TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN THE PEDAGOGY OF BRAZILIAN INSTRUMENTAL CHORO

A dissertation submitted to the College of the Arts of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Nathalia Santos offered major support through Portuguese lessons and affordable accommodations. She and Charles Zanol made me feel at home, becoming more of a sister and brother than just friends. My Brazilian brother and colleague, Rafael Velloso, gave me advice and helped edit one of my interview transcriptions. Cristhiano Kolinski transcribed all but one of my interviews conducted in Portuguese. Jason Little delved into Brazilian music and specifically carioca music and culture with me, and we shared many adventures living together for several months on Praia do Flamengo. He, Jon Mosey, and Sara Tamburro, along with a host of other participants, helped me learn and promote choro in northeast Ohio with Ohio Choro Club.

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I may have never left northeast Ohio if it were not for my adventurous parents who moved our family overseas in 1982. Our traveling experiences ignited my passion for learning about different points of view. I am eternally grateful for their choice. Ben Harbert, my great friend and colleague has always given me advice I trust. Hopefully, some day soon we’ll be able to live near enough to one another to regularly play music and converse into the wee hours.
Finally, my wife Concetta has been my best friend, travel companion, and the breadwinner over the past couple years. I am fortunate to have found someone equally enamored with the adventure of discovery and learning inherent with cross-cultural living.

I dedicate this research to choro musicians throughout the world.

Chorões do mundo uni-vos! Vamos fazer uma grande roda!
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I began participating in music at an early age. My family had a piano in our home and my mother would sing popular children’s songs with me. I remember being in the children’s choir at my parents’ church beginning at age four or five. Around this time I also began taking piano lessons. My parents sang in the church choir as well and my older sister played trombone in the school band. I began playing trombone at age ten and guitar at age thirteen. For high school, I attended Interlochen Arts Academy, studying guitar, and for college I attended Berklee College of Music, studying professional music. My life has always been filled with learning music.

As a non-Brazilian and outsider to choro, my first contact with the genre was unconscious. Like many people from outside Brazil, and before the Internet, my exposure to Brazilian music was through films, cartoons, and shorts made by Walt Disney or Hollywood movies starring the incomparable Carmen Miranda. Much of the music featured in those productions about Brazil was in fact choro. One of the most famous choro songs in the United States is the Zequinha de Abreu choro composition “Tico Tico Na Fubá” (1917), which Miranda made famous with added lyrics. I would eventually be made conscious of this music while studying popular music and guitar in college during the early 1990s. In a new context, I would be reminded of Abreu’s song by the recording made by American mandolin player David Grisman and his quintet on the album Dawganova (1995). I loved the melody, full of arpeggios, chromaticism, and fast syncopated sixteenth note lines, accompanied by the syncopated samba rhythm. Little did I know, this song was a part of a genre of music called choro, let alone from Brazil. I transcribed the melody and added the song to my band’s repertoire, not realizing that more than ten years later I would begin my long journey learning about Brazilian music and culture.
I discovered the depth of the choro music at the behest of my ethnomusicology advisor at Kent State University (KSU). Dr. Kazadi wa Mukuna directed me towards investigating choro, having lived in Brazil for many years doing extensive research and teaching. He encouraged me to focus on choro because of my interest in guitar, improvisation, and the fact that very little has been written about choro, especially in English. I started listening to choro CDs that I bought online. Although I played guitar for 18 years before starting to learn choro, I enrolled in classical guitar lessons at KSU to work on my right hand finger plucking technique and general facility on a nylon string guitar; all of my playing had been on electric and acoustic steel string guitars, which are designed differently, having steel strings and employing a plectrum. I bought a method book on Brazilian guitar style\(^1\) and started learning the various exercises and songs. In my lessons at KSU with George Bachmann, we focused on the Brazilian art music repertoire, and specifically the guitar music of Heitor Villa-Lobos. Online, I found several CDs of choro music. The first three CDs I ordered were *Os Choros Dos Chorões* [The weeping of the weepers], a collection of famous choro recordings from Jacob Do Bandolim, Pixinguinha, Canhoto, Benedito Lacerda; *Pixinguinha*, a live recording of Pixinguinha classics by Paulo Moura and “Os Batutas,” a reference to Pixinguinha’s famous band, “Os Oito Batutas” in the 1920s; and *Tira Poeira*, a CD from the band of the same name, who represent the newer style of choro (i.e. elaborate arrangements, extended vamps, and non-orthodox/jazz-style improvisation). I also discovered and ordered the five-volume collection *Princípios do Choro* [Principles of Choro].\(^2\) While these books had lots of songs, in the form of lead sheets (melody with chord names above and genre listed, e.g. polka, choro, tango, waltz, etc.), the book did not have written examples of

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the genre rhythms, so it was a guess to how the accompaniment to the songs were supposed to sound. Later I discovered that the books have corresponding CDs, which enable accompanists to hear all the parts of the songs, especially the accompaniment, which is not written. These experiences were valuable for my initial introduction to choro, but when I finally arrived in Brazil and tried to begin playing choro songs with people, I was still unsure and uncomfortable playing the basic accompaniment rhythms. In January 2006, My wife and I took our first trip to Brazil. We had taken one semester of Portuguese class at Kent State, we had just gotten married, and we wanted to dovetail our honeymoon with my first research trip. While in Rio, I met Brazilian ethnomusicologist/educator/musician Mônica Leme, a former student of Mukuna. She gave me a bibliography of important sources as well as advice on where to see choro performed live. My first live choro experience was at Trapiche Gamboa in the Centro section of the city where Rogério Caetano and Eduardo Neves had a group that held a weekly roda de choro. Few people attended the show that night, but the lack of attendees did not seem to bother the musicians. They played in a style similar to that of the aforementioned group, Tira Poeira, playing the written melodies first and then making up new melodic and rhythmic material over the song’s chord progressions, not unlike jazz performance practice. Caetano is one of the top young choro/samba guitarists. After the show, I arranged to have a lesson with him the following day. From this point forward, I began meeting and learning from members of the Brazilian choro community.

FIELDWORK

In 1964, musicologist Alan Merriam wrote *The Anthropology of Music*. In this work, he advocates studying music not from the standpoint of music itself, but with the idea that music is
a byproduct of human concepts and ideas. In turn, music influences human concepts and behavior. His tripartite theoretical model (concepts-behavior-music) has become the foundation for ethnomusicology. Essential to ethnomusicological research is fieldwork. Echoing Merriam, ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl writes, "it is understood that one can hardly comprehend a musical system without knowing how it is taught, learned and transmitted in its own society." Furthermore, the data collected from fieldwork needs to be interpreted to understand its meaning and importance, what anthropologist Clifford Geertz, inspired by Gilbert Ryle, calls "thick-description ethnography," which entails drawing "large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics." An important aspect to ethnographic research is reflexivity, or being self-aware in the field and acknowledging this within the study.

Figure 1: Luciana Rabello and the author at a roda de choro. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 14 June, 2011. (Photograph: Dominique Pibrac)

I use participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, and analysis of music from audio recordings as methods for this ethnographic study. My goal is to understand a culture other than my own and gain an insider's perspective. As a guitarist for twenty-three years, trained in multiple music styles, I had the advantage of quickly learning the music and participating in multiple levels of choro music performance and practice. In 2006, 2007, and 2008, I made fieldwork trips of varying lengths to Rio de Janeiro, staying two weeks, three months, and two weeks respectively. In 2010 I performed the longest stretch of fieldwork, staying one year in Rio de Janeiro. Every trip, I studied Portuguese, made connections with choro musicians, participated in traditional group practice/performance sessions, took private guitar lessons, visited archives in the Biblioteca Nacional, and interviewed choro musicians. I participated in the National Festival of Choro in 2007, 2008, and 2010. The festivals are a week of intensive choro training produced and administered by Instituto Casa de Choro [Choro House Institute], the institution responsible for Escola Portátil de Música [Portable School of Music] (EPM), used as the case study for this investigation. During my yearlong fieldwork stay in Rio de Janeiro from July 2010 to July 2011, I attended a full year of classes at the EPM. In 2010, my research trip coincided with my wife’s signing of a four-year contract at an elementary international school in Porto Alegre, Brazil. This has enabled me to continue performing fieldwork in Brazil while writing my dissertation.

INTERVIEWS

Of the seventeen choro musicians I interviewed, fourteen were involved with EPM in some way, in the capacity of teachers, students, or monitors for the school roda de choro [choro circle]. Seven of the interviews were conducted in English, while the rest were in Portuguese. In some cases I made multiple interviews with the informant. The interviews were recorded to
digital audio and later transcribed. With the exception of my interview with Maurício Carrhilo in 2007 that I transcribed and Rafael Velloso edited, all of the Portuguese interviews were transcribed by Christiano Kolinski, a Brazilian anthropology student at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre.

**QUESTIONNAIRES**

I created a two-page, multiple-choice questionnaire for students and teachers of EPM to fill out (Appendix B). The questionnaires were distributed by EPM via their list server two separate times between March and April 2011. Fifty-three musicians responded. The data from these questionnaires helps define the choro community today and how they learn choro.

**TRANSLATIONS**

Unless otherwise noted, I made all the Portuguese to English translations in this dissertation. I initially write Portuguese words and groups of words in italics, followed by the English explicitation, e.g. *cavaquinho* [small Portuguese 4-string lute]. After the first use, I revert to writing the word(s) without italics. I provide a glossary of Portuguese terms used in this study at the end of the paper. For longer passages in Portuguese, I only provide the English translations within the text. This is due to the intended English-speaking audience. I provide the longer, original Portuguese transcriptions in the Appendix section, arranged by chapter. My translations have been checked and edited by Rafael Velloso, Kazadi wa Mukuna, and Richard Washbourne, all Portuguese speakers and familiar with the problems inherent with translation.
CHAPTER II: WHAT IS CHORO?

