and rhythm found in human speech are considered to be melodies, the atonal and asymmetrical rhythmic-melodic outlines of which are perceived by the absolute hearing of Hermeto Pascoal, and played on conventional instruments, such as electronic keyboards. The technique, which requires an extremely acute ear on the part of the aural musician,<sup>28</sup> demonstrates how Hermeto makes the exotic familiar, and vice versa. According to him, "sound of the aura" functions like a camera: it records the "image" of the sound which was invisible up to that point, thus revealing the musicality – or aura – of that which is not conventionally heard as music, as for example, the sounds of the human voice. The aural musician is simultaneously photographer, developer, and creator. It is he who captures the sound-moment through recording, develops the negative of the captured sound, decodes the pitches and rhythms of the voice, and creates, transforms, filters and modifies the sound-image, stamping the final result with his own imagination.

Hermeto Pascoal does not usually write the "sound of the aura" on the staff, because the atonal and non-tempered frequencies, as well as the asymmetric rhythms of speech melodies, can only be registered in score in an approximate way. No. 348: 370 –in which Hermeto Pascoal makes reference to "sound of the aura" – demonstrates, however, some of the characteristics of speech melodies. For example, the fifteen initial notes of the melody use the complete set of twelve notes of the chromatic scale. In accompanying the atonal melody, Hermeto Pascoal makes use of almost only one major chord, with sixth, seventh and ninth. Once more, the musician superimposes and fuses opposites: the unconventional atonal melody is accompanied conventionally by chords in superimposed thirds, played on the keyboard. The *fusion of opposites* present in "sound of the aura" produces a third paradoxical substance that is no longer nature (speech), nor civilization (major chord).

<sup>25</sup> By means of his annotations, Hermeto Pascoal informs us that he used this instrument in order to compose the pieces nos. 84: 106; 104: 126; 173: 195; 190: 212; e 208: 230 of *Calendário do Som*.

<sup>26</sup> The composer informs us that he used this instrument in order to compose the pieces nos. 89: 111 e 249: 271, do *Calendário do Som*.

<sup>27</sup> 'Berimbau' is a musical instrument of African origin. See Pascoal, 2000: 13.

<sup>28</sup> To appreciate Hermeto Pascoal playing the "Sound of the Aura" of the French actor Yves Montand see: <http://br.youtube.com/watch?v=SrgveUpwCnM&feature=related>



Ex. 6 June, 5 – “Music no. 348: 370” - measures 1 - 4

The annotations of the *Calendário do Som* present, finally, particular fictitious spatial and temporal references, as, for example, the memories that Hermeto supposes that he has from his other “incarnation” in Vienna, an important cultural center for European classical music, where he believes that he learned to play in 3/4 (no. 316: 338; and no. 341: 363). The gallery of characters mentioned includes such disparate figures as Jesus Christ (whose birthday is celebrated in no. 186: 208), the sports broadcaster José Carlos Araújo (no. 55: 77), the spiritist medium Doutor Fritz (no. 267: 289), and his pet parrot Floriano (no. 309: 331).

These, and other characters and apparently picturesque references, should, however, be interpreted in a *dense* way.<sup>29</sup> For example, the composer draws the figure of a bird on the sides and in the repeat signs of the scores in the *Calendário do Som*. The insistence with which the image reappears, from the beginning to the end of the publication, clearly shows intent on Hermeto's part. The birds were Hermeto's first musical partners, when he was seven years old, that is, in 1943, even before entering his brother José Neto's group to play *pé-de-bode* accordion at *forrós* (popular balls) and weddings in Lagoa da Canoa.<sup>30</sup> There in the backwoods, the albino boy would hear his hat to protect himself from the sun, while he played flutes made of the leaves of *mamona* and squash, attracting the birds to come and play duos with him under the trees. In my opinion, the drawing of the bird in the repeat marks for the scores in the *Calendário do Som* indicates a symbolic *ritornello* to the musician's childhood. In 1996, about to turn 60, the “wizard” seems to have changed places with the birds, and through the 366 daily compositions in the work, began a duet with all the human beings in the world. In this way, taking symbolic flight, the imagination of Hermeto Pascoal goes beyond the fixed boundaries of time and space, since as the musician stated recently: “Lagoa da Canoa is the past, the present, and the future.”<sup>31</sup>

### VIII. THE MUSIC THAT BELONGS TO ALL OF US

This tune reminds me of the buses at the station, coming and going, and also of the people, arriving and leaving, looking for the terminals to travel up to their destinies. (no. 360: 382).

The recollections annotated by the Northeastern immigrant Hermeto Pascoal in the publication illustrate how difficult it was for him to move through the big cities since when the adolescent musician arrived in Recife, in 1950. While he was playing *accordion*, *piano*, *flute*, *saxophone*, *surdo* (a type of *bass drum*) – or any other instrument that would bring a paying gig - on the radio and in clubs in order to survive, Hermeto Pascoal lived

<sup>29</sup> “Thick description” is a type of ethnographic description which seeks not only to narrate the facts as they superficially present themselves to the eyes of an observer, but to *interpret* what these facts signify in a particular context, in accordance with codes socially established by the natives of a specific cultural group. See Geertz, 1989: 13-41.

