# Love Forever, Fear Never: Brazilian Musical Responses to a Political Coup

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## Abstract

On May 12, 2016, the Brazilian Senate initiated impeachment proceedings of President Dilma Rousseff, installing Michel Temer as interim president. Temer's agenda included Provsisional Measure No. 726, which shuttered Brazil's Ministry of Culture, calamatious news for Brazilian culture makers, who relied on the ministry as a source of advocacy and financial support. In response, activists occupied state offices across the country in protest. At Palácio Gustavo Capanema, the Rio de Janeiro headquarters of the ministry, the occupation lasted more than 100 days. Culture makers from myriad disciplines and backgrounds showed support for the activists, with music and musicians playing a particularly important role in raising the profile and spirits of the occupation. The present article examines this moment through an analysis of a May 22 performance by composer Jards Macalé. Drawing on ethnographic work at the occupation and in-depth interviews with participants, it argues that musical performance, articulated through a politicized notion of love, served an important community-building function at these protests. It also contributes to debates by theorists such as Lauren Berlant and Sara Ahmed on the use of love to motivate political action. This language, while key to creating the possibility for identification, can be undercut by the lived exclusions of events like these when they do not include the presence of the people most affected by the policies being protested.

On May 12, 2016, the Brazilian artistic and political communities experienced a tectonic shift when the senate voted to begin impeachment proceedings for President Dilma Rousseff. The stated justification for impeachment was Rousseff's alleged manipulation of the federal budget to conceal the country's deficit, though Rousseff and her allies decried the move as a coup (*golpe*): an undemocratic power grab by a coalition of center-right politicians themselves being investigated on corruption charges.[1] Rousseff's left-wing Worker's Party (PT) had held the presidency since 2003, during which time challengers from the right-wing Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) failed four times to win the presidency. With Rousseff's removal, her vice president, Michel Temer, of the center-right Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), was installed as interim president, shifting executive power from a center-left coalition to a center-right one. Temer immediately began to enact his agenda, including Provisional Measure No. 726, which shuttered or collapsed ten of the government's thirty-three ministries.[2] Included was the Ministry of Culture, which was

[1] Andrew Jacobs, "Brazil's Dilma Rousseff, at U.N. Climate Ceremony, Assails 'Coup Mongers,'" *New York Times*, April 22, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/23/world/americas/brazil-dilma-rousseff-impeachment-climate-change.html; Andrew Jacobs, "Brazil Impeachment Debate Hinges on a Thorny Legal Question," *New York Times*, April 19, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/20/world/americas/dilma-rousseff-impeachment-brazil.html; Andrew Jacobs, "Brazil's Graft-Prone Congress: A Circus That Even Has a Clown," *New York Times*, May 14, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/15/world/americas/brazils-most-entertaining-show-may-be-congress.html.

[2] "Medida Provisória no. 726, de 2016," *Congresso Nacional*, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.congressonacional.leg.br/materias/medidas-provisorias/-/mpv/125733.

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blended into the Ministry of Education. This was calamitous news for Brazilian culture makers, who relied on the ministry as a source of advocacy and public financial support.

Activists mobilized to express their indignation and resistance to the shuttering of the ministry, occupying offices of the Institute of National Historical and Artistic Patrimony (IPHAN) in Curitiba, Paraná, within hours.[3] Within days, unaffiliated groups had occupied other similar institutional headquarters in twenty-seven state capitals across the country, including offices of the Ministry of Culture (MinC) and the National Artes Foundation (Funarte).[4] In Rio de Janeiro, activists calling themselves Ocupa MinC RJ (Occupy Ministry of Culture, Rio de Janeiro) seized the offices of the Ministry at the Palácio Gustavo Capanema as well as the building's courtyard.[5] Ocupa MinC RJ had two primary goals: (1) the reinstatement of the Ministry of Culture and (2) the removal of Temer from office. On the first score, these activists succeeded; Temer reversed course and reinstated the ministry within two weeks of the occupation.[6] On the second, they were unsuccessful. In spite of these occupations and a series of large-scale protests over the subsequent two years, Temer completed his term. Furthermore, the subsequent presidential election was won by Jair Bolsonaro, a politician from the reactionary right who had participated in Rousseff's removal. Among his many efforts to dismantle the social programs of the PT, Bolsonaro permanently dissolved the Ministry of Culture.

In Rio de Janeiro, professional and amateur musicians supported and drew attention to the occupation with a near-constant series of performances. At first, performers focused on the reinstatement of MinC, but when this goal was accomplished—and perhaps emboldened by their success[7]—they focused their rhetoric on the removal of the interim president, leading the crowd in chants of *Fora Temer* (out with Temer) and *Temer golpista* (Temer coup monger) (see figs. 1 and 2). In this article, I examine an event that happened at the articulation point between these goals: a solo performance by the composer Jards Macalé (b. Jards Anet da Silva, 1943–) that happened late on May 22, the day before the culture ministry's reinstatement. Through a close reading of Macalé's performance, I show how musical performance, articulated through a politicized notion of love, served a unifying and community-building function at these protests. Much like musical sound, whose meaning is disputed and debated by performers, audiences, critics, and scholars, love offered these protesters a vernacular lexicon to draw on. While participants and theorists alike have raised important questions about the efficacy of such rhetoric in the political realm, love and music's multivalent and ephemeral natures help explain its adoption in this context.

Macalé performed three songs at Ocupa MinC RJ, each of which, in his words, "speak directly to, or whose reading can turn to, the political."[8] The "political" that Macalé claimed for these songs was grounded in ideologies and discourses of love and community. He began with the well-known samba "A Voz do Morro" by Zé Kéti (b. José Flores de Jesus, 1921–1999), which was a massive hit in 1955, at the dawn of the economic boom of the Juscelino Kubitschek presidency and the theme music for one of the first films of

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[3] Lorena Avellar de Muniagurria, *Políticas da Cultura: Rrânsitos, Encontros e Militância na Construção de uma Política Nacional* (São Paulo: Humanitas, 2018).
[4] Cacá Machado, "Música e ação política, Brasil 2003/2016," *Políticas Culturais em Revista* 10, no. 2 (2017): 144, https://doi.org/10.9771/pcr.v10i2.24319.
[5] Though most activists and others with whom I spoke referred to the action as simply "Ocupa MinC," I adopt "Ocupa MinC RJ" to avoid confusion with concurrent actions in other cities.
[6] "Medida Provisória no. 728," *Diário Oficial da União*, May 23, 2016, https://pesquisa.in.gov.br/imprensa/jsp/visualiza/index.jsp?jornal=1000&pagina=1&data=23/05/2016.
[7] Alexandre Barbalho, "Em Tempos de Crise: O MinC e a Politização do Campo Cultural Brasileiro," *Revista de Políticas Públicas* 22, no. 1 (2018): 32–35, https://doi.org/10.18764/2178-2865.v22n1p239-260.
[8] Jards Macalé, interview with the author, February 2, 2017.

the Cinema Novo movement. The song's lyrics stake a claim for a definition of the Brazilian people grounded in the marginalized communities of Rio de Janeiro. He continued with his 1972 composition "Revendo Amigos (Volto Pra Curtir)," a countercultural anthem released during the *anos de chumbo* (leaden years) of the Brazilian military dictatorship that reacts to repression through a mixture of revelry and bitterness. His set concluded with the 1973 samba "Juízo Final" by Nelson Cavaquinho (b. Nelson Antônio da Silva, 1911–1986), which was experiencing a renaissance in popularity in 2016 due to its use as the theme music for a *novela* (soap opera). The song's lyrics explicitly set up love as the victor in the battle against evil.