Brazilian choro music had a monumental year in 2000; *Escola Portátil de Música* [Portable School of Music] (EPM) opened, the first school to exclusively teach choro in Rio de Janeiro, choro’s birthplace, and the Brazilian government officially passed a law making every April 23rd Brazil’s National Day of Choro. This date was chosen to commemorate the 1897 birthday of Alfredo da Rocha Viana Júnior, popularly known as “Pixinguinha,” who is one of the most important names in Brazilian popular music and the most celebrated choro composer, flautist, and saxophonist. Twenty-seven years after Pixinguinha’s death on February 7, 1973, and well over one hundred years after choro’s formation in the later half of the nineteenth century, Brazilians formally established two national institutions. The founding of the National Day of Choro and Escola Portátil de Música mark a major turning point in the history of this music as they punctuate choro’s resurgence throughout Brazil that began in the 1970s.

CHORO’S ETYMOLOGY

At base, “choro” in Portuguese is the present tense conjugation of the verb chorar, meaning to cry or weep. This seemingly logical implication of emotional meaning tied to music is obvious, especially considering the many melancholy choro compositions that exist. But choro is very dynamic in terms of emotional expression, with a wide range of possible descriptors. Indeed, a great proportion of choro music is light-hearted, upbeat, and exciting. Regardless of choro’s multiplicity of expression, many choro musicians that I met ascribe the emotional definition to choro, as does musicologist David Appleby. José Tinhorão believes in the term’s connection between emotion and music, but goes further in stating that the *baixarias*

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[counterpoint bass lines] are the point of connection to melancholy. Some scholars have established strong arguments for other possible etymologies.

Sergio Alvares points to four different Brazilian scholars who link the term to the Afro-Brazilian term xôlo [a term related to Afro-Brazilian dances]. Isenhour-Livingston and Garcia also cite Gérard Béhague as agreeing with this theory, believing it is possible that “xôlo” transformed during the process of Afro-Brazilian migration from plantations to cities to become pronounced “choro.”

Ary Vasconcelos proposes a compelling etymological theory, connecting choro to the term choromeleiros—colonial Brazilian instrumental music ensembles that incorporated the charamela, a folk oboe from the Iberian Peninsula. He argues that other instruments were used in the ensembles, especially guitar and cavaquinho and colloquially any instrumental music ensemble would be given the title choromeleiro, which over time was shortened to choro. Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia agree with Vasconcelos and have found “overwhelming evidence” that supports this theory. While contemporary scholars acknowledge the various etymology theories, many choro musicians I spoke with relate choro to its emotional meaning, and as Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia concur, are normally unaware of these scholarly theories.

Some choro musicians give more abstract definitions to the term. Through my personal experiences learning and playing choro, I have heard musicians say that choro means a “conversation” between instruments. Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia give an account of a choro

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8. Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, Choro: Social History of a Brazilian Popular Music (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2005), 60.
musician who believes the term came from certain instances in gatherings of musicians in the later nineteenth century. Supposedly, poorer musicians were said to “cry” when asked to contribute something to the party—food, beverage, or money—and because they had to give from very little, the name choro became associated with these parties of musicians.\textsuperscript{11}

Today, the popular term for choro is \textit{chorinho}, the diminutive form, used as a term of endearment. Using the term “choro” to describe to Brazilians what I study usually elicits a confused look followed by a look of revelation and the response, “Oh! You mean chorinho.” Although the general public uses chorinho instead of choro, some choro musicians criticize the use of the diminutive because in their opinion, chorinho can connote smallness, a lack of seriousness, or unimportance. One of my first experiences at the Third National Festival of Choro in 2007 was hearing a professor address the attendees and exclaim that the music we play is called “choro” and not “chorinho.” We were advised not to use “chorinho.” All the while, the term “chorinho” is far more common than “choro” to the general Brazilian public, and because of this, choro musicians are confronted with having to negotiate its use. While the use of the word “chorinho” is intended to express affinity for the music genre, to some conservative choro musicians, its use is controversial.

\textbf{DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CHORO PRACTICE}

Choro, a Brazilian music style and genre, is an American hybrid product similar to jazz in the United States; they are both mixtures of mainly European and African musical elements. Like jazz musicians, choro musicians often play instrumental music and accompany vocal music. Choro musicians have always straddled the divide between “classical” and “popular” notions of musical production, playing virtuosic instrumental music set to social dance rhythms. With their

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 60.
high level of musicianship, choro musicians are regularly hired to accompany popular vocal genres.

Choro music is instrumental, although since the 1930s a few choro compositions have had lyrics added to their melodies. In Portuguese, a musician that plays choro is called a chorão. Experienced chorões (plural of chorão) spend years of dedicated practice to achieve a high level of technical ability and develop an expansive repertoire; some chorões claim to know more than 200 compositions. Many advanced chorões have the ability to learn new melodies and/or chord progressions spontaneously. Improvisation is one of the more advanced methods used in choro performance, especially by the chorões providing chord progressions, rhythmic accompaniment, and counterpoint, as their function is more flexible and more open to individual interpretation than the melodic players. The chorões playing melody traditionally improvise through embellishing and ornamenting composed melodies. However, as some choro performances I attended demonstrate, chorões providing the melody can stray far from the original melody of the composition, creating completely new melodic material over the composition’s chord progressions.

In addition to being a rhythm and music style, choro is also associated with the ensembles playing this music. The instrumentation of Joquim Callado’s 1870 ensemble called Choro Carioca consisted of two violões [guitars, singular—violão] (both six-string), cavaquinho (a small four string lute of Portuguese origin), and Callado on flute. This ensemble was called the terno, referring to the “trio” of guitar, cavaquinho, and flute. The music associated with these bands was based originally on European dance music of the time, especially the waltz and polka. Beyond the instrumental ensembles, many of the nineteenth century dance compositions were arranged, printed, and sold for piano, an instrument wildly popular among the middle to upper
classes that could afford to own or rent the instruments and pay for a music education. By the turn of the twentieth century, the popularity of dance music expanded to larger martial bands that also functioned as dance bands. Today, the typical instrumentation for choro ensembles varies in size—duo to large group—and can include any combination of guitars (six and seven-string), cavaquinho, mandolin, accordion, woodwinds (especially flute, clarinet, and saxophone), brass (trumpet, trombone, and tuba), pandeiro [Brazilian style tambourine], and various percussion instruments; although the “standard” instrumentation is modeled after the radio bands of the 1930s-1950s called the conjunto regional [regional ensemble, plural—conjuntos regionais], consisting of one or two six-string guitars, a violão sete cordas [seven-string guitar], cavaquinho, pandeiro, and a melodic instrument. The accordion is also popular in the regional ensembles as well as various Afro-Brazilian percussion instruments—reco-reco [scraper], tamborim [small, single-headed, high-pitched drum], and various types of shakers, including matchboxes.

HISTORICAL SURVEY

Choro is commonly considered to have begun during the 1870s in Rio de Janeiro, where popular European dance music styles and rhythms—polka, waltz, schottische, mazurka, and quadrille—were being composed and performed by Brazilian musicians, both professionals and high level amateurs, coalescing into what became known as a music genre by the early twentieth century. From these Brazilian interpretations of European music came Brazilian music styles and rhythms—lundu, choro, Brazilian tango, maxixe, and samba. Eventually, composers were registering compositions under various hybrid styles (e.g. polka-lundu, polka-tango, and eventually polka-choro) as well as a variety of other non-Brazilian styles (e.g. habanera, bolero, fox-trot, and ragtime). Today, choro musicians play compositions in a variety of rhythms ranging
from the European and Brazilian rhythms mentioned above to regional rhythms as well, e.g. *milonga* and Argentinian tango from south Brazil and *baião* and *frevo* from northeast Brazil.

Another structural element to choro is its form. The vast majority of choro compositions follow a modified rondo form, i.e. AABBACCA. Each section is usually sixteen measures in length. To a lesser extent, although more popular over the past fifty years, ternary form is also used with repeated sections, i.e. AABBA.

Outside Brazil, choro was promoted through Heitor Villa-Lobos, Brazil's most famous European art music composer of the twentieth century. Villa-Lobos learned the guitar through playing choro and would compose many art music pieces for guitar as well as other instrumental ensembles that were inspired by the choro tradition. He composed a series of seventeen pieces titled *Choros*, from 1920 to the mid-1940s, that use various musical elements inspired by not only choro music, but also by various folk and popular music styles from all over Brazil. In this way, Villa-Lobos used the term choro, and some of its defining characteristics, as a form of nationalist expression.

Journalist and music critic Ilmar Carvalho contends that for fifty years, between 1870 and 1920, choro was the most popular music in Brazil. Because of the introduction of the radio in the 1920s, choro practice waned with the increased popularity of choro’s vocal counterpart called *samba* as well as foreign musics. Choro would be influenced by some of these outside forces, namely jazz and music from the North American entertainment industry. It would take a radio show, *O Pessoal da Velha Guarda* [The Personnel or Gang of the Old Guard], in the late 1940s, to reinvigorate the genre and pique the interest of Brazilians nationwide. *O Pessoal da Velha Guarda* featured the composer and flute and saxophone player “Pixinguinha,” a member of what

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was considered the “Old Guard,” leading a group of older chorões. As the show's title indicates, Pixinguinha and his band were preserving and protecting choro as well as establishing it as the foundation of Brazil's national musical heritage.14 Pixinguinha's group *Pixinguinha e a Turma dos Chorões* [Pixinguinha and the Chorão Crew] played songs, and in between their performances, the charismatic master of ceremonies “Almirante” talked about various aspects of the music and told anecdotes and vignettes about choro's heyday. The radio shows inspired resurgence in learning and performing choro throughout Brazil, and soon after, this genre became known as one of Brazil's traditional musics and one of the main foundations of Brazilian popular music.

Choro's popularity declined again in the late 1950s, overshadowed by *bossa nova* [new way] and once again by the popularity of music from outside Brazil, namely rock and roll and jazz. Through the 1960s, although choro received little popular attention, chorões continued to play and compose music for private gatherings as well as occasional television and public performances. Choro's most prolific performer, composer, and advocate in the 1960s is Jacob Bittencourt, popularly referred to as Jacob do Bandolim [Jacob of the mandolin]. Through his dedication to the genre and exceptional bandolim and composing skills, Bittencourt and his band *Época de Ouro* [Golden Era] would become some of the most idolized musicians in choro, their recordings becoming veritable “textbooks” for following generations. It would not be until the 1970s when a new generation of choro enthusiasts would start a revival that would resuscitate the genre, inspiring numerous publications, concerts and festivals, television shows, local choro clubs, and research funded by the Brazilian government.

