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## Brazilian Sound, Well Beyond Bossa Nova

Contributed by Ernest Barteldes  
Sunday, 09 September 2007

Brazil is a country rich in music, and there are various different rhythms that have their origins through the miscegenation that occurred as the Portuguese colonizers mixed with the native Brazilians, Africans brought in as slaves and countless other immigrants that landed in the country over the years.

On the enlightening documentary *Moro No Brasil*, (Milan Films) Finnish-born director Mika Kaurismaki gives us a small sample of these musical traditions of the land.

"For the film I did quite a lot research and soon realized that there was so much music in Brazil, that it wasn't possible to show everything in one film," he explains in an interview. "That's why I decided to concentrate more in the roots of samba and the musical traditions in the Northeast of Brazil and Rio de Janeiro.

After a brief introduction in snow-covered Helsinki, we are taken to the sertão (backlands) of the northeastern state of Pernambuco, where the director begins to trace the roots of samba through the music of the Fulni-ô Indians, who have a language and culture that goes back to before the Portuguese colonization.

The next stop is Caruaru, a small town about three hours from the state's capital, Recife. There we meet Silvério Pessoa, a young innovator of forró, the syncopated dance beat that has gained popularity stateside in recent years via groups like Forró in the Dark. He explains that growing up, he heard the sounds of pioneers like Jackson do Pandeiro, Luiz Gonzaga and others, which helped him shape his chops.

In Bahia, arguably the most fertile ground for music in the country - legends like Caetano Veloso, João Gilberto, Gal Costa and João Gilberto, to name a few, were born there - we learn how Candomblé, an Afro-Brazilian religion that is very present in the region, influenced the country's music.

Rio comes last - we are exposed to the sounds of the Samba Schools and the funk-inflected samba of the more urban areas of the city, and there are several live performances captured at Kaurismaki's nightclub there.

"It was clear from the beginning that the film was not only about music but also about the people who make music," he explains. "Socially Brazil is a land of contrasts, people are rich or poor, black or white, and in my travels during research and filming I learnt a lot about the everyday struggle of the Brazilian people."

*Moro No Brasil* makes us realize that Brazilian music goes far beyond bossa nova and the more sophisticated beats Americans get via Marisa Monte or Bebel Gilberto. Music there is in every corner, and it is not simply entertainment - it

actually plays a major part in the country's fabric.

Note: Different versions of this review have appeared on New City Chicago and The Miami New Times

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