Each of these songs was written for and about specific historical moments, and their refashioning at Ocupa MinC RJ both connects them to earlier inflection points in Brazilian history and reveals how their uses and meanings are far from stable. Macalé's refashioning of this repertory for the Ocupa MinC RJ protests sees him engaging in struggle over the meaning of these texts, who they are about, and who they are for. Examining this performance, then, offers not only a close look at the workings of a music-based protest but also an opportunity to consider what happens when a musical text is taken from one context to another. This process of transmitting and transmuting meaning is intertwined with changing political dynamics and the demographics of the public involved. It plays out between the myriad participants, including the performers, the protesters, the organizers, and the state. With that in mind, in addition to my own observations and a host of informal conversations, I draw on in-depth interviews with three participants: Jards Macalé himself; Júlio Barroso, who organized the programming of the occupation; and Mathias, a protester and musician who, while he did not perform at the events, attended many of them.

As much as the lyrical significance of his repertory, though, Macalé helped engender a temporary community of protesters by engaging protesters in a collective avowal of their commitment to the ideal of love, in opposition to the forces of evil and fear. Macalé's set illustrates how collective singing facilitates public assembly, which Judith Butler (2015) argues is a crucial means of "the people" defining and claiming space for themselves. By examining how these activists adopted the language of love in this protest, moreover, I contribute to debates by theorists such as Lauren Berlant (2011) and Sara Ahmed (2014) on the use of love to motivate political action. I show that this language, while key to creating the possibility for identification, can be undercut by the lived exclusions of events like these when they do not include the presence of the people most affected by the policies being protested. For example, Black Brazilians have suffered disproportionately with this political shift, whether as victims of state-sponsored violence or through exclusion from social and economic opportunities, but were underrepresented in the Ocupa MinC RJ crowd. Thus, this demographic disjuncture is indicative of the ways that the rhetoric of love, activated in participatory performance, may require broader material and policy changes to effect the kinds of political change imagined by protesters.

In what follows, I first briefly describe the political circumstances surrounding Rousseff's impeachment and how these events relate to and recall the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985. I then investigate how Macalé's performance at Ocupa MinC RJ contributes to an understanding of the rhetoric of love, as it is described by Berlant and Ahmed, in a protest context. Drawing on Judith Butler's work on performative assembly, I investigate love as motivating force in the formation of political community, arguing that collective vocalization in protest can serve as the union that gives the assembly meaning. After describing the atmosphere at the occupation and how it related to other protests of the time, I perform a close reading of Macalé's set, beginning with the song "Voz do Morro." I show how the song imagines samba as a synecdoche for the Brazilian nation and consider how questions of class and race complicate the goals and realities of these protests. Next, I historicize and analyze Macalé's anthem "Revendo

Amigos" to explicate its historical connections to this counterculture and lyrical emphasis on revelry in the face of a series of traumas: the song warns of the dangers of the past repeating in the present and offers a way for its audience to emotionally manage violences and oppressions. I conclude with a discussion of Macalé's performance of "Juízo Final," dissecting how the song's lyrics dovetail with the movement's messaging and how Macalé's performance invited a continuation of this temporary community beyond the protest space.


**Figure 1:** Michel Temer as a "coup monger" at Ocupa MinC RJ action (photo by the author).

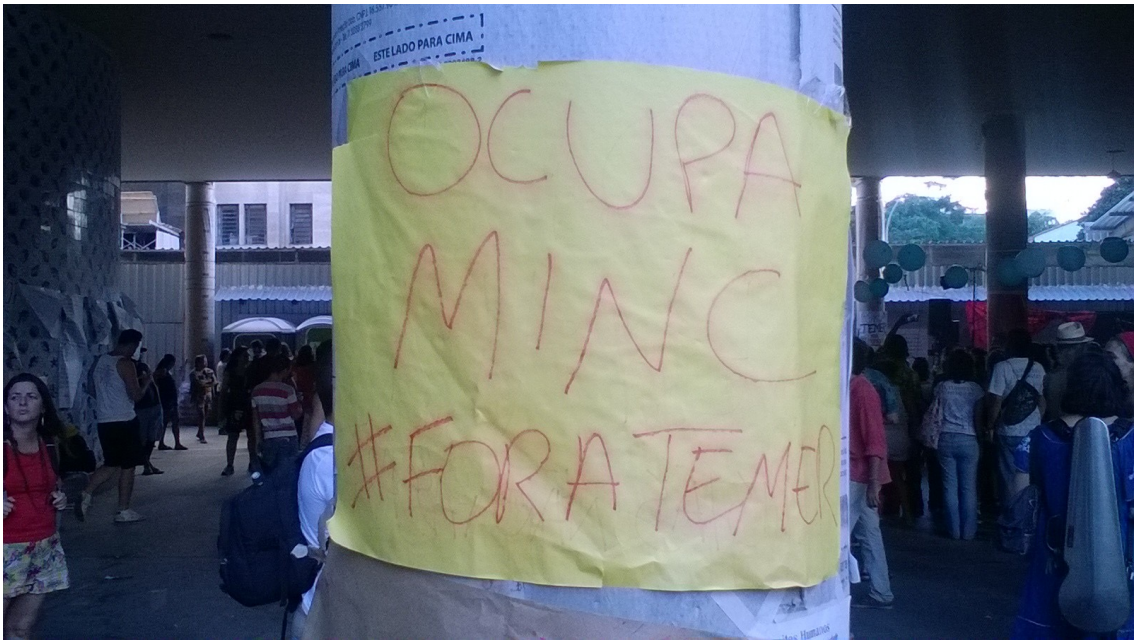


**Figure 2:** Handmade sign at Ocupa MinC RJ occupation (photo by the author).

## A Tale of Two Coups: The Context for Ocupa MinC in Rio de Janeiro

In 2016, Dilma Rousseff was in the second year of her second term as President of Brazil, following two terms by her predecessor Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula). Her party, the PT, had defeated the center-right Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) in four consecutive elections, though by a smaller margin in the final election, necessitating an alliance between the PT and the PMDB, a party without a clear ideology that has traditionally aligned itself with whichever party holds the presidency. On May 12, the Brazilian Senate initiated impeachment hearings, suspending Rousseff and instating her Vice President Michel Temer of the PMDB as interim president. Ocupa MinC RJ activists, like Rousseff and other members of her party, described the impeachment proceedings as a coup (*golpe*) and characterized the politicians behind the process as coup mongers (*golpistas*) (see Fig. 1).[9] Evidence for their claim included the fact that the stated justification for impeachment was that Rousseff had manipulated the budget to conceal the country's deficit, a common practice never previously punished and formally legalized after Rousseff's impeachment.[10] Subsequent reporting on the legislators involved in the impeachment revealed their ulterior motives. On May 23, 2016, the national newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* published transcripts of private conversations between senator Romero Jucá (then leader of Temer's PMDB) and oil executive Sergio Machado, which revealed that, rather than cleaning up corruption, the true motivation for removing President Rousseff was to halt the corruption investigations altogether and ensure that other implicated parties—including Jucá and Machado—would avoid similar fates.[11]

The language of "coup" not only frames the impeachment proceedings as an erosion of the democratic process but also recalls the 1964 military coup that marked the beginning of a twenty-one-year dictatorship. That year, the Brazilian military, backed by U.S. intelligence agencies, ousted the left-wing President João Goulart.[12] One Ocupa MinC RJ attendee, Mathias, told me that the specter of the 1964 military coup reverberated in the impeachment:

> It is not a military coup that curtails everyone's freedom. This is an institutionalized coup, done in the bowels of the government, of the legislative and judicial [branches]. But it is still a coup, right? . . . I see various people that say that it is a coup—and I include myself—but there are lots of people that are indifferent to this and before there must have been too, but the parallel is going to be there, obviously with its own proportions.[13]

Those parallels extend to the political ideologies at play in the two power transfers. One reason for the military's seizure of power from Goulart in 1964 was his support for agrarian reform and other policies intended to combat poverty and shrink the country's wealth divide, efforts that are echoed today in social welfare programs like Bolsa Família and Minha Casa Minha Vida, created or grown by the PT to provide