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During the 1970s and early 1980s, the famous musician, composer, and arranger Radamés Gnattali and a group of younger chorões formed the group *Camarata Carioca* [Rio Chamber] that performed and recorded choro in a more “classical” or erudite manner. One of the guitarists from the group, Maurício Carrilho, described it as “a new style of performance,” where the conjunto regional ensemble format played with “the spontaneity of traditional choro with the technical quality and balance of chamber music.”

The sophistication *Camarata Carioca* brought to choro has been an important contributor to choro’s practice since the 1980s. While choro would not be considered popular in terms of recording and live concert ticket sales in the 1980s and 1990s, the genre gained sustained interest amongst Brazilian instrumental music enthusiasts with choro clubs in cities throughout Brazil, numerous choro bands composing, recording, and performing, and a continuous influx of young aspiring chorões. In 1998 and 2000, the first formal choro schools were founded respectively, *Escola Brasileira de Choro Raphael Rabello* [Raphael Rabello Brazilian School of Choro] in Brasília and EPM in Rio de Janeiro.

**CHORO LITERATURE**

Choro sources in Portuguese are wide-ranging in scope, depth, and professionalism. The history of choro or its performance practice before the 1920s is the focus of almost all of the sources written before the late 1990s. Like the sources in English, Portuguese sources prior to 1980 deal with choro in the context Brazilian popular music or in surveys of Brazilian music in general or in biographies of choro musicians. Several notable Portuguese books focus specifically on choro. Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto's *O Choro: Reminiscencias dos Chorões Antigos* [Choro: Memories of the Old Choro Musicians] (1936) is one of choro's oldest and most important sources, giving biographies of some of the old chorões—their character, occupations,

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and playing ability. His book gives an ethnographic perspective of a chorão living in the 1930s, and a testimonial to choro’s initial establishment. A facsimile edition was reprinted in 1978 by FUNARTE, Brazil’s national arts foundation. Ary Vasconcelos’ *Carinhoso Etc.: Historia e Inventario do Choro* [Carinhoso Etc.: History and Inventory of Choro] (1984) is one of the few studies in Portuguese that deals with choro after 1920s, although he does this only in the introduction. The rest of the work is an incomplete annotated discography based mostly on his private collection. Henrique Cazes, a product of the 1970s choro revival, is one of the dominant cavaquinho players in the contemporary choro scene. He recently wrote *Choro: Do Quintal ao Municipal* [Choro: From the Backyard to the Concert Hall] (1998). Cazes focuses on all aspects of choro's history, with special attention to the period between the choro revival in the 1970s to when the book was written in 1997. He brings his experiences of being a chorão to his writing, making this an important source for recent choro history and practice.

An influx of Brazilian theses and dissertations about choro started in the middle 1990s, their topics being the guitar and its use in choro. Graça Alan’s *Violão Carioca: Nas Ruas, Nos Salões, Na Universidade—Uma Trejetória* [Rio de Janeiro Guitar: In the Streets, In the Salons, In the University—a trajectory] (1995) investigates the guitar’s history in Rio de Janeiro in both Brazilian popular and European art music contexts. *Dino Sete Cordas: Creatividade e Revolução nos Acompanhamentos da MPB* [Dino Seven Strings: Creativity and Revolution in the Accompaniments of MPB] (1995) is Márcia Taborda’s master thesis focusing on one of the most important seven-string guitar players in choro’s history. Essentially a biography, Taborda was able to interview the guitarist, and she also provides transcriptions and analysis of his playing. José Paulo Becker’s master thesis, *O Acompanhamento do Violão de Seis Cordas no Choro* [The accompaniment of Six-String Guitar in Choro] (1996), analyzes six-string guitar accompaniment
in choro with transcriptions from recordings of Jacob do Bandolim’s group *Época de Ouro*.

While Anna Paes de Carvalho’s *O Violão na Escola do Choro: Uma Análise dos Processos Não-Formais de Aprendizagem* [The Guitar in the School of Choro: An Analysis of the Non-Formal Learning Processes] (1998) is her undergraduate thesis, her research nonetheless provides substantial information on the topic of learning choro. She includes transcripts from interviews of two leading guitarists involved in the contemporary choro community—Maurício Carrilho and José Paulo Becker. *O Saxofone no Choro: A Introdução do Saxofone e as Mudanças na Prática do Choro* [The Saxophone in Choro: The Introduction of the Saxophone and Changes in the Practice of Choro] (2006) is Rafael Velloso’s master thesis, which is one of the few Brazilian studies to investigate non-Brazilian, especially jazz, influence in choro music beginning in the 1920s. Velloso also covers the uncommon topics of the now extinct oficleide bass wind instrument, the transformation of arrangements, and national identity as related to choro. Pedro Aragão’s doctoral dissertation, *O Baú do Animal: Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto e O Choro* [The Treasure Chest of Animal: Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto and Choro] (2011), is an ethnomusicological analysis of Pinto’s 1936 musical ethnography. Aragão extracts previously unacknowledged evidence of musical practices from choro’s early generations. Finally, two doctoral dissertations have focused on teaching and learning and have used Escola Portátil de Música as a case study. Elza Greif’s *Ensinar e Aprender Música: O Bandão no Caso Escola Portátil de Música* [Teaching and Learning Music: The Big Band in the Case of Escola Portátil de Música] (2007) focuses on general Brazilian music curriculums, Brazilian popular music history, choro history, and a case study of EPM with special attention to the Bandão [Big Band] component of the school’s curriculum. Marina Fryberg’s “*Eu Canto Samba*” ou “*Tudo isto é Fado:*” *Uma Etnografia Multissituada sobre a Recriação do Choro, do Samba e do Fado por*
*Jovens Músicos* [“I Sing Samba” or “All This Is Fado:” A Multi-Sited Ethnography About the Recreation of Choro, of Samba and of Fado by Young Musicians] (2011) is a dense work, covering three traditional Lusophone music genres in Brazil and Portugal that have been “rediscovered” by a new generation of musicians. Fryberg’s work is based on social anthropology and therefore delves deep into ethnographic details and social theory. EPM and its teachers are one of her case studies for choro, providing many transcribed interviews and analysis of the school’s founding and functioning. Another important component to Fryberg’s research is an analysis of *Acari Records*, a recording company founded in 1999, dedicated to choro music.

Four important scholarly articles about choro in relation to teaching and learning should be mentioned. Iuri Lana Bittar’s *A Roda é uma Aula: Uma Análise dos Processos de Ensino-Aprendizagem do Violão Através da Atividade Didática do Professor Jayme Florence (Meira)* (2010) [The Circle is the Class: An Analysis of the Processes of Teaching-Learning the Guitar Through the Instructional Activity of Professor Jayme Florence (Meira)] is based on Bittar’s research for his master’s thesis. His article covers the content of the prolific Brazilian guitarist Meira’s guitar lessons through interviews with his former students, now some of the most respected guitarists in the music scene of Rio de Janeiro. Bittar focuses on methods that Meira used with his students during the 1960s and 1970s, up to his death in 1982. *O Choro que se aprende no colégio: a formação de chorões na Escola Portátil de Música do Rio de Janeiro* (2009) [Choro Learned in School: The Training of Chorões in the Escola Portátil de Música of Rio de Janeiro] by Carolina Gonçalves Alves investigates teaching and learning at EPM with particular attention to the pandeiro classes. While I observed several pandeiro and percussion classes, Alves’ description and analysis provides a much deeper perspective. *O Ensino de Choro*
no Violão em Grupo: Um Estudo de Caso com Dois Professores da Escola Brasileira de Choro

Raphael Rabello de Brasília (2012) [Teaching Choro Guitar in Groups: A Case Study of Two Professors from The Raphael Rabello Brazilian School of Choro in Brasília] by Augusto Charan Alves Barbosa Gonçalves focuses on learning processes of guitar teaching within the context of a school, in this case the only other choro school besides EPM. Lastly, João Gabriel L. C. Teixeira’s article A Escola Brasileira de Choro Raphael Rabello de Brasília: Um Estudo de Caso de Preservação Musical Bem-Sucedida (2008) [The Raphael Rabello Brazilian School of Choro of Brasília: A Case Study of Successful Musical Preservation] is a sociological study of the music scene in Brazil’s capital city, with attention to the first music school devoted to choro.

A magazine devoted to choro, titled Roda de Choro, was briefly published from 1996-1997, finishing with a total of five volumes. The contents include articles, written by various chorões and scholars, covering choro’s history and continuing advancement. Each volume contains a couple of lead sheets, either classics or newer compositions, from relevant choro composers. An announcement section provides information on CD releases and shows related to choro. The last page is titled “Ídolos do Choro” [Idols of Choro] which features three short biographies with pictures of important chorões; available for cutting out like collector cards (Figure 2, below). The publication could not support itself even though it gained a readership in Europe as well. All five volumes have been digitized and made available for free download Online by the French blog O Bando do Chorão, devoted to choro and Brazilian music.16

In English, much of the information on choro is from books that are surveys of Brazilian music, magazine articles on choro musicians, Internet blogs and websites, or liner notes from audio recordings. Some of the most important passages on choro come from surveys of Brazilian music conducted by five scholars—David Appleby (1983), Gérard Béhague (1971 and 1979), Cristina Magaldi (2004), Bryan McCann (2004), and Chris McGowan (1991)—as determined by my own readings. These scholars stand out for their depth, length, and general quality of research, compared to the rest of the English sources.

There is one scholarly book in English devoted solely to choro titled *Choro: A Social History of a Brazilian Popular Music* (2005), a collaboration between Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia. Their book is the most comprehensive English source on the genre as Garcia and Livingston-Isenhour are both ethnomusicologists who wrote Ph.D. dissertations on choro music (Garcia 1997 and Livingston 1999). The history of the genre is discussed from its beginnings in the 1870s through the present, in the context of Brazilian
society. This book shows the parallel development of a hybrid music with a hybrid culture through a historical perspective. It is a study of popular music with attention given to performance practice, focusing on defining choro and framing its evolution within social history. They include an extensive bibliography, select discography, and Internet resources pertaining to choro.