<sup>30</sup> To appreciate Hermeto Pascoal playing a duet with some birds in a zoo see: <http://br.youtube.com/watch?v=Y10Ewgcqky8>

<sup>31</sup> See Hinrichsen, 2004, op. cit.

close to *morros* and favelas, in boarding houses and slums on the periphery of São Paulo, until he settled in Jabur, in 1977, in the suburbs of the city of Rio de Janeiro. His long search for an appropriate, worthy residence for himself and his family exemplifies the contrasts of the urban sociogeography of Brazil. The huts of the favelas in the hills and peripheries of the great urban centers of the Southeast – inhabited above all by blacks and *mulatos*, as well as immigrants from the Northeast – coexist, side by side, with buildings where individuals from the middle and upper classes, mostly whites. The geographic proximity between the two types of dwelling does not hide, however, the abyss which separates them. The national society did not integrate the segments of the population in a balanced way, nor did it resolve the serious economic inequalities which still separate the social classes in Brazil. On this subject Hermeto Pascoal annotates in score no. 166: 188: "One day, the life will be like a perfect two-pan balance, which weighs the same for both sides, not too much richness, not too much poverty".

I believe that this separation can also be noted in Brazilian popular music. Beginning from the initial decades of the twentieth century, the idea that the specific nature of Brazil was derived from the meeting and mixture of Amerindians, Africans and Europeans was generally accepted.<sup>32</sup> However, the nationalization of the *samba*, *bossa nova* and *MPB*, took place, curiously, in only one region of Brazil, the Southeast, and as a result of negotiations between whites, *mestiços* and Negros, but without the Indians<sup>33</sup> or of other Brazilians from other regions of the country. Thus, the territory of music considered to be "Brazilian and popular" excludes from within its narrow borders, paradoxically, the nation itself. It is a kind of *cultural favelization* on a large scale.

In immigrating to the big cities of Southeast in search of better working conditions, the *nordestinos* experience a situation of financial exploitation and social humiliation becoming workers (laborers in industry and construction), proletarians in the third sector (service providers and small business owners) and sub-proletarians (domestic workers and casual laborers). A few become literate, gain professional qualifications, and stand out. Rare are those who gain national and international fame and recognition. The self-taught Hermeto Pascoal is one of these persons. The *paradox* and the *improvisation* seem to have saved him. His persistent attitude of going against the unfavorable logical of socioeconomic determinants, added to his capacity of reacting to unexpected situations (musical and existential), prevented him from adding to the Brazilian statistics on social exclusion. In this sense, the life of Hermeto Pascoal is like the compositions of the *Calendário do Som*, always changing tone, job and city, without a fixed residence or key signature, moving through barlines, styles and countries in an indefatigable *musical immigration*. Hermeto Pascoal made a long professional journey, from the *duos* with the birds (1943) and the groups playing at *forrós* and dances in Lagoa da Canoa (1945), passing through regional groups playing *choros*, *frevo*, *baião* and *seresta* at the radio stations of Recife (1950) and Caruaru (1952), playing *samba*, *bossa nova* and *jazz* in dance and nightclubs ensembles of Recife, Rio de Janeiro (1958) and São Paulo (1961), and through instrumental trios of *samba jazz* in São Paulo (1964), and the *musical nationalism* of *Quarteto Novo* in Rio de Janeiro (1967-1969), until finally beginning his solo career in 1972 in the USA, composing for *big-band* and *orchestra* of tuned bottles. Since then, Hermeto Pascoal has recorded sixteen discs under his name, and has become internationally famous, despite his fights with the multinational recording companies.

Through the notations, images, recollections, foods and cosmologies present in the 366 scores and annotations of the *Calendário do Som*, the musician from Alagoas broadens even more the frontiers of his

<sup>32</sup> See Reily, 2000: 1-10, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> See Menezes Bastos, Rafael de, in Tugny e Queiroz (orgs.), 2006: 115-130.

Brazilian universal music: “After so many confusions in this world of God's and ours, what we most have to do is to compose and play with love and with the soul full of happiness, with no preconceptions and prejudice. All we want is the quality and respect for music that belongs to all of us, beings of Earth, and of other galaxies” (no. 241: 263). The *Calendário do Som* demonstrates how music, society, ecology and spirituality are inextricably connected in Hermeto Pascoal's imaginary, making up one indivisible unit. The rapsodic forms, the sudden genre and style changes and fusions, the chromatic melodies and dissonant harmonies, the improvisational way of composing and the cultural and synesthetic relation between music and food of Hermeto Pascoal's musical system are thus linked to the concept of “loving God”, “with no borders” and who “has no prejudice” (no. 272: 294). In his greatness the *God-Sound* welcomes everything and everyone, musical notes, noises, nature, celestial bodies, animals and human beings included, with no distinction of sex, colour of the skin, religion, social class or origin.

After a syncopated dance and a popular choro, both tonal, a modal song, a modulating, polyrhythmic etude, as well as an atonal melody inspired by the shape of speech, the final example of this article is a “simple” piece in C major. In this piece, Hermeto Pascoal once more “dreams while awake”, and converses with performers and society through the ritualized space of music. Reily (2002) demonstrated how the participants in the Folia de Reis enchant the search for social integration through vocal polyphony. In a similar way, in this composition by Hermeto Pascoal the suave voice-leading of the soprano and bass, and the internal voices of the chords (indicated by chord symbols), suggest a harmonious chorus, showing how life in society could be pleasurable if human beings did not insist on systematically violating certain natural laws and ideals relating to social equality and reciprocity between peoples.

Ex. 7 December, 24 (Christmas eve) “Music nº. 185: 207” - measures 1 – 10

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