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[9] Jacobs, "Brazil's Dilma Rousseff, at U.N. Climate Ceremony, Assails 'Coup Mongers.'"
[10] Jacobs, "Brazil's Graft-Prone Congress: A Circus That Even Has a Clown"; Jacobs, "Brazil Impeachment Debate Hinges on a Thorny Legal Question."
[11] Rubens Valente, "Em diálogos gravados, Jucá fala em pacto para deter avanço da Lava Jato," *Folha d. São Paulo*, May 23, 2016, https://m.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2016/05/1774018-em-dialogos-gravados-juca-fala-em-pacto-para-deter-avanco-da-lava-jato.shtml.
[12] James N. Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1168c5x.32.
[13] Mathias, interview with the author, May 3, 2017. On his request, I am including only Mathias's first name. All interviews were conducted in Portuguese and all translations are my own.

support for poor families outside of the urban economic centers.[14] In addition, the PT is responsible for a bevy of other social policies, including increasing northeastern citizens' access to water, democratizing higher education, and a host of culture-based programs, including those outlined below.[15] The beneficiaries of Bolsa Família made up nearly a quarter of the country's population at this time and served as the voter base for the PT. Though right-wing media outlets used this fact to paint the PT as buying votes from the poor,[16] scholars agree that Brazil experienced massive advances in reducing poverty and increasing food security and health among the poor during the PT's presidencies. In both 1964 and 2016, right-wing politicians removed a left-wing government understood as sympathetic to the plight of poorer Brazilians rather than take that government on in an election.

The participation of so many musicians in Ocupa MinC RJ is part of a long tradition of left-wing protest in Brazil. The music historian Zuza Homem de Mello told me that he was surprised neither by the response of the musicians to the ministry's closure nor by the efficacy of their efforts: "Culture has moments of importance when it is causing trouble. And when it causes trouble, it causes a lot of trouble. . . . Music is what penetrates most quickly."[17] Connecting the present moment to those of the past, Mathias recalled that "since the dictatorship, music has been the greatest instrument against the dictatorship."[18] These affirmations speak to the widely held belief in music's importance to protest in Brazil, a topic that has been extensively covered by historians and music scholars.[19] This is especially the case with musicians active during the mid-1960s MPB boom, the late 1960s Tropicália movement, and the early 1970s counterculture, all of which navigated the censorship and repression of the military dictatorship. This earlier moment reverberated in the 2016 protests not only in its pro-democracy stance, but in its goals of broader cultural revolution. The choice of occupation as protest activity takes as inspiration the myriad political occupations that have

[14] Though the PT under Rousseff was criticized for moving away from its base, these programs grew substantially during her and her predecessor's terms. Sérgio Sauer and George Mészáros, "The Political Economy of Land Struggle in Brazil under Workers' Party Governments," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 17, no. 2 (2017): 397–414, https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12206.
[15] Lincoln Secco, *História do PT, 1978–2010* (Cotia, SP: Ateliê Editorial, 2011); Anthony Hall, "From Fome Zero to Bolsa Família: Social Policies and Poverty Alleviation under Lula," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38, no. 4 (2006): 689–709, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X0600157X. Afrânio Mendes Catani, Ana Paula Hey, and Renato de Sousa Porto Gilioli, "PROUNI: Democratização do Acesso às Instituições de Ensino Superior?," *Educar em Revista* (2006): 125–40, https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-40602006000200009; Cláudia Daniele de Souza, Daniela de Filippo, and Elías Sanz-Casado, "Impacto do Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais Brasileiras (REUNI) na Atividade Investigativa: Crescimento, Qualidade e Internacionalização," *Em Questão* 21 (2015): 336–67, https://doi.org/10.19132/1808-5245213.336-367.
[16] "Bolsa Família Repassa R$ 2,3 Bilhões para Quase 50 Milhões de Brasileiros" *Planalto Palace*, May 2015, http://www2.planalto.gov.br/noticias/2015/05/bolsa-familia-repassa-R-2–3-bilhoes-para-quase-50-milhoes-de-brasileiros; "O Voto do Bolsa Família," *Estadão*, December 26, 2016, http://opiniao.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,o-voto-do-bolsa-familia,10000096526; Gabriel Castro and Laryssa Borges, "Bolsa Família, o maior colégio eleitoral do Brasil," *Veja*, August 17, 2014, http://veja.abril.com.br/politica/bolsa-familia-o-maior-colegio-eleitoral-do-brasil/.
[17] Zuza Homem de Mello, interview with the author, May 3, 2017.
[18] Mathias, interview with the author.
[19] Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda and Marcos Augusto Gonçalves, *Cultura e Participação nos Anos 60* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1982); Marcos Napolitano, *Seguindo a Canção: Engajamento Político e Indústria Cultural na MPB (1959–1969)* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2001); Ricardo Santhiago, "Flowers Made of Lead: Paths, Times, and Emotions of Protest Music in Brazil," in *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, ed. Jonathan C., Friedman, 291–303 (London: Routledge, 2013); David Treece, "Guns and Roses: Bossa Nova and Brazil's Music of Popular Protest, 1958–68," *Popular Music* 16, no. 1 (1997): 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143000000672; Charles A. Perrone, "Nationalism, Dissension, and Politics in Contemporary Brazilian Popular Music," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 39, no. 1 (2002): 65–78, https://doi.org/10.3368/lbr.39.2.65; Paulina L. Alberto, "When Rio was *Black*: Soul Music, National Culture, and the Politics of Racial Comparison in 1970s Brazil," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, no. 1 (2008): 3–39, https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-2008-043; Stephen Bocksay, "Undesired Presences: Samba, Improvisation, and Afro-Politics in 1970s Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 52, no. 1 (2017): 64–78, https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.71.

occurred throughout Brazil, many of which have taken on a festive character.[20] In 2011, shortly after the start of Occupy Wall Street, an encampment emerged in Rio de Janeiro's Cinelândia Square. In 2013 and 2014, occupations sprung up in São Paulo in response to public transportation fare hikes.[21] Musicians have both participated in these occupations and brought the language of "occupy" to carnaval, showcasing the repertories and practices shared across ostensibly festive and political occasions.[22]

The closure of the Ministry of Culture in 2016 served as an articulation point, in part because of its symbolic importance in Brazil's fragile democracy, and in part because of the politicization of the Brazilian cultural field during the PT's time in power.[23] The ministry was created upon the dissolution of the military government in 1985. Temer's closure of the Ministry is both indication of his administration's antagonism toward Brazilian culture makers and further evidence that his instatement as president was undemocratic. In his essay about the slow but measurable advances the Ministry of Culture made during the PT years, Cacá Machado writes:

> It is symptomatic that one of the first acts of the new government was to extinguish MinC. . . . There was a real expansion, even if through tortuous paths, of the rights and access to culture for an ample portion of the Brazilian population between 2003 and 2016. . . . It is difficult not to relate this generous process of inclusion to the "army" of citizens that made up occupations.[24]

The army of citizens was built during the PT years, particularly under Minister of Culture Gilberto Gil, as political values such as "representation, participation, deliberation, ideological production" were articulated within the cultural sphere.[25] This meant, in part, that cultural production became a crucial domain of expression of diversity and of denouncing inequality,[26] perhaps substituting culture for its earlier combative class politics.

These efforts also established the cultural field as a consolidated site for political participation, and one recognized and financially supported by public funding.[27] Destruction of the Ministry of Culture threatened institutionalized mechanisms, such as the Lei Rouanet, which had been created in 1991 to provide federal funding for culture makers, and Cultura Viva, which had supported communitarian culture, especially indigenous and folk arts, since its creation in 2004.[28] Júlio Barroso told me that the discussions that led to the occupations were instigated by these precise fears. MinC provided material benefits for musicians and other artists, just as Bolsa Família provided measurable economic support for poor Brazilians; without it, both the livelihood and the institutionalized political voice of artists were under threat. As Barroso made clear, although the impeachment proceedings themselves inspired protests, it was the closure of the ministry that incited activists "not only to review the question of the Ministry of Culture, but to call the public opinion's attention so that we could reverse the coup against Dilma and against democracy."[29] For culture makers, the closure of MinC was both a symbolic and a real threat to their access to the political machinery.