In addition to Garcia and Livingston-Isenhour's dissertations, "The Brazilian Choro: Music, Politics and Performance" (1997) and "Choro and Music Revivalism in Rio de Janeiro, 1973--1995" (1999) respectively, several other doctoral students have focused on choro. Two that pertain to this study's topic are "A Rationale for and the Development of Choro Courses as a Proposed Model for Brazilian Popular Music Programs in Colleges and Universities of Brazil" (1998) by Sergio Luis de Almeida Alvares and "Sensivel: A Study on Social Aesthetics, Group Creativity, and Collective Emotion" (2007) by Alfredo Minetti. Alvares focuses on developing a rationale and curriculum for choro instruction at the university level using data collected through questionnaires distributed to professional choro musicians, university faculty, and university students. His research concludes that most of his respondents believe choro should be taught in university and college popular music programs. Minetti's dissertation deals with contemporary choro practices in Rio de Janeiro through interviews and participation and observation in rodas de choro. His ethnography focuses on sociological factors such as how the roda de choro provides a social place and experience that can be a relief from urban life.

PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATION

This study will show how and why the recent establishment of Brazilian choro music schools over the past fifteen years helps sustain and contribute to the transmission of the
instrumental choro tradition. These new institutions offer venues for defining and validating the tradition as well as inspiring an atmosphere for innovation and creation within a genre of music that is one of the main foundations of Brazilian popular music. Inherent within the concept of tradition is the dichotomy of change and continuity, and this study will expose, through a comparison of current and historic pedagogical practices and processes of learning, how individuals and institutions negotiate the past and present.

I investigate what aspects of choro pedagogy have remained the same since its beginnings in the later half of the nineteenth century and what new methods of teaching have been introduced, through ethnographic fieldwork, specifically participant observation within EPM, as well as involvement in the choro music scenes of Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre, Brazil. Additionally, my research contributes to the understanding of why choro schools started within the past fifteen years, and how these schools teach instrumental choro music. In a recent article, ethnomusicologist Judah Cohen discusses the importance of viewing traditional music institutions as complex entities, where constant negotiation takes place between the past and present, the study of which can lead to a more refined understanding of how history and tradition are understood and practiced:

The relationship music institutions hold with the musical traditions they propagate may be far more complicated than the claims of the contemporary institutions themselves. A more textured understanding of how and why institutions operate in relation to musical traditions…may point us toward a more nuanced negotiation between communal notions of tradition and modernity, individuality and group expression, and artistic autonomy and societal regulation.17

My conviction is that EPM’s curricula supports and enhances the choro genre through organization and in turn validation, as long as the choro schools continue to emphasize traditional modes of learning and practice.

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Although learning to play choro always involves a combination of both written and oral transmission, emphasis was and continues to be placed on oral tradition, specifically in the roda de choro. The roda de choro provides a unique musical social gathering in which musicians of all levels, beginner to professional, experience music together—simultaneously practicing, performing, and learning. These gatherings afford beginners an opportunity to practice and familiarize themselves with the choro repertoire. Private musical instrument study together with the roda de choro, are two of the traditional learning methods still practiced today. Beginning in 2000, EPM formalized a curriculum for choro instruction, developed by choro musicians who participated in the choro revival of the 1970s.¹⁸

EPM is the main school for choro in Rio de Janeiro. Established as the *Casa do Choro* [Choro House] in 2000 by five prominent choro musicians/composers/pedagogues—Maurício Carrilho, Luciana Rabello, Selzinho Silva, Pedro Amorim, and Álvaro Carrilho—the school has grown in size to accommodate over 800 students. The school offers a curriculum based on comprehensive musical training (both theory and practice) through the choro music style, that EPM claims, "allows graduates to work in any musical genre."¹⁹ The school's faculty is composed of professional musicians, many of whom have music degrees from college or university, and are involved in choro workshops and music festivals in and outside of Rio de Janeiro. State and local government funding has been provided to EPM and its students, as well as for various research projects pertaining to choro and the national festivals of choro music.

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CONCLUSION

In this chapter I defined what choro music is through its etymology, a current description of choro practice, history survey, and review of choro literature. As the purpose of this study is to investigate the recent establishment of choro institutions, the next chapter discusses who practices choro.
CHAPTER III: CHORO MUSIC COMMUNITY

Sitting at a table in his mother’s apartment in Nitorói, Brazil, Ronaldo Souza (a.k.a. Ronaldo do Bandolim) and veteran chorão, guitarist Carlinhos Leite, finish playing an old waltz they learned earlier that day. I am struck by the emotionally charged performance and can only respond by shaking my head in amazement and giving a complimentary “wow!” Souza puts down his bandolim and says:

“Choro, it exists in my mind like a habitat of an animal, as their habitat. It is worshiped here, and it is played a lot here…You have to be very good on guitar or good on your instrument and then begin to play choro. It is no use if you do classical music training and suddenly grasp and take off playing choro. You will have to become accustomed to a variety of habits of musical communication.”

His statement says a lot about choro musicians. He uses the analogy of animals and their natural living environments to choro music to relate the importance of musical expression practiced by a specific group of people devoted to music who strive to play their instruments well. Furthermore, Souza’s statement implies the need for dedication on the part of the musician involved in choro, to become fluent in specific musical codes of communication, different from, albeit related to, “classical” or European art music.

I often describe choro to people unfamiliar with the genre as “musician’s music,” meaning its practitioners and admirers are music lovers and concerned with virtuosity, expressive performance, and innovation within the “traditional” social and musical framework that constitutes choro. A major social aspect to choro is the connection to dance rhythms, especially social dance rhythms. Tamara Livingston agrees, as she writes in regard to the choro revival of the 1970s:

As an elitist “musician’s music,” the choro tradition does not appear to lend itself to mass participation characteristic of many music revivals. Choro circles or gatherings tended to be small and intimate, with only one soloist at a time. A high level of musical and

technical ability is required and the repertoire often employs difficult harmonic changes and tortuous melodies that the musicians are expected to know in advance or be able to anticipate.  

Choro musicians are people obsessed with being exceptional musicians. Indeed, my experience learning to play choro music confirms that chorões measure themselves and other musicians by the level of mastery of instrument performance and repertoire knowledge, their technical facility on musical instruments, amount of music memorized, the ability to adapt to musical situations “by ear”, and finesse at conveying sentimental expression through music. Chorões have the means to play tonal instrumental music that is slow, dynamic, romantic, and at times sentimental to music that is fast, densely noted, rhythmically complex, difficult, and at times exciting. Chorões play with panache, what some musicians describe in Portuguese as *malandragem* [craftiness or shrewdness] or *malícia* [lit. “malice,” but applied to the performance of choro and samba as “swing” or “balance,” or “sauce”]. Learning and playing choro enables musicians’ access to musical codes, which form a major part of the foundation of Brazilian popular music’s history, a history marked by its participants’ social rather than professional ambitions. Often, chorões play for small gatherings of people—other musicians and devoted instrumental music enthusiasts—with the only material reward being food and drink. Today, the few musicians able to play strictly choro for little financial gain, do it mostly for the mastery of their instruments and musical codes that define choro.

Choro music is practiced by an exclusive group of musicians that study, preserve and innovate what is believed to be the most authentic tradition of Brazilian instrumental music, what I posit as the choro music community. Throughout its history, as a form of musical expression, choro developed through social/musical processes of transmission, which can be described as

22. As defined by bandolimista Marcilio Lopes, email message to author, 30 November, 2012.
combinations between erudite and common, educated and street savvy, highbrow and lowbrow, and professional and amateur. These processes began in environments for social/musical activity between the 1870s to the 1920s, providing a foundation for choro music as a genre and community. After the 1920s, some new processes and contexts were added to choro’s practice through its professionalization. With the choro revival of the 1970s, coupled with advances in technology, namely audio/visual recording and the Internet, and the establishment of formal pedagogies, Brazilian instrumental choro music has established a strong network of adherents, in choro’s veritable Mecca, Rio de Janeiro, and throughout Brazil. Outside Brazil, musicians are joining the choro community in burgeoning choro music scenes in South America, Europe, Japan, and the United States.

To lead the dissertation to today’s choro pedagogy, discussed in Chapter Three, this chapter focuses first on the music scene of Rio de Janeiro between the 1870s and 1920s, the period which provided the foundation for the establishment of the choro music community today. I frame my argument with evidence of the learning processes and contexts of that time as a consistent marker of transmission. Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto’s *O Choro: Reminiscencias dos Chorões Antigos* (1936) [The Choro: Remembering the Old Choro Musicians] and Pedro Aragão’s dissertation which analyzes Pinto’s book, have been indispensable sources of information about choro’s beginnings. As described in Chapter One, Pinto’s book is the first source written exclusively about choro music and the musicians that practiced it, written from an insider’s perspective, as Pinto was a guitarist and cavaquinho player active in Rio de Janeiro’s music scene, and a member of the choro community. I use Pinto’s ethnography to help describe the members of the choro community, their environments, and their habits and practices. The chapter concludes with a discussion of several social and musical processes at play that help
provide a nuanced definition of the choro community with ethnographic details of current members’ introduction to music and choro, creating a profile of musicians in the choro community. This discussion helps to tell choro’s history in order to better understand how choro is taught and learned today.

MUSIC SCENES

The first entries for “scene” in the Oxford English Dictionary Online describe relationships to theater, the stage, and space thereof in, or on, which action takes place. Entry 8e gives this definition, “(originally U.S. Jazz slang and Beatniks’ slang). A place where people of common interests meet or where a particular activity is carried on. Hence, more loosely, an activity or pursuit (especially a fashionable or superior one); a situation, event, or experience; a way of life.”\(^{23}\) Using this definition, which in relation to popular culture fits the classification at hand, and qualifying it by adding the word “music,” a “music scene” then denotes the environment where “in vogue” music is produced. Will Straw defines the concept of “music scene” in contrast to “music community,” by explaining the former’s connotations of place and variety while the latter connotes uniformity practiced by a specific group. Straw argues:

> The sense of purpose articulated within a musical community normally depends on an affective link between two terms: contemporary musical practices, on the one hand, and the musical heritage which is seen to render this contemporary activity appropriate to a given context, on the other. Within a musical scene, that same sense of purpose is articulated within those forms of communication through which the building of musical alliances and the drawing of musical boundaries take place.\(^{24}\)

Music communities are born out of musical scenes, where groups establish preferences or affinities for particular concepts and behaviors within a specific environment. The choro music


community was established by a group of people, musicians and audience, living in Rio de Janeiro, who distinguished themselves by practicing instrumental European popular dance music in the context of parties during a roughly fifty year span between 1870s and 1920s.

