

## Brazil Says Farewell to Rogério Duprat, Tropicália's Maestro

Contributed by Alessandra Dalevi  
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Rogério Duprat, the maestro and arranger of the 60's Tropicália and one of the most important arrangers of the MPB (Brazilian Popular Music) has died this Thursday, October 27, in São Paulo, at age 74, from complications of a bladder cancer and Alzheimer's.

He had been taken to the Premier Residência Hospital on October 10 and that's where he died.

Some of the arrangements he made became anthological, among them Gilberto Gil's *Domingo no Parque*, from 1967 and Chico Buarque's *Construção* from 1971. Extremely versatile Duprat felt equally at home doing erudite or popular music.

He was also the man behind the revolutionary arrangements of Tropicália or *Panis et Circensis* - the manifesto-record of 1968 that made Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa and Nara Leão, among others, into household names and started the whole Tropicalismo movement.

He was also responsible for several arrangements for Rita Lee and the Mutantes band. For that he was called Tropicália's George Martin, a reference to the Beatles's arranger who helped the British band win worldwide recognition.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, on February 7, 1932, Duprat, who was a cellist, moved to São Paulo in 1955 where he joined the Municipal Symphonic Orchestra. The next year he helped found São Paulo's Chamber Orchestra.

In the coming year he moved to Europe. There, together with American Frank Zappa, he studied under electronic music pioneer, German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen.

In 1963, he was one of the signatories of the movement "New Star Music" an avant-garde group that brought together Gilberto Mendes, Julio Medaglia, Willy Correia and Sandino Hohagen.

Five years later he would sign the Tropicalismo manifesto, a syncretic and rebellious musical movement that criticized the military regime's censorship and human rights abuses. Five years more he would leave the group convinced they had just become a pastiche, being a repetitive echo of themselves.

It was Duprat who first used the electric guitar in Brazilian popular music and he had to listen to lots of criticism and jeers from Brazilian audiences for that.

In the 70s he produced advertising jingles and worked with Walter Franco and the band O Terço. He disappeared from the musical stage in the 1980s due to a hearing loss, but still made some arrangements for Rita Lee and Lulu Santos in the 1990s.

He also worked in the movies being the author of the soundtracks for Walter Hugo Khouri's "A ilha" and "Noite vazia" among other contributions.

In a recent interview, the maestro said, "Everything that's being done today we were already doing it 30 years ago. Rock repeats formulas. All I had to say I've already said around the 60s and 70s."

Duprat's wake is being held in the São Paulo MIS (Image and Sound Museum) and he should be cremated this Friday, October 27, at the Vila Alpina Crematorium, in the east side of town.

The maestro leaves three children (Raí, Roata and Rudá) and wife, Lali, with whom he was married for 59 years.

What some old friends and colleagues like Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso and Tom Zé, had to say about maestro Rogério Duprat:

Gilberto Gil, Culture Minister and singer/composer:

"Rogério Duprat was a great friend. I am big admirer. He had previous experiences before working with us, with the erudite music in São Paulo, bringing us a rich baggage. He had a very bold position, a very clear notion of the interaction between popular and erudite music, in the opposite direction of the conventional thought of the time. He was fundamental for my work as well as for Caetano's, the Mutantes' and Tom Zé's. He was fundamental for all of us..."

Caetano Veloso, singer and composer:

"He not only made brilliant arrangements, he also showed Gilberto Gil the Mutantes, something that was of great significance to all of us. He was one of the most important presences in the history of my professional life. He had a very acute musical conscience and knew how to produce better than anybody else. He was a very dear fellow and a very important historical actor. Duprat was one of the best world producers and he still inspires enthusiasm among today's youth. I got very shaken when I heard the news..."

Tom Zé, singer and composer:

"In the Tropicália album, everything was delivered to him and he made it into orchestra pieces. His contribution was really much bigger than any arranger can offer. The disk arrangements for Tropicália gave final clothes not only to each music, but also to the movement itself. And now he played a trick on us. He showed that he doesn't want cry or candle because he traveled the world with the presentation on Tropicália, he even made the Mutantes sing again, and now he said: "Enough, I've seen it all." And died.

Rita Lee, singer and composer:

"Rogério Duprat was one of the world's most important maestros. He was the George Martin of Tropicalismo, only that he was much more brilliant... The trumpets in heaven will have now much crazier arrangements. His death is an irreparable loss for music..."

Júlio Medaglia, maestro:

"Duprat was much more than a musician, he was a good-humored philosopher. He unfortunately became disenchanted with the trash that the Brazilian music turned into after the 60s and 70s, and preferred to turn deaf. It was a protest against the barbarism. His death is also a protest..."