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[20] Muniagurria, *Políticas da Cultura*, 298.
[21] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Beatriz Provasi, "Acts as Performances in the Occupation of the Urban Space: Against a Model of City for Mega-Events," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença* 6, no. 3 (2016): 439–59, https://doi.org/10.1590/2237-266061977.
[22] Andrew Snyder, "Politicizing Carnival Brass Bands in Olympic Rio De Janeiro: Instrumental Protest and Musical Repertoires of Contention," *Latin American Music Review* 41, no. 1 (2020): 27–58, https://doi.org/10.7560/LAMR41102.
[23] Barbalho, "Em Tempos de Crise."
[24] Machado, "Música e ação política, Brasil 2003/2016," 144.
[25] Barbalho, "Em Tempos de Crise," 37.
[26] Anita Simis, "A Política Cultural Como Política Pública," *Políticas Culturais no Brasil. Salvador: EDUFBA* 1 (2007): 152.
[27] Isaura Botelho, "A Política Cultural e o Plano das Ideias," *Políticas Culturais no Brasil. Salvador: EDUFBA* (2007): 109–32.
[28] Júlio Barroso, interview with the author, May 15, 2017.
[29] Ibid.

The spontaneous occupation of so many MinC headquarters evidences the importance of the organ to the nation's artists, while the continued occupations at key sites, such as Rio de Janeiro's Palácio Gustavo Capanema, showcase the general resistance to the political coup kicked off by Rousseff's impeachment.


**Figure 3:** Graffiti outside Rio de Janeiro's Palácio Gustavo Capanema (photo by the author).

## Love Forever, Fear Never

The first time I arrived at the occupation at Capanema, I encountered an enormous piece of street art graffitied on a corrugated steel wall. The graffiti read, "*Amar sempre, Temer jamais* (Love forever, Fear never)." Three of the words—love, forever, and never—were in green block letters, while the third—*temer*—was written in a burnt red, its wavy lines giving it a spooky effect (see fig. 3). The contrast in lettering emphasized the play on words: *Temer* was not just the interim president's last name, but the Portuguese verb "fear." As a slogan, these words spoke to the movement's practical goal of removing Temer and its ideological grounding in a vernacular of love, a notion that artists and activists from the Brazilian left had frequently invoked prior to and during these protests. Prior examples include Ygor Marotta's *mais amor por favor* (more love, please) graffiti and the *Existe Amor em São Paulo* (There is Love in São Paulo) festival.[30]

In the context of Ocupa MinC RJ, and Jards Macalé's participation specifically, love functions not just as a slogan, but as a commentary about the orientation and makeup of an alternative political community. In their theorizing of a political concept of love, Lauren Berlant sees it as a "form of affective solidarity" that nonetheless embraces the "enigmatic, chaotic, incoherent."[31] For Berlant, love's ambivalence is part of both its utility and its complexities in the political sphere. Because love engenders patience, it becomes a crucial

[30] Shannon Garland, "No Love Without Conflict: Rights to the City, Cultural Activism, and the 'Irony of Affect' in São Paulo, Brazil," *Culture, Theory and Critique* 61, no. 2–3 (2020): 283–302, https://doi.org/10.1080/14735784.2020.1856699; Bernardo Fonseca Machado, "Emoções em Disputa: Usos do 'Amor' em Manifestações," *Revista De Antropologia* 61, no. 3 (2018): 86–108, https://doi.org/10.11606/2179-0892.ra.2018.152039.

[31] Lauren Berlant, "A Properly Political Concept of Love: Three Approaches in Ten Pages," *Cultural Anthropology* 26, no. 4 (2011): 685–6, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2011.01120.x.

element when groups coalesce to work through problems or contradictions.[32] Love also serves as an affective motivation to engage in difficult struggles for social changes that can be rhetorically expressed using vernacular language in continuity with many people's lived experiences. But its "narrative and affective promises" do not guarantee material changes.[33]

Because of love's theoretical complexity and vernacular availability, its manifestations and meanings remain disputed within the political and cultural realms. In her critique of the political efficacy of love, the theorist Sara Ahmed asks, "What does it mean to stand for love by standing alongside some others and against other others?"[34] This question calls attention to the binary opposition between love and fear. Love, for these protesters, means enacting policies for the good of as large a swath of the community as possible, rather than ones that maintain and deepen social stratification. In this structure, through policies such as the shuttering of MinC, the Temer government's policies fail to show love for the Brazilian people. This binary structure exemplifies Ahmed's interrogation of love's (lack of) inclusiveness, which is amplified by examining how very similar discourses have been used on the other side of the Brazilian political divide. Kjetil Klette Bøhler has shown that supporters of the far-right Jair Bolsonaro sang specific portions of the Brazilian national during political rallies during the 2018 presidential election.[35] Skipping the opening of the anthem, they highlighted the lyric "Brazil, be a symbol of eternal love" as part of their family values and anti-corruption rhetoric. Love may be the focal point in the formation of "collectives through their identification with an ideal," but its discursive slipperiness makes it available for opposing groups. For these reasons, Ahmed warns about the conscription and manipulation of love by groups seeking a political or ideological upper hand.[36]

At Ocupa MinC RJ, this rhetoric of love undergirded the formation of a political community in the moment of protest. In her work on political assembly and protest, Judith Butler has argued that group action, beyond constituting a demand for change, or a protest against particular instances of injustice, is a primary method of challenging commonly accepted notions of the political. Assembly, she argues, serves as a way for citizens to perform their message as well as call attention to the people whom that message affects:

> when bodies assemble on the street, or in the square, or in other forms of public space . . . they are exercising a plural and performative right to appear, one that asserts and instates the body in the midst of the political field, and which, in its expressive and signifying function, delivers a bodily demand for a more livable set of economic, social, and political conditions no longer afflicted by induced forms of precarity.[37]

In this conception, assembly, occupations, and public protests are ways of delivering a literal message ("This is an unjust coup"), as well as a symbolic one ("We are the people and we assemble in this space to remind those behind that coup exactly whom your policies affect").

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[32] Ibid., 685.
[33] Ibid., 690.
[34] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2014), 122.
[35] Kjetil Klette Bøhler, "Rhythm Politics in a Changing Brazil: A Study of the Musical Mobilization of Voters by Bolsonaro and Haddad in the 2018 Election," *Qualitative Studies* 6, no. 2 (2021): 72–74, https://doi.org/10.7146/qs.v6i2.127312.
[36] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 124.
[37] Butler, *Notes*, 11.

Scholars have pointed out the importance of real and symbolic community building through musical performance in protest contexts.[38] At the Ocupa MinC RJ site, musicians played a key role in drawing crowds. Beyond Macalé, some of Brazil's most famous musical artists participated in the occupation, including megastars Caetano Veloso and João Bosco, as well as Chico Buarque, who performed at a later iteration. Júlio Barroso reiterated the importance of those who appeared with the assembly:

> I think that we could have had more support from these people. . . . Many sent messages and whatnot. But to actually show up there, show their face, and say, "I am with you. I am against this coup," there were only a few. The majority stayed out of it. I would say that the majority stayed out of it. But many did not stay away. Many went to the street to struggle. They went there to give their support to the occupation, right? They went there to give support. They played. They spread [the message].[39]

Additionally, musical sound played a key role in enacting the assembly as a community. As I will discuss, collective voicing through music helped to organize the crowd and make them aware of their belonging to that community. This collectivity owes to both the logistical and affective valences of musical performance.[40] By assembling, "the people" have made their communal assertion real. Musical performance aids in the coherence of that community and the sense of belonging of its members. Jodi Dean has critiqued Butler's framing of performative assembly as the embodiment of democracy by suggesting that the notion of precarity, while a useful rubric to overcome identity-based differences between disenfranchised and marginalized groups, fails to frame—or even imagine—the power that the oppressed might possess as a resisting collective.[41] These critiques help clarify the limitations of symbolic political assembly, especially assembly that fails to extend beyond the symbolic, as I discuss below.