RIO DE JANEIRO’S MUSIC SCENE, 1870s-1920s

Rio de Janeiro was a unique place in the nineteenth century, becoming the seat of the only monarchy in the New World in 1808, the capital of the Empire of Brazil from 1822 until 1889, and remaining the capital of the Brazilian Republic until 1960. By the 1870s, many civil engineering projects were being funded and this, coupled with the fact that *A Cidade Maravilhosa* [The Marvelous City] was one of the largest ports in Brazil, meant the city offered many decent paying jobs. These job prospects drew many people to Rio de Janeiro. By 1890, Rio’s population was around half a million inhabitants, “the only great urban center in Brazil…the center for political life and entertainment…[with] much investment in transportation, lighting, and beautification.”

Through development and industrialization, growing middle classes provided money for the burgeoning entertainment industry. Various types of popular opera, musical revues, and performances of European art music were produced in theaters, concert halls, homes, and public spaces. European art music societies, which were fashionable for the elite, supported ensembles and produced concerts. Pianos were a common instrument for people to own or rent, being not only a musical instrument but also a social status symbol. In the streets as well as salons, one could hear guitar accompanying sentimental poetic vocals in music known as *modinhas* [songs] and *serestas* [serenades]. In people’s homes, music would be played at *festas/pagodes* [parties] or *saraus* [soirées]. Music societies for carnival activities were also popular, and active year-round beyond the annual event itself.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a popular form of entertainment across all segments of the Brazilian population was enjoying music through direct or indirect participation. Popular music and dance styles and fashions from Europe, especially Paris, were a hit. In an article from the Revista Musical e de Bellas Artes in 1879, the author, simply listed as “Mario,” laments the lack of professional musicians available to “properly” outfit an orchestra. He continues, saying the musicians of Rio de Janeiro do not lack talent or quantity, but merely lack dedication. Instead of dedicating themselves to the “high art” from Europe, the market for music is supported by a preference for popular dance music, evidenced in the types of music being published.

Almost every day we publish pieces of music, and at this point, it can be said that the pace of musical output in Rio de Janeiro is comparatively higher than that of any capital, including even the great centers of artistic activity such as Milan, Paris, Vienna, London, etc.. But what are those compositions that appear? Polkas, waltzes, contradances, lundus that inevitably show two things: talent and very little study. In respect to the execution, we find invariably also: many poorly trained pianists and very few good ones. The culture of musical art is for us a mere hobby and nothing more. 26

The writing above describes how the general public enjoyed and consumed music. As the writer laments, the music industry in Rio, although strong, was focused on popular music and not high art music. Various genres of European popular dance music were a hit in printed music with the middle classes, and the middle classes were closer to the lower classes, especially because of music. The large output of popular dance music for piano supports the thesis that the trend for the middle and elite classes was to produce and consume lower-class culture. Figure 3 shows the back of Revista Musical e de Bellas Artes (1879), advertising sheet music collections of dance music for sale. The collections are titled, “Pearls of the Party: Collection of Quadrilles, Waltzes,

Polkas, etc., etc. (French Repertoire)” and “Album of the Parties: New Collection of Quadrilles, Waltzes, Polkas, etc., etc.” 27

To elaborate further on the popularity of dance music and practice of music in Rio de Janeiro, I offer this excerpt from an article written by Tom Moore about the manuscript collection held at Biblioteca Alberto Nepomuceno, the music library at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Moore’s work focuses on the collections of music donated by families from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The excerpt describes Rio de Janeiro during this period of time.

Aside from the many instruments available to learn, the piano was king. There were so many pianos in Rio de Janeiro, it became known as “The Piano City.” Moore uses the following excerpt written by music critic, composer, and pianist Antonio Cardoso de Menezes from Gazeta Musical in 1892 to help illuminate Rio de Janeiro’s music scene at the time.

Everywhere, in all the innumerable streets of the city, throughout all the neighborhoods and alleys of this most heroic Pianopolis, when one passes by, weighed down by the struggle for existence, bubbling out from the balconies and the windows, out through the clouds of dust snaking through the muggy air or through the dried foliage of the

27. Ibid., 8.
overheated trees lining the lakes, the canals, the beaches of the groaning sea, one hears puffs of music of every price, cheap music and high-price music, because there is no house here that does not have a piano, a flute, a fiddle, a clarinet, a guitar, or a cavaquinho, and a competent artist to perform on the corresponding instrument. If only the number of instruments were a thousand times smaller, and the family of performers more refined.  

All of this music activity implies a corresponding music learning environment.

A search through the Almanak Laemmert (1844-1889) finds many of Rio de Janeiro’s primary and secondary schools offered courses in piano, singing, and music theory. An abundance of social clubs and societies existed, established for carnival, sport, or leisure, and many of them offered a musical component in either private or class lessons or opportunities to play and learn in bands. Martial bands and company bands also provided contexts for musical learning. Private music teachers were also available. From 1870 to 1889, the listings for music professors remain relatively consistent, with a total of about 80 registered teachers; 54 registered professors of piano and singing and 26 “professors of diverse instruments,” which include guitar, strings, brass, and woodwinds. Some of the entries describe the subjects and/or instruments the professors teach or in some cases what they perform—composition, harmony, accompaniment, “director of music for church parties,” and “pianist of soirées.” A search through the classified adds of the popular newspapers finds occasional classified adds for piano teachers.

The classified add below is especially interesting as its poster, Hippolyte Vannier, makes his private lesson sales pitch proclaiming the importance of knowing the rules of melody and harmony, and how that is applied to playing piano, especially for accompaniment. Furthermore,

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30. Ibid.
he likens music to language by saying the two have rules that govern correct communication; hinting at the musical codes of communication used by Brazilian popular musicians.

Hippolyte Vannier, special teacher of practical harmony applied to the piano, 36 Evaristo da Velga Road. Will it be needed to say that without the study of the rules governing the chords and notes in passing, an instrumentalist can not overcome the difficulties of sight-reading, nor indispensable transposition in order to accompany, neither to understand the relevant character of each school of music? In a nutshell, it is as necessary, for an instrumentalist, to understand the rules of melody and harmony, as it is necessary to understand grammar of a language, to speak it correctly.\textsuperscript{32}

These teachers were trained in European art music, having the ability to read and write music notation, having an understanding European art music theoretical concepts, and having adequate technique or at least knowledge of how to achieve adequate technique on piano, or other instruments. Beyond the learning opportunities provided by some primary and secondary schools, private music teachers, and music clubs and societies, a music conservatory was also available for advanced music education.

By Imperial decree, the creation of the first conservatory of music in Brazil was authorized in Rio de Janeiro in 1841. It officially opened in 1848. After Brazil became a republic, the school was renamed \textit{O Instituto Nacional de Música} [The National Institute of Music] in 1890. The school would become annexed to the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in 1937, and the name changed to the \textit{Escola Nacional de Música} [National School of Music]. Beginning in 1965, through the military dictatorship’s founding of the \textit{Universidade do Brasil em Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro} (UFRJ) [University of Brazil in [the] Federal University of Rio de Janeiro], the school kept its name but became a part of UFRJ. The

\textsuperscript{32} Hippolyte Vannier, “Annuncios,” \textit{O Journal do Brazil}, October 17, 1891.
curriculum of the school has remained relatively consistent since its beginning, training musicians in European art music based on the French conservatory model. In the period between the 1870s until the 1920s, many of the National Conservatory/Institute of Music professors would teach musicians outside of the school itself and some wrote popular compositions. Popular music would not have been a part of the conservatory’s curriculum, but some of the professors were involved in the popular music community associated with choro music. Most of the professors at the conservatory were trained in Europe, especially in France. Some of the choro musicians named by Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto in his ethnography *O Choro: Reminiscencias dos Chorões Antigos* (1936) were affiliated with Rio’s conservatory or known to have extensive music training and the wherewithal to compose music. Below I offer short biographies of some of the musicians who were traditionally trained, composed music (including popular music), and were connected in some way to Brazilian instrumental popular music of the late nineteenth century. Today, these musicians are considered the so-called “Founding Fathers and Mother, i.e. Chiquinha Gonzaga,” of the choro community.

**Henrique Alves de Mesquita** (1836-1906)

Mesquita was a Brazilian composer, conductor, trumpet player, organist, and educator, given credit for “creating” the Brazilian Tango. After successfully studying with Giocchino Giannini, he continued his music studies at the Paris Conservatoire, studying harmony with Francois Bazin. He wrote many styles of music but was known for his theatrical works. He

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became a professor at Rio de Janeiro’s National Institute of Music. Mesquita’s music was consumed by the public at large, not only in theaters, but also through published sheet music. In relation to its transmission in the choro community, there is evidence choro musicians played some of his compositions.

Many of his tunes were also found in the handwritten copybooks of choro musicians. This fact demonstrates that Mesquita’s compositions were played not only in salons and theaters, but also in rodas de choro. An excellent example is the score for the quadrille “Soirée Brésilienne,” composed while Mesquita lived in Paris; it appears as “Soirê Brazileiro” in a manuscript by Theodoro Aguilar, copyist of the choro copybook that belonged to Alfredo da Rocha Vianna (Pixinguinha’s father).36

Some of Mesquita’s pieces are still played today. His most famous piece is titled “Batuque,” of which many audio recordings have been made, first in 1911 by the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros [Band of the Firefighters’ Brigade], and more recently in 2002 by Ronaldo do Bandolim and Rogério Souza.

**Joaquim Antônio da Silva Callado Jr. (1848-1880)**

Callado’s importance to choro cannot be overstated, as it was his group, Choro Carioca, founded in 1870, which is believed to be one of the first references to the word choro used in respect to ensemble and style. He was a flute player, composer, and educator. At a young age, Callado began his studies with his father, who was a music teacher, and even had some lessons with Henrique Alves de Mesquita at the age of eight.37 Considered a virtuoso, performing both popular and classical music, Callado became a professor at the Imperial Conservatory of Music. In addition to formal concerts, he also played at “weddings, christening, birthdays, and parties,” as well as frequented rodas de choro.38 Pinto writes that Callado was such a talented composer, at

the request of “whatever lady or gentleman,” he could write down a composition in honor of the occasion. His composition “Flor Amorosa” is a choro standard still frequently played today.

**Francisca Edwiges Neves (Chiquinha) Gonzaga (1847-1935)**

One of the few women involved in Rio de Janeiro’s burgeoning popular music community, Chiquinha Gonzaga was a composer, pianist, teacher, and conductor. Her piano teachers were José de Sousa Lobo and Napoleão dos Santos. She also studied with Artur Napoleão, the famous Portuguese pianist, composer, and teacher. As a contemporary and friend of Callado and Mequita, Gonzaga would attend rodas de choro. Her composition “Atraente” (1877), still played today, was “improvised at a party in homage to the composer Henrique Alves de Mesquita and later published,” becoming “her first hit.” She wrote over three hundred compositions, in various genres, including many pieces for theater.

**Ernesto (Júlio de) Nazareth [Nazaré] (1863-1934)**

Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1863, Ernesto Nazareth is associated with choro because he composed many compositions for piano in the popular dance styles of the time, some of which are still part of the standard choro repertoire. Nazareth describes his pieces as polkas and tangos, and he is considered a major contributor to the development of the maxixe rhythm.

His mother was his first teacher, and after she died, he studied with Eduardo Madeira and Lucien Lambert, the later exposing him to the work of Chopin, which influenced his compositions. After composing his first piece at the age of fourteen, a “polka-lundu” called

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41. Isenhour-Livingston and Garcia, 75.
“Você bem sabe,” Nazareth stopped taking lessons. He would continue composing, performing, and began giving piano lessons. He eventually acquired a job at the Carlos Gomes music publisher, demonstrating pieces for the public to buy, and most famously, playing in the cinema lobby between features at the Odeon Theater in downtown Rio. Many of Nazareth’s compositions are still played today, including “Brejeiro,” “Odeon,” “Apanhei-te Cavaquinho,” “Escovado,” and “Atlântico” to name a few. While his prolific output of compositions has obviously impacted choro music, and he did teach piano privately, Isenhour-Livingston and Garcia claim that Nazareth, “took great pains to distinguish himself from the common people,” was “outside the choro tradition of the terno and the roda de choro,” and “had no desire to mingle with chorões.”

Anacleto de Medeiros (1866-1907)

Composer, conductor, clarinet/saxophone player, and educator, Anacleto de Medeiros was extremely important to the formation and performance of choro music. He began studying music at nine years old with Antônio dos Santos Bocot in Rio de Janeiro’s Banda do Arsenal de Guerra [Band of the War Arsenal], which would put him on a trajectory to work with band ensembles the rest of his life. At the age of eighteen, Medeiros enrolled in the Imperial Conservatory of Music and graduated with a certificate as professor of clarinet in 1886. He formed several wind bands and in 1896 started Rio de Janeiro’s Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros, which made the first Brazilian audio recordings for Casa Edison in 1902. First, through his studies, then through his organization of and composition for wind bands, Medeiros was known as a music educator, bringing the popular music repertoire, associated at the time with piano and the choro terno, to wind players. Pinto writes of him:

43. Isenhour-Livingston and Garcia, 76.
Anacleto was a great music professor, as well as a leader of many private bands, leaving many disciples who did honor to his gifts as an expert teacher. As Master of the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiro he immortalized himself. With his intelligence and dedication, he worked, correcting, shaping, and refining, all his players with the magic of a big stick used by him in the rehearsals, in the guise of a baton, which made his pupils obey. As a master conductor he transformed the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiro into an ensemble of music professors who respected and obeyed the greater harshness of his energies, for Anacleto was a capricious and tough music director.

Writing about Medeiros’ strict leadership, transforming the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros “into an ensemble of music professors,” Pinto suggests that he imparted advanced musical knowledge to the band’s members, and in turn, these musicians could teach others what they learned.

The five chorões described above are central figures in choro’s history and all of them had a traditional European music education. Other chorões also had similar music educations, evidenced by Pinto and his interpreters (i.e. Aragão, Carrilho and Paes). In many cases, chorões were students of one or more of the musicians above, or chorões who studied with a teacher but never composed music. Below I discuss some of the lesser know chorões and aspects of their education.

Pinto describes Duque Estrada Meyer (1848-1905), a flautist, as “the great professor,” who was a student and friend of Callado, and had “a very fine education.” He became a flute professor at the Imperial Conservatory/National Institute of Music. Viriato Figueira da Silva (1851-1883) was another conservatory flute student of Callado, who composed dance music and also played the saxophone. Pinto mentions Felisberto Marques (1860?-1920?) as “an expert professor of the flute” and Juca Kallut (1858-1922), a “famed teacher” with exceptional artistic

47. Pinto, 78.
48. Ibid., 121-122.
51. Pinto, 26.
taste that “elevated him in the minds of other great musicians and professors.”52 Luiz de Souza, a trumpet player, is noted to have studied with famous bandleader Soares Barbosa in the northern city of Forteleza, and then upon moving to Rio, became part of the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros under the leadership of Anecleto de Medeiros.53 Leandro de Sant’Anna (1870?-1930?) is described as an “outstanding teacher who conducted many musical bands.”54 The euphonium player and conductor simply known as Mondego (1870?-1940?) had “a teacher’s diploma through the Institute of Music, where he managed all the courses admirably to the satisfaction of all the masters of the institute.”55 Quincas Laranjeiras (1873-1935) began a “musical apprenticeship” in the band of the textile mill where he worked at eleven years old. He switched to guitar and became one of the great guitarists of his time. According to Carrilho and Paes, “he was a pioneer in teaching guitar from scores (rather than by ear) in Rio de Janeiro, adapting the methods of Dionísio Aguado and Francisco Tárrega.”56 Another member of the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros, Irineu de Almeida (1873-1916) is noted for playing euphonium, trombone, and the now extinct ophicleide (a bass keyed brass instrument) and composing popular dance music. One of the roles of the low register instruments is to create melodic counterpoint lines, which today in the conjunto regional format is fulfilled by the seven-string guitar. Almeida was considered a “master in the language of counterpoint,” which evidently he passed on to his famous student—“in 1911 he became Pixinguinha’s music teacher.”57 Pixinguinha also studied cavaquinho with Mário Álvares da Conceição (1861?-1905), a student of Galdino Cavaquinho.58

52. Ibid., 34.
54. Ibid., 55.
55. Pinto, 57.
57. Ibid., 101.
Beyond an education marked by teachers and/or schools, bands, and clubs, method books as well as theory books offered other options for musicians to learn music. Mônica Leme’s research on the history of printed music in Rio de Janeiro shows that many instrument method books were published, mostly for piano, but also for guitar, mandolin, and woodwind and brass instruments. In the 1913 Bevilacqua & Cia publishing house catalogue (works from 1846-1913), Leme counts 14 theoretical works, 105 piano methods/studies/exercises, 25 reading methods, 24 violin methods, 5 mandolin methods, 2 guitar methods (one being Carcassi), 7 “methods for diverse instruments,” and 20 “scale exercises for diverse instruments.”

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHORO COMMUNITY

Today, the roda de choro is considered the most important context for choro performance, defined as a gathering of choro musicians to simultaneously play and practice choro music. Pedro Aragão points out that in 1936, Pinto uses the word roda [circle] to describe a group of choro musicians, or cliques of musician friends, and not a place for playing music like it is used today. For example, Pinto frequently uses the term roda in the phrase “roda dos tocadores” [circle of the players], or “roda de chorões” [circle of choro musicians]. The establishment of the roda de choro is likely an extension of its original definition, making the term common enough between people “in the know” to set the boundaries for a place to play specifically choro music.

61. Pinto, 22, 25, 32, 41, 43, 72, 92, 93.
The contexts Pinto describes for choro performances are festas, pagodes, bailes, saraus in private homes, as well as in public squares, cafes, theaters, music stores, *botequims* [bar/restaurants], and private clubs. The majority of choro performance venues were private homes and essential ingredients for these gatherings were food and drink, and plenty of them. The occasions that would call for musicians were christenings, birthdays, and marriages. Here Pinto describes the gatherings:

…there was no home doing a christening, birthday, marriage, etc., that did not throw a dance, pull the pig, or the turkey, chickens, many beverages such as beers, wines, liquors, etc.,. So that the chorões of that time lacked nothing, eating well and drinking better.62

Pinto describes many parties in his ethnography and they inevitably involve food and drink. He states at the beginning of his book that in addition to “profiles” of chorões from both the “old guard” and new, the book contains “facts and customs of the old parties.”63 But would chorões learn at these gatherings like they do today? It is clear that choro was developing by way of both professional and amateur musicians playing together. Musicians not trained through lessons in schools or by private teachers could learn by themselves or by spending time with more knowledgeable musicians and through association and experiences with them.