## Ocupa MinC RJ

The occupation of the Rio de Janeiro office of the Ministry of Culture was set in motion even before Temer officially signed the decree closing the ministry. Júlio Barroso, who was part of the group that enacted the occupation, told me that he and other activists began discussing the action as soon as rumors started swirling.[42] He recalled that he and a number of other activists and artists met for two days and debated what they would do, "not only to review the question of the Ministry of Culture, but how to call attention to the public opinion to reverse the coup against Dilma and against democracy."[43] Using a process of decision by consensus, these activists determined that they would occupy the ministry's offices and not leave, at least until Temer reinstated it. More than that, they determined that the "occupation would be, first of all,

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[38] See, for example, Serge Denisoff, "Protest Songs: Those on the Top Forty and Those of the Streets," *American Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1970): 807–23, https://doi.org/10.2307/2711871; Lawrence Berger, "The Emotional and Intellectual Aspects of Protest Music: Implications for Community Organizing Education," *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* 20, nos. 1–2 (2000): 57–76, https://doi.org/10.1300/J067v20n01_05; Moshe Bensimon, "The Sociological Role of Collective Singing during Intense Moments of Protest: The Disengagement from the Gaza Strip," *Sociology* 46, no. 2 (2012): 241–57, https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038511416160; Noriko Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199334681.001.0001.

[39] Barroso, interview with the author.

[40] Kjetil Klette Bøhler, "Theorizing Musical Politics through Case Studies: Feminist Grooves Against the Temer Government in Today's Brazil," *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology* 9, no, 2 (2017):118–40. https://genderandset.open.ac.uk/index.php/genderandset/article/view/494.

[41] Jodi Dean, "Crowds and Power" [Review of *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, by Judith Butler], *Cultural Critique* 98 (2018): 335–42, https://doi.org/10.5749/culturalcritique.98.2018.0335.

[42] Barroso, interview with the author.

[43] Ibid.

cultural. We would promote various events at the building, almost twenty-four hours per day."[44] He told me that the occupation "saw every musical language. We had rock shows, blues shows, jazz shows, *cumbia* shows, *lambada* shows, *maracatu*, *coco*, indigenous music, *samba*, *chorinho*, *forró*."[45] The musicians ranged in experience level from community percussion groups to independent bands to high-profile stars, who drew attention from mainstream press outlets.

Though I am an outsider to the affected communities, having been raised in the United States, I lived in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and 2017 and attended a number of these protests. I also frequented protests and rallies in other parts of the city, including the massive *greve geral* (general strike) on April 28, 2017, in protest of Temer's austerity measures, which drastically altered and reduced Brazil's social security benefits.[46] Despite the shared left-wing orientation of most of these events, there were differences, including in the scope and type of disruptions they instigated. As Júlio Barroso told me, both the occupiers and the protesters who supported them came from different segments of the Brazilian left: some were avowed PT voters, while many others, including Barroso himself, were dissatisfied with Rousseff but outraged at the impeachment, which they consistently described as a coup.[47] Ocupa MinC RJ was most distinct, though, in the foregrounding and participation of musicians from many segments of the Brazilian music industry.

While activists occupied the offices inside, a "little festival" atmosphere reigned inside the plaza, which was decorated in colorful graffiti and signs.[48] Around the perimeter, folding tables were covered in pamphlets and sign-making materials. The attendees included artists from many disciplines, including painters, screen-printers, dancers, and filmmakers. Artists sold banners and buttons, promising that proceeds would support the occupiers inside. Most prominent were the musicians, who took up the most physical and sonic space. A stage, outfitted with microphones, monitors, and a PA system, occupied most of the shaded area of the plaza. I saw a variety of musical performances, from indie bands playing for tiny crowds gathered near the front of the stage, to groups performing in the center of the plaza, such as when *maracatu de baque virado* groups Tambores de Olokun and Baque Mulher drummed their support or when the space hosted a massive *roda de samba* (samba circle).

Jards Macalé's participation in Ocupa MinC RJ built upon participation in musical protest during the Brazilian military regime. He began his career as the guitarist for the musical *Opinião* (Opinion), generally acknowledged to be the first response to the military regime from the cultural realm.[49] During the Brazilian counterculture of the early 1970s, he produced albums for artists such as Caetano Veloso and Gal Costa and composed countercultural anthems in partnership with poets such as Waly Salamão and Capinan. In 1973, he organized the iconic show *Banquete dos Mendigos* (Beggar's Banquet) at Rio's Museum of Modern Art (MAM), which celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The clandestine recording that resulted from the show was banned as subversive content by government censors four times before finally being released in 1979.[50] Macalé continued these efforts in the

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Simon Romero, "Brazil Gripped by General Strike Over Austerity Measures," *New York Times*, April 28, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/28/world/americas/brazil-general-strike.html.
[47] Barroso, interview with the author.
[48] Mathias, interview with the author.
[49] Buarque de Hollanda and Gonçalves, *Cultura e Participação nos Anos 60*, 22; Maria Helena Kühner and Helena Rocha, *Para Ter Opinião* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2001), 46.
[50] Márcia Ramos de Oliveira, "O (Lp) Banquete dos Mendigos e a Censura Musical no Brasil (1973–2013)," *Resonancias* 18, no. 34 (2014): 155–80, https://doi.org/10.7764/res.2014.34.9.

wake of the impeachment vote, making a video averring his "support for democracy" and decrying the coup.[51]

**Figure 4:** Jards Macalé at Ocupa MinC RJ, May 22, 2016 (photo by the author).

Macalé's performance occurred late on the evening of Sunday, May 22. Ocupa MinC RJ organizers had invited him to perform, but he told me that, even if they hadn't, he would have shown up anyway, guitar

[51] PosTV, "#RetaFinalContraOGolpe – Jards Macalé – Ator," April 12, 2016, https://youtu.be/LiY7ge_pmhY. He also participated in a promotional video for Ocupa MinC that touched on the same themes. See Izaqueu Alves, "ocupa minc," May 23, 2016, https://youtu.be/fIJWuNAGAWY.

in hand.[52] Organizers promoted his appearance on social media, posts that were sent to me by multiple friends.[53] Late in the evening, he emerged from behind the stage wearing his signature teashade glasses. He sat in a white plastic chair, the kind you would encounter at any of Rio's sidewalk bars (see fig. 4), and strummed a few chords, checking the sound. Before singing a word, he initiated a call-and-response, shouting, "Fora!" to which the crowd replied, "Temer!" From there, his short set unfolded more as sing-along than a formal performance, the crowd drowning out the amplified Macalé. He frequently stopped singing entirely, letting the protesters take over.

## The Voice of the People of a Nation

Macalé's set began with the well-known song "A Voz do Morro" ("The Voice of the Hill"), whose lyrics speak to a series of nested communities in Brazil, beginning with some of the nation's most disenfranchised citizens and extending to the nation itself. Macalé merely led the protesters, who, in singing the song, initiated a version of the song's ethos of community. Part of a tradition of *samba crítico* (critical samba), "A Voz do Morro" is deeply imbricated with the history of using artmaking to comment on sociopolitical issues in Brazil.[54] The song's title refers to the hillside *favelas*—*morro* translates to "hill" and has historically been a euphemism for *favela*—that were occupied primarily by disenfranchised Black Brazilians in the decades after abolition. Not only did Zé Kéti perform it in *Opinião*, the musical protest against the military dictatorship that employed Macalé as a guitar player in 1965, but the song was prominently placed in the opening credits of Nelson Pereira dos Santos's 1955 film *Rio, 40 Graus*, itself a sociological critique of Brazilian society that focused on marginality in the outskirts of Rio, countering the idealized portrait that Rio and Brazil had received in cinematic depictions to that point.[55] "A Voz do Morro" was crucial to the realistic portrayal of class inequalities in Rio and a celebration of the people and culture of the lower class.