One of Pinto’s biographies discusses the musician and composer simply known as “Videira.” Pinto writes, “It is true that he played by ear but he knew how to communicate on the flute what others communicated knowing [how to read] music.”64 Videira evidently worked at a tobacco shop making cigarettes. He most likely could not afford music lessons and learned through methods of observation and imitation during experiences being around musicians in various contexts, especially parties and bars, as well as private practice. An example of this type of learning is found in a vignette about Videira at a party. Pinto describes a situation between

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63. Ibid., 2.
64. Pinto, 29.
Videira, the soloist, and some people accompanying him. A musician trying to accompany is having trouble and plays a wrong note. Videira stops playing and asks, “Sir, do you know how to play?” to which the accompanist responds, “I play a little and I hardly practice, and you play with great difficulty, which hinders us.” Videira then says, “Now I’ll play so that you do not fall [fail]. What are the keys you know on your instrument?” The weaker musician replies, “C major, G major, and E minor,” to which Videira says, “Very well, so let’s just play in these keys.” As Pinto describes, the weak players could continue to participate, and Videira could demonstrate “his mastery, despite playing by ear,” and the party could continue. On another occasion, Pinto (a guitarist and cavaquinho player) and a friend know simply as “Dinga” are hired to play a party for a birthday and baptism. Pinto explains that he and Donga arrive before the flautist, who they discover is none other than Videira. Pinto describes the fear he and Dinga have of playing with Videira, who is known as a top-notch musician with a “cranky” attitude. The two decide to leave the party before Videira arrives but are too late, running into the flautist as they try to make their exit. Videira asks them not to leave so that, “the whole party is not ruined.” Pinto, “very scared and nervous,” tells Videira that he and Dinga thought they were there to only play modinhas, and not accompany the flute, for which they “lacked the practice.” Videira responds laughing and hugging Pinto, “boy, do not be afraid of the little that you play. I will play everything inside the notes that you know.” The party lasts till the next day, and Pinto describes what a great time he and everyone else have. After this encounter, he continues to meet with Videira, “Always walking with him to play guitar and cavaquinho, which he knew regularly, and in this way turned me [into] a respected guitar and cavaquinho [player] in the circle of great players.”

65. Pinto, 29.
66. Ibid., 31-32.
The story above illustrates some of the ways musicians learned outside of schools, method books, sheet music and even formal private lessons. Written music was not present because Videira played by ear. Pinto and Dinga were weak players, probably knowing how to accompany in only a few keys. As Pinto claims, he and Dinga were capable of being hired to play popular songs—serestas and modinhas, considered easier to accompany than the instrumental dance music—and they were concerned when they found out that Videira was coming that they were lesser musicians. Pinto implies that Videira becomes his mentor, teaching him guitar and cavaquinho through spending time together, not necessarily in a lesson format. Aragão agrees with this interpretation:

It is thus seen that the learning of Pinto came about through a master-disciple relationship: although Videira could not read music, he had a [merely] fair mastery guitar and cavaquinho, which probably means that the flautist/cigarette-maker mastered not only a repertoire of chord formations, but also the harmonic progressions and the repertoire of harmonic/rhythmic accompaniment “levadas” [accompaniment rhythmic patterns] of the two instruments. In this way, always walking with Videira, Alexandre [Pinto] was able to compile a vocabulary of accompaniment structures, which enabled him to become a musician “respected in the circle of great players.”

A hallmark of a good accompanist is their ability to use their ear to adapt to what the soloist plays. In choro, it is not uncommon for accompanists to want or be asked to play songs having never heard them before, or perhaps only a few times. Soloists can also play by ear, learning a melody or accompanying through providing counterpoint to the melody. Of course, certain conventions are followed, especially considering that choro has many clichéd rhythms and chord progressions, but the ability to play by ear takes experience and practice—individual practice. Here, Pinto describes a guitarist who upon hearing someone play, could figure out what they were playing and provide appropriate accompaniment:

67. Aragão, 214.
Ventura Caréca, guitarist of renown, who played with much love and taste, and when accompanied a choro, or a modinha, did not accept that the key be said, so great was the confidence that he had in his ear.  

In this description, Pinto infers that Caréca did not read music, or at least, he did not need sheet music or to know the key of a song and yet he was still able to accompany. Pinto’s statement could be interpreted that Caréca challenged himself, and showed off a bit, by not having the soloist or others present tell him the key of the song.

Pinto mentions other musicians who play by ear. Eduardo Velho da Silva “was a pianist that played by ear.” Justiniano, “was a flautist…that played difficult music by ear, that embarrassed first class musicians…Justiniano went everyday to the Arsenal, to hear the band rehearsals…this happened more or less fifty-years ago, and we still speak of the accurate ear of Justiniano.” Pointing out that Justiniano went to listen to band rehearsals everyday implies that he was spending time listening and learning, using the method of observation. Antonio Baptista Rosa, “was a reliable guitar player with a keen ear, played in many choro gatherings in Cidade Nova, and also the suburbs.” The famous left-handed guitarist Americo Jacomino (o Canhoto), from São Paulo, “accompanied by ear very well indeed, [and] he knew and played by [sheet] music.” The ophicleide player, Antonico dos Telegraphos, “played well by ear, accompanying with taste and art.”

As mentioned earlier, some melodic instruments, especially lower pitched instruments, also “accompany” soloists, by providing counterpoint lines. The ophicleide, trombone, tuba or euphonium, tenor saxophone, and seven-string guitar are some of the lower-pitched instruments

68. Pinto, 113.  
69. Ibid., 235.  
70. Ibid., 39.  
71. Ibid., 233.  
72. Ibid., 139.  
73. Ibid., 132.
that may provide accompaniment, but any melodic instrument can provide counterpoint lines as long as they do not interfere with the main melody provided by the soloist. Pinto mentions two trombone players that played by ear. Jacinto Costa (O Quaty) “accompanied choros by ear, with great beauty.”\(^74\) Deodato Matta played trombone “with great perfection,” “accompanied very well, not only with the part [sheet music] in front but by ear as well.”\(^75\)

Not all musicians play by ear successfully. Pinto writes of Gilberto Bombardino that he knew how to read music very well, “but if asked to accompany by ear, did not give anything.”\(^76\) The ophicleide player, Josino Facão, played by ear, but was horrible. He also “played out of tune and without rhythm, in the end, hell for everyone at dances, parties, and more.”\(^77\)

The stories above help form an idea about the processes and contexts that gave rise to the choro community. Many of the accompanists—guitarists and cavaquinhistas—were self-taught amateurs while the soloists were often trained in a school or with private teachers. Indeed, most of the musicians described by Pinto, including himself, were not musicians by profession. Pinto was a postman, and like him, many chorões worked as public servants in government offices such as the “post, telegraph, Customs, Ministry of War, etc.,” as well as jobs as “journalists, doctors, printers and even clowns.”\(^78\) With the advent of radio and the increasing popularity of recorded music, choro would become further defined by professionalization, although with continued engagement by amateur musicians.

The choro music community was born out of the changing music scene in Rio de Janeiro. By the 1920s, radio and audio recording afforded some musicians opportunities to solely work as musicians. Radio also brought the ability to transmit non-Brazilian music, which would be a

\(^{74}\) Ibid., 216.
\(^{75}\) Ibid., 222.
\(^{76}\) Ibid., 57.
\(^{77}\) Ibid., 63.
\(^{78}\) Aragão, 41.
factor in the establishment of the choro music community as its members and critics began to distinguish between authentic and traditional forms of Brazilian music and non-Brazilian music and/or influences. Ary Vascancelos states in his book *Carinhoso etc - História e Inventário do Choro* (1984) that the “golden age” of choro occurred during the second generation of chorões (he categorizes chorões by generation, the first being active between 1870 and 1889, the second between 1889 and 1919), and indeed it is during the second period that choro was most popular. Furthermore, he writes, “jazz bands had not yet broken out in our music scene, with their saxophones and their American drum-sets.”\(^7^9\) The American influence would come in the 1920s, and it would help foster future ideas about choro and establish it as not merely an ensemble, rhythm, and style of playing, but a unique music genre, practiced by a community of musicians.

By the middle 1930s, the roots of choro music education had been established and can be described as a conglomeration of methods—schools, private teachers, sheet music, method/theory books, observation, imitation, and learning through social contact. Although new forms of transmission—radio and phonograph records—could have contributed to the learning processes of some choro musicians, I have no evidence supporting the belief that musicians were learning through transcription. The new technologies of transmission affected choro music through national broadcasting and record distribution, reaching a larger audience. Radio helped to solidify the conjunto regional ensemble formation composed of a solo instrument with cavaquinho, six and seven-string guitars, accordion, pandeiro, and percussion as the standard instrumentation for choro music. Non-Brazilian music genres, such as jazz, bolero, and film music, had some influence on choro. But choro music was never really a popular music for the public at large after the 1930s. The general public, and the few remaining chorões, considered

\(^7^9\) Ary Vasconcelos, *Carinhoso Etc.: Historia e Inventario do Choro* (Rio de Janeiro: Grafica Editora do Livro, 1984), 21.
Choro performance to be almost extinct by the early 1970s. The biggest change in how people learned choro came in the 1970s with the choro revival. In addition to learning from the same formal and informal methods discussed above, young musicians who wanted to learn choro music began to transcribe audio recordings. The process of systematizing choro, in the form of method books and schools dedicated specifically to choro, began two generations later, in the 1990s, leading to how choro music is learned today.

THE CHORO COMMUNITY TODAY

The term “community” denotes a group of people with shared values in concepts, ideas, and behaviors. A community usually occupies a specific locality, although through processes of globalization, some communities have grown beyond one specific location. Music communities often transcend boundaries of location, especially today with advances in processes of transmission. Indeed, musicians may practice a genre of music and not be born or live in the same locale associated with the particular genre, and yet still consider themselves part of that musical community. American jazz music is one example, as it is practiced throughout the world, and it would be naïve to suggest that all of its practitioners have been to the United States, let alone the community’s commonly perceived birthplace in New Orleans, Louisiana. The same is true of Brazilian choro music. Through online social media contact with various musicians who play choro outside Brazil, it is evident that location is not an inhibiting factor for participating in the choro community at large, although it is arguable to what extent outsiders are able to participate.

Currently, people learn choro music for many reasons. Trained musicians and aspiring musicians are usually drawn to the genre by virtue of choro’s instrumental nature and technical
demands, but also possibly for one or any combination of the following reasons—it is Brazilian, associated with Western art music, related to samba and Brazilian popular music, or simply for its aesthetics. Most people that get involved with choro music already have experience playing an instrument that employs the European twelve-tone equal temperament tuning system and its functional harmonic system.