Zé Kéti's lyrics locate samba within the social milieu of some of the most disenfranchised citizens of Brazil. He employs a synecdoche, a poetic device in which a part comes to stand for the whole: samba comes to stand first for the marginalized populations of the *morro*, then for Rio de Janeiro, and finally for the entire nation of Brazil. As the voice of the *morro*, samba is aligned with the poor and disenfranchised residents who live there, who need to assert their own value in and to Brazilian society. During the Estado Novo dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas in the 1930s and '40s, as it achieved the status of Brazil's "national music," samba became a contested site for expressions of identity, belonging, and exclusion.[56] When appropriated as a symbol of Brazilianness, the genre risked losing its association with the community (primarily Black Brazilians) who created it, even as it relied on that community to confer a sense of authenticity. Zé Kéti reminds his audience that samba is "the king of the *terreiro*,"[57] a word that refers to Black Brazilian social spaces, such as the ritual site in religions like Candomblé, the performance space for samba in the *morros*,

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[52] Jards Macalé, interview with the author.
[53] Mathias noted that social media was the only way to find out about the situation at the occupation, because the news media was not covering the event.
[54] Santhiago, "Flowers Made of Lead," 293.
[55] Nei Lopes, *Zé Keti: O Samba Sem Senhor* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2000), 56; Randal Johnson, *Cinema Novo x5: Masters of Contemporary Brazilian Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 164, https://doi.org/10.7560/710900.
[56] See Hermano Vianna, *The Mystery of Samba: Popular Music & National Identity in Brazil*, trans. John Charles Chasteen (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11hphxb.
[57] All lyric translations included in this essay are my own.

and the plots of land on these hills where Black Brazilians created communities starting in the late nineteenth century.

Those with knowledge of Zé Kéti's work and career are likely to recognize a critique of samba's appropriation in these lyrics, which factored into Macalé's choice to open his set with the song, but the lyrics are ambiguous enough to be misinterpreted as a simplistic paean to the nation. Samba is representative of multiple levels of community—local, municipal, and national. Thus, when the lyrics demand that samba is valued and saved, they imply that to value and save the people of the *morro*, Brazil's most disenfranchised citizens, is to save the nation itself. Temer's interim government represented the antithesis of this, with its austerity measures and closing of ministries.[58] That said, some attendees discussed their lack of enthusiasm for the song. One indie musician used this song as an example of what she does not like about samba. Poking fun at the song, she sarcastically sang its opening lines to me in the posture of a crooner. Mathias also admitted that although the song had been politically important when it was written, it "lost the meaning it used to have. It's a little empty."[59] While he believes that the song still has a political message, "nowadays it's so much more complicated because it doesn't represent . . . the reality of the problems of the *morro* . . . because it was made 40, 50 years ago."[60] For Mathias, invoking this historical version of Rio racial and socioeconomic politics from the 1950s doesn't capture the complexities of the *morro* today. Moreover, he notes that "samba isn't the voice of the *morro* anymore."[61]

At Ocupa MinC RJ, the poetic message of "A Voz do Morro" was at least partially undercut by its relationship with this particular audience, most of whom did not come from the social geography described in the song. The occupation did not occur in a *morro*, and Júlio Barroso estimated that although the earliest crowds were heterogeneous, most people came from wealthier parts of the city.[62] And though on some occasions, different musical styles and performers drew crowds from poorer neighborhoods, on that particular day, the crowd showed little racial and even less economic diversity. Mathias echoed this: "If you take it from the point of view of [demographic] representation of Rio de Janeiro, it was ridiculous, the quantity of Black people there. Very few, very few that day."[63] These critiques paint a picture of an audience of mostly middle-class non-*morro* residents singing an overplayed song written to reflect sixty-year-old social realities.

Macalé chose the song not only for its messaging but also because the song's ubiquity allowed him to engender a participatory performance.[64] On a practical level, the fact that most attendees already knew the lyrics and offered them a means to coalesce as a community. Singing these lyrics synchronized by the song's rhythms, harmonies, and melody became a practical tool for organizing protesters, something that was lacking at other *Fora Temer*, where audience chants that were not accompanied by music often died off after a few repetitions. Even Mathias, who felt that the song's politics had been lost, but he still sang it when prompted by Macalé: "They sing the song, not the song's message."[65] This idea recalls Benedict Anderson's idea of unisonance as a tool for the creation of imagined communities: "No matter how banal the words and

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[58] Jonathan Watts, "The Kingmaker Tipped to Seize the Throne," *The Guardian*, April 3, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/03/brazil-michel-temer-dilma-rousseff-impeachment.
[59] Mathias, interview with the author.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Barroso, interview with the author.
[63] Mathias, interview with the author.
[64] Thomas Turino, *Music and Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[65] Mathias, interview with the author.

mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody."[66] Or, as Mathias put it, "There is a certain communion there of the people. For me, you sing . . . a song like that that everyone knows, that gets you excited, a certain communion happens, a certain identification between people."[67]

## Seeing Old Friends

Macalé drew parallels between the 2016 political coup and the 1964 military coup by performing a defiant version of his own countercultural anthem "Revendo Amigos" ("Seeing Friends Again"), which he wrote in 1972 with the poet Waly Salomão. Macalé and Salomão were active members of the counterculture in Rio de Janeiro, writing some of the movement's most enduring texts. The song speaks to and about the culture of revelry that informed the '70s counterculture, which has been criticized as an example of the "festive left," a term used to describe students and artists who identified ideologically with left-wing, anti-military government movements and sentiments but who did not participate actively in such movements, and the activists at Ocupa MinC RJ, which have, at least, been described in similar terms.[68] Furthermore, the song's countercultural roots connect it to 1970s discourses of love, including the notion of "free love," as well as North American-derived slogans such as "Make love, not war."[69]

Written during the height of the dictatorship's repressions, the lyrics of "Revendo Amigos" oscillate between mortal consequence and youthful festivity. The words "*revendo amigos*" ("seeing friends again") never appear in the lyrics of the song, making the refrain *volto pra curtir* ("I'll come back to have a good time") a more recognizable touchstone for its meaning and its historical setting. In the early 1970s, *curtir* was a slang term popular among the countercultural youth that is often translated as "dig," but means "have a good time." In the first context of the first verse, Macalé sings,

> If the whim strikes me, I'll go
> If the whim strikes me, I'll kill
> If the whim strikes me, I'll die
> And I come back to enjoy myself.

As Frederico Coelho has pointed out, the song's language is pacifying and provocative at the same time.[70] The return is proof of survival, of overcoming, but a return to revelry provokes a question: Does the singer not understand the import of these acts?

In the early 1970s, these lyrics served as commentary on the many musicians who had been exiled by the military government, but at Ocupa MinC RJ, the song's meaning was more ambiguous. The notion of "coming back to enjoy oneself" allowed protesters to laugh off the charges against Rousseff, who had not officially been impeached yet. Because of revelations of backroom dealings and allegations that the impeachment proceedings were illegitimate, protesters held onto some hope that Rousseff's popular

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[66] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 145.
[67] Mathias, interview with the author.
[68] "Bossa da Conversa," *Manchete* 752, September 17, 1966, 31; Muniagurria, *Políticas da Cultura*, 298.
[69] Rodrigo Faour, *História Sexual da MPB: A Evolução do Amor e do Sexo na Canção Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 2008), 379; Christopher Dunn, *Contracultura: Alternative Arts and Social Transformation in Authoritarian Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 41, 188, https://doi.org/10.5149/northcarolina/9781469628516.001.0001.
[70] Frederico Coelho, *Eu, Brasileiro, Confesso Minha Culpa e Meu Pecado Cultura Marginal no Brasil das Décadas de 1960 e 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 2010), 284.

support, which had waned, would begin to wax again. Even protesters who were admittedly not fond of Rousseff, like Júlio Barroso, described her as "a symbol of resistance, a symbol of injustice that should be reversed."[71] The lyric "but I already died and I am coming back to enjoy myself" seems designed for such an occasion.

Balancing this sentiment was a bitter disdain, which Macalé conveyed by altering the song's lyrics and arrangement. Macalé told me that the original lyric, censored by the military government, was not *curtir*, but *cuspir* (spit). "*Eu volto pra cuspir*" ("I come back to spit") would not have called to mind the festive left or the "alienated" counterculture at all, but disgust. In his Ocupa MinC RJ performance, Macalé snuck this alternative lyric into the song, maintaining some of this vitriol, even if in secret. I did not speak with any audience members who picked up on the alternate lyric, but no one could miss his arrangement choices. In the live performance, he violently plucked his guitar, exaggerating the contrast with his quiet, mumbling vocal delivery. Listening live, I was struck by the similarity between the guitar strums, distorted by the small PA system, and gunshots. It was a fitting, if disturbing, invocation for a narrator reveling in dying and killing, actions recalling in stark terms the violence of the dictatorship.

Much like he did in the first song in his set, Macalé organized "Revendo Amigos" as a sing-along, a neat trick given that many in attendance were unfamiliar with the song. In fact, because of the level of crowd participation, I wrongly assumed that most protesters knew the song, and only learned later, when I mentioned—and even sang—the song to a group of attendees that not one person recognized it. Macalé structured effectively taught the crowd the song during the performance. In its recorded version, the song's refrain is structured as a call-and-response between the singer and the accompaniment. Macalé begins with two wordless syllables, "eh eh," which the band echoes. This process repeats with "ah ah" and "ih ih," before ending with the line "volto pra curtir." At Capanema, Macalé used the breaks and spaces to create a different kind of call-and-response. The band hits—now guitar strums—were signals to the crowd, who echoed Macalé. This allowed him to build on the collective performance that he had established with "A Voz do Morro," despite using a text that was unfamiliar to many protesters. By playing this song second, he built on the precedent he had established with "A Voz do Morro" and took advantage of the climate's "not so subtle pressure to participate."[72] It gave protesters a way to enact the message of "We'll be back to celebrate, which in turn, helped raise and maintain their spirits.[73]

These lyrics, written during the worst years of the military dictatorship, draw clear parallels between that time and the in-process political coup of 2016. Rousseff herself was a member of an anti-dictatorship guerilla movement during the military regime. In 1970, she was captured and jailed for two years, during which time she was repeatedly tortured.[74] During the impeachment proceedings, one congressman dedicated his pro-impeachment vote to "the memory of Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, the terror of Dilma Rousseff."[75] Ustra led the agency responsible for Rousseff's torture. At the moment that Macalé sang these lyrics, they were an affirmation of a positive future: "We may have died, but we're coming back." In retrospect, there is a twisted irony in them. The congressman who had paid tribute to Rousseff's torturer,

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[71] Barroso, interview with the author.
[72] Turino, *Music as Social Life,* 29.
[73] See Rob Rosenthal, "Serving the Movement: The Role(s) of Music," *Popular Music & Society* 25, nos. 3–4 (2001): 11–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/03007760108591797.
[74] Simon Romero, "Leader's Torture in the '70s Stirs Ghosts in Brazil," *New York Times*, August 12, 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/05/world/americas/president-rousseffs-decades-old-torture-detailed.html.
[75] Luís Barrucho, "'Enquanto me dava choques, Ustra me batia com cipó e gritava,' diz torturado aos 19 anos," *BBC News Brasil*, April 19, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2016/04/160419_torturado_ustra_bolsonaro_lgb.

Jair Bolsonaro, was elected president after Temer fulfilled his term. These subsequent events also invite us to revisit the message of enjoyment in this song. Just as some criticized the festive nature of the counterculture as not sufficiently oppositional to the military regime, this song's message of enjoying oneself might seem insufficient for those on the left bemoaning Brazil's turn to reactionary politics.[76]

## Love Will Be Eternal Again

The final song in Macalé's set, the samba "Juízo Final" by Nelson Cavaquinho, hewed closest to the graffitied motto "Love forever, fear never" that I encountered at the entrance to Capanema. The song is set in the moments after death, during the "final judgment." And like the graffitied slogan, the song's lyrics offer love as part of a binary opposition, in this case with evil:

> The sun has to shine one more time
> Light has to reach the hearts
> Evil will be burned to its core
> Love will be eternal again.

The lyric is a paradox. Eternal means everlasting, without beginning or end. It is not possible to be eternal *again*. If something *is* eternal, it always *was* eternal. Directed at Temer, this song says, "Give up; you have already lost. Love won. It is eternally winning." This paradox of eternal renewing recalls Berlant's argument that love demands patience. Positing the political in these terms showcases a desire to bind this community through love, because love, unlike strictly rational conceptions of the political, is messy and paradoxical, but eternally winning. But the fact that the struggle is cast in abstract terms, between the ideals of good (love) and evil (fear), recalls Ahmed's questioning of using discourses of love to define a community. As she points out, any group can assert its commitment to love and position itself against another group that does not share its ideals. At Ocupa MinC RJ, protesters seemed to claim that their love was righteous—the love of other members of the community, which was under threat by evil, by fear, as represented by Temer. But, as Sara Ahmed has argued, love is a disputed concept that is claimed by opposing forces. Anthropologists have shown that, even limiting our research to twenty-first-century musical protest in Brazil, there are examples of activists and politicians from many corners of the ideological spectrum turning to love to generate support and embolden their followers.[77] Temer could give a speech suggesting that "we must preach love," as he did in late 2017.[78] The adoption of love as a focal point for this community, then, is grounded not in an ideologically clear thesis statement, but in the availability of a vernacular that can be quickly digested and shared in the moment of performance.

The song had been in Macalé's repertory for years but had returned to public consciousness as the theme music for the *novela* (soap opera) *As Regras do Jogo* (The Rules of the Game), interpreted by the singer Alcione. As is common for *novela* theme music, the song's new wide recognition was a double-edged sword. Mathias told me that "it's already a song that was played to exhaustion, sort of a cliché because of that. I find it's a good song and confess that after it became a *novela* theme, I started to dislike it."[79] This recognition may have contributed to its availability at these protests, where I heard the song interpreted three

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[76] See Dunn, *Contracultura*.
[77] Machado, "Emoções em Disputa"; Bøhler, "Rhythm Politics in a Changing Brazil."
[78] Carla Araujo, "'Devemos pregar o amor' diz Michel Temer em Rondônia," *Estadão*, November 23, 2017, https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,devemos-pregar-o-amor-diz-michel-temer-em-rondonia.
[79] Mathias, interview with the author.

different times. It also facilitated Macalé's performance choices, which took advantage of the song's unusual phrase structure to suggest how the temporary community of Ocupa MinC RJ might extend beyond the geographic and temporal limits of the protests.

With "Juízo Final," Macalé enacted another clever participatory technique that reinforced the message of eternal renewing and indicated one way that the ephemeral moment could live on. In contrast to much popular music in Brazil, including many sambas, the song is built in three-measure phrases rather than two or four. For those used to hearing popular music in four measure cadences, this creates an unexpected lack of rhythmic finality, particularly on the lyric "Love will be eternal again" that closes the song. Macalé took advantage of this attribute by repeating the final lyric many times. The crowd obliged, singing "Love will be eternal again" after Macalé stopped playing his guitar, stood up from the plastic chair, and began to leave the stage. Encouraged by the singer's gesticulations, the crowd continued to sing the lyric even after he exited. Through repetition, the phrase became eternal, again and again. Macalé had shown the crowd through this subtle technique how they might continue this temporary union beyond his set, beyond this day, beyond this act of protest.[80] In this coming together of the song's message and its collective performance, the political potential of this form of music making emerged. Mathias highlighted the importance of the musical setting of the lyrics for him: "It's the music that makes this message bring people together. Of this I haven't the slightest doubt."[81] In other words, music is not just a political tool for disseminating a message of coming together; it is what causes that coming together. This act, then, evidences the potentialities of vernacular love in this musical protest: while the song, performed in this way, engenders a temporary community, that community requires eternal renewal to effect political change.

## Conclusions

By repeating "Love will be eternal once again," protesters temporarily embodied a community of people united in their opposition to the political coup. And though they were successful in their call to reinstate the Ministry of Culture, Temer finished his term as interim president. Moreover, Rousseff's party was defeated in the subsequent presidential election by the ultra-right-wing Jair Bolsonaro, a man who, in addition to shuttering the Ministry of Culture, dismantled social welfare programs and enacted disastrous environmental policies.[82] He has also ushered in a dark period for leftist activists and artists, who have reported being attacked by emboldened Bolsonaro supporters.[83] Others have pointed out the similarity between rhetoric from Bolsonaro's government, which has implied that funding is only available for artists ideologically aligned with the president, and twentieth-century fascists.[84]

It is fair to wonder what these subsequent events say about the efficacy of this form of activism and this kind of rhetoric in broader political terms. In her work on uses of an ethos of love in the mayoral

[80] He had also made use of this technique at a performance in São Paulo some years prior.
[81] Mathias, interview with the author.
[82] Medida Provisória no. 870, de 2019," *Congresso Nacional*, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.congressonacional.leg.br/materias/medidas-provisorias/-/mpv/135064/pdf; Manuela Andreoni, "Brazil's Bid to Outsource Amazon Conservation Finds Few Takers," *New York Times*, May 26, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/26/world/americas/brazil-amazon.html.
[83] Oliver Basciano, "Death threats and denunciations: the artists who fear Bolsonaro's Brazil," *The Guardian*, November 7, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/nov/07/brazil-artists-death-threats-censorship-intimidation-jair-bolsonaro.
[84] Théo Manzali de Sá-Kaye, "Bolsonaro's Cultural Revolution," *America's Quarterly*, January 24, 2019, https://americasquarterly.org/article/bolsonaros-cultural-revolution/.

campaign of politician Fernando Haddad, Shannon Garland raises a persuasive and pointed critique of love as a political discourse. She argues that if the demand for love is articulated "as dialogue or reconciliation, rather than struggle against the very contradiction between life and capital that structures our social relations, we will indeed continue to dwell in the epistemic realm of capitalism's fictitious discourse about itself."[85] That is, affects such as love, when generated in conjunction with music and other cultural forms, only serve political change if they are tied to material and structural changes. This line of reasoning resonates with Ahmed's critiques: "The idea of a world where we all love each other, a world of lovers, is a humanist fantasy that informs much of the multicultural discourses of love, which I have formulated as the hope: If only we got closer we would be as one."[86] These critiques find a foothold in the realities of the makeup of the crowd at Capanema, many of whom came from Rio's middle and upper classes. In plain terms, many protesters called for and sang about an ideal of community that did not necessarily correspond with their own class positions and the exclusions attendant to it. They appealed to a language of love to uplift all Brazilians, but from their own relatively safe socioeconomic positions.

Without denying these demographic realities, Júlio Barroso pushed back against this critique of the protest when I asked about it by highlighting some material benefits the occupation created for a more diverse cross-section of the Rio populace. He told me that among the initial occupiers who actually stayed inside the Capanema building for the one hundred plus days of the occupation were city residents experiencing homelessness. Some of these joined the movement out of practical necessity—protesters were supported with food donations and mattresses and had been granted access to bathroom and kitchen space by building workers—but took advantage of their position to voice opinions about the movement's activities. Moreover, street vendors from the poorest classes flocked to the protests and, unlike at officially sanctioned events, they did not have to pay for permits or share earnings with event coordinators. Barroso was emphatic in reminding me that these vendors appreciated the occupations on financial terms, but they also participated in nightly lectures, educating themselves on civic and economic matters relevant to their own lives in ways unavailable through mainstream news and educational channels. The willingness of protesters to forego wages in order to occupy the building and offer material support to vendors and homeless participants is a manifestation of the exact non-narcissistic love that has real political power.

Another perspective on the limits of this action might be to view middle-class protesters' actions as taking advantage of their own privilege to fight on behalf of those whose daily responsibilities prevent them from participating in such protests. As Butler writes, "There is no possibility of 'the people' without a discursive border drawn somewhere, either traced along the lines of existing nation-states, racial or linguistic communities, or political affiliation."[87] Though "the people" gathered at this protest performance may have been primarily of that middle class, "the people" they imagined through that performance was more inclusive. Can we at once recognize the limitations of this community while also positing that the people who attended these protests did so, in part, on behalf of "those who can never be part of that concerted action, who remain outside the plurality that acts?"[88] Were these protesters acting in exclusion by assembling in a place where and at a time when those most affected by the Temer government's policies could not participate? Were they standing in for those who could not physically assemble?

Seeking to define the intentions of every attendee may be beside the point. Perhaps the most material

[85] Garland, No Love Without Conflict," 298.
[86] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 139.
[87] Butler, *Notes*, 5.
[88] Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," *#Occupy Los Angeles Reader* 1, no. 3 (2011).

effect of this even comes in how, as occupiers like Júlio Barroso, musicians like Jards Macalé, and protesters like Mathias formed their political assembly through their communal voices, they modeled and promoted engagement with the political realities of their moment. Barroso estimates that the night Veloso sang, seventy percent just went for a free concert; however, the night he sang *also* drew the largest crowds.[89] If only thirty percent were pure of intention, that still represented a critical mass. Moreover, some of the people who showed up to drink beer and see a free show were educated. There was no fancy production surrounding any of these events, and performers spoke openly against the coup, educating and convincing casual attendees. Given their misgivings about the demographic makeup of the protests, I expected participants like Barroso and Mathias to respond cynically when evaluating Ocupa MinC RJ in retrospect. Barroso, though, was steadfast, reiterating that "love is greater than fear" and quickly following with "Love forever, fear never. So, let's fight!"[90] This attitude is audible in many places within the cultural field, notably in Rio's samba school competition, held annually during *carnaval*.[91] Some leftist musical activists have also seemed to learn from the exclusions of past protest events, highlighting the importance of coalitions that include voices from myriad movements affected by the policies of the current government.[92] Moreover, in late May 2021, Brazilians took to the streets in record numbers to protest their president's mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic.[93]

This close reading of Jards Macalé's performance at Ocupa MinC RJ reveals some of the potentialities and limitations of politics done through musical expression. His choice of repertory called attention to the connections between historical and contemporary political dynamics and the shifting meanings of musical texts and performances across time. Moreover, Macalé's use of participatory forms, grounded in a vernacular of love, helped him imagine and engender a community in the moment of protest, one that seemed to align with the vision of activists and protesters present at the Rio de Janeiro occupation. These efforts had clear effects with respect to the Ministry of Culture itself, which was reinstated during the occupation. With the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018, the Ministry was shuttered again, though it is expected to reopen following the inauguration of President Lula, who defeated Bolsonaro at the polls in 2022. Following the 2022 election, I corresponded with some of the people who had participated in Ocupa MinC RJ; they offered cautious optimism for their causes. Macalé, meanwhile, posted a photo of himself draped in a Brazilian flag. Along with the words *ordem* (order) and *progresso* (progress), which are typically found in the center, was a third: *amor*.

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[89] Barroso, interview with the author.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Caio Barretto Briso and Tom Phillips, "Brazil's artists lead a chorus of resistance to Jair Bolsonaro," *The Guardian*, December 28, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/28/brazil-artists-lead-chorus-of-resistance-jair-bolsonaro.
[92] See, for example, Fred Ouro Preto, dir., *AmarElo: É Tudo Pra Ontem*, Laboratório Fantasma, 2020, https://www.netflix.com/title/81306298.
[93] Ernesto Londoño and Flávia Milhorance, "As Virus Toll Grows, Brazil's Political Divisions Spill Onto the Streets," *New York Times*, May 31, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/31/world/americas/brazil-protests-covid-19.html.

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