As choro music requires great technical facility to play, it is not surprising that many choro musicians begin studying music at an early age, or come from musical families and were raised in a musical environment. As discussed above, the choro music community began in Rio de Janeiro and its members share musical codes of communication, requiring all who want to participate to learn the same essential knowledge. The basis of choro’s musical codes is European functional harmony, giving an advantage to anyone who knows how to play Western based music over those who are complete beginners on their instrument. Whether a person is accomplished or not in music, arriving at the decision to play choro will involve learning the musical codes that represent the metaphorical musical language that defines choro as a genre. As the award winning Brazilian classical guitarist Zé Paulo Becker states, “I can be a finalist in an international competition playing guitar but I did not know Brazilian music, my music. No. I want to learn this music.”

The choro music community has expanded far outside Brazil, which brings new aspects to the processes involved in its transmission and reception. For non-Brazilians, the discovery of choro usually comes after years of studying Western art music, bossa nova, samba, rock and roll, jazz, bluegrass, or other forms of Western based popular music. Non-Brazilian guitarists, flautists, pianists, clarinetists, saxophonists, and mandolin players are usually drawn to choro

because of the prominence of those instruments in the genre. Non-Brazilians have the added
disadvantage of having to also learn Brazilian Portuguese, at least at a basic level, as well as
Brazilian social and cultural mores—basic non-verbal communication skills, especially in the
context of music.

NON-BRAZILIANS

Ted Falcon

Music was always a part of Ted Falcon’s life, as his father was a professional guitar
player. At the age of six, Falcon began playing violin. He recalls hearing his father teaching
guitar lessons and practicing, as well as seeing his father play gigs at house parties. Falcon
remembers specifically listening to Brazilian music as a child, which he feels had a great effect
on him:

“I always heard Brazilian music at home, he [father] used to play all the Villa Lobos
guitar pieces, and there are a lot of etudes and partidas, they’re beautiful. I used to like to
hear them because they were like wild rides, these pieces were magical. It wasn’t
classical, it wasn’t jazz, it was like this adventure, this music. I remember always
enjoying that.”

Like me, Falcon discovered choro during his university studies and also through an
interest in its connection to Brazil. After studying guitar and violin at Pittsburgh, he went to
Indiana for graduate studies and there, he joined a choro ensemble directed by the guitarist
Marcos Cavalcante. The group played choro classics from Pixinguinha and Ernesto Nazareth.
After graduating, Falcon moved to New York and forgot about choro. After living in New York
for four years as a professional musician, he moved to Los Angeles and there he reconnected
with choro music through other professional musicians.

“I played on the violin, and I didn’t even know that the mandolin was even like one of the
major instruments in the music. I had a really crappy mandolin at the house, it was really
bad. It was more like a mandolin to have and not really to play, but I learned how to play

some choros on that and Colin Walker, the seven-string player in California, he did a lot of research, transcribing tunes, finding recordings, he was kind of like a big mentor for me, getting into this music. This would’ve been 2001. We found a pandeiro player and there’s a guy that played cavaco, who played pagode and samba, and we put together a little choro group just for fun, just for parties.”

Falcon continued his involvement with choro, forming a choro group in Los Angeles, California.

He eventually started making trips to Brazil and finally moved to Brasília, Brazil, where he became a teacher at the Escola Brasileira de Choro Raphael Rabello.

**Aline Soulhat**

Aline Soulhat is a French flautist who teaches biology at Colégio Franco-Brasileiro (a French school in Rio de Janeiro). Soulhat’s initial musical experiences, learning through the public French conservatory system, are similar to those who study in the public music schools in Brazil. As a highly skilled amateur musician, Soulhat emphasizes the fact that for her, involvement in music has always been for entertainment with no professional aspirations. She began studying piano at the age of six and flute at the age of eleven.

“I had classical studies in the regional conservatory of Paris. They have three levels—the international, national, and regional. I studied theory too, chamber music, and orchestra. I never studied music in college because in France you don’t study music in college, you study in a music school. I studied science, I was making music for pleasure, always.”

Soulhat discovered Brazilian music in 1996 after meeting an Italian guitarist who played bossa nova and choro. She was attracted to choro because of the prominence of the flute.

“I liked it because for the flute it’s really interesting, because for a classical flautist you have a lot of technique so it was easy for me to play, technically speaking, and I remember I enrolled in his Brazilian guitar class, and I was playing with the guitarists. It was more *Música Popular Brasileira* [Brazilian Popular Music] (MPB), samba, Chico Buarque, and a little bit of choro. After, I began to play pandeiro and Brazilian percussion and I began to meet the Brazilian community in Paris at night, I began to meet Venezuelan people too, who were playing choro music, and I think in 2000 or 2001 I founded the Choro Club of Paris.”

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82. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
As non-Brazilians that began to seriously study choro, Falcon, Soulhat, and I started playing instruments at an early age. We all were accomplished musicians to varying degrees before focusing on choro. All of the non-Brazilians that I have met who were studying choro had similar stories to tell—exposure to music at an early age and significant musical experience prior to learning choro. Outside Brazil, with very few people knowing what choro music is, or even Brazilian music for that matter, interested musicians make the “pilgrimage” to Brazil to learn directly from the choro community. I met both Soulhat and Falcon at the Festival Nacional de Choro III in 2007. Both Soulhat and Falcon had been involved in choro for several years, both forming groups to play with back in their home countries. Coming to Brazil afforded them the opportunity to play and learn with a larger pool of choro musicians in the country that gave birth to the genre.

Through my experiences learning choro in Brazil, the few non-Brazilians that have a serious interest in the music come from several specific regions of the world. In the United States, choro music activity is happening in several larger cities and some colleges and universities. The biggest Brazilian music “scenes” in the United States are in the western states—California, Oregon, and Washington. California has several groups dedicated to choro and samba, and hosts the largest Brazilian arts camp in the United States called California Brazil Camp.\textsuperscript{85} Europe has choro music activity, especially in France, with clubs in Paris and Toulouse. Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Portugal also have choro activity as well. Outside of Europe and the Americas, a substantial scene exists in Japan, due in part to the fact that Brazil contains the largest Japanese population outside of Japan.

BRAZILIANS

Like non-Brazilians, most Brazilian choro musicians begin playing music at an early age. Many of the advanced choro musicians I interviewed started hearing choro or began learning and playing music in adolescence or before. Choro’s connection to Brazilian popular music, especially samba, ensures that most Brazilian are aware of its existence, even if only subconsciously. Brazilians learn choro, a Brazilian cultural product, in one or more typical ways. Many choro musicians come from families that play either popular or classical music or in many cases both. Naturally, these musicians tend to be more accomplished than musicians that begin learning later in life. Other common avenues leading to choro include the common local civic bands and conservatory-like music schools in towns and cities throughout Brazil, as well as in colleges and universities, and private music lessons. Involvement with samba and other popular music forms can also lead to an interest in choro. Below are excerpts extracted from interviews with Brazilian choro musicians, revealing their early musical experiences.

FAMILY

I begin this section by discussing the beginning musical lives of four professional choro musicians, musicians that are recognized within the choro community as true chorões because of their actions propagating the genre through not only performances, but also recordings they have made and the agency with which they have acted, choosing to be acknowledged as specifically choro musicians. Luciana Rabello and Maruício Carrilho were integral parts of the choro revival of the 1970s as part of the group Os Carioquinhas, and later, under the direction of Radamés Gnattali, the group Camarata Carioca. In 1999, they started Acari Records, which is the only record label devoted solely to the genre of choro. Ronaldo Souza and Carlinhos Leite are chorões
that have played in Jacob do Bandolim’s group Época de Ouro, Leite playing and recording with
the original group and Souza replacing Déo Rian who had replaced Jacob after he passed away
on 13 August, 1969. I begin with them to show the most extreme examples of choro musicians
because they have attained the ultimate status of “stars,” inside and outside of the choro
community.

**Luciana Rabello**

For Luciana Rabello, music, especially Brazilian music, was always present because her
grandfather was extremely passionate about music. He instilled in her, and her family, a deep
respect for and austere approach to listening, studying, and appreciating music. As a guitarist,
music teacher, and chorão who also came from a family of musicians, her grandfather would
make vocal arrangements for Rabello and her five sisters. Rabello describes growing up in a
home where music was constantly present. Not surprisingly, several of her siblings have become
acclaimed professional musicians like herself, the most famous being her brother, Rafael
Rabello, arguably one of the most important Brazilian guitarist of the last thirty years, and her
sister Amelia Rabello, an accomplished singer. The Rabello house was an environment filled
with music.

“So, there was guitar and piano with him [grandfather] in the house…he taught music to
everyone, and he was passionate about music, he worked in a bank, he was an
accountant. But his passion was music, and he listened to lots of music at home. He
listened to lots of classical, erudite music. He listened to lots of great quality Brazilian
music—Jacob do Bandolim, Ataúlfo Alves, Noel Rosa, lots of Luiz Gonzaga, Jackson do
Pandeiro, Dorival Caymmi. So, we were at home playing and listening to music. You
were eating breakfast and hearing the music, not like, sit here and now you are going to
hear. No! He was listening. You were hearing it because you were in the house. He had
great respect for music, and so whoever might arrive to where the music was playing, had
to stay quiet. If you did not want to stay there, you did not need to, but you had to keep
quiet. When he was going to study guitar it was by himself in his room, and he would not
let anyone enter, because there were many children. But he let me. [He said], “No! Let
her,” because I stayed quiet, listening. So to these grandchildren, to these children that
went more, he gave more, but it was not an obligation. [In the sense] “you have to sit
here, you have to hear.” No! You did not have to do this. It was playful. It was free. That music, this never leaves, this that you hear when little. And you begin to have a palate, a taste. Your taste will be refined.”

**Maurício Carrilho**

Like Rabello, Maurício Carrilho was born into a musical family. Carrilho’s uncle is Altimiro Carrilho, one of the great Brazilian flautists of the last sixty years, and his dad, Álvaro is an accomplished flautist, composer, and choro advocate. It is not surprising that Maurício was interested in music at a very early age. He received a guitar at five years old, too early in the opinion of many guitarists to consider giving him lessons. Carrilho’s father was resigned to take him to piano lessons instead.

“And so I went to study piano, they took me to a piano class that was horrible. It was a horrible teacher. She did not allow playing anything by ear. She would put the most boring songs I played the first time, she played one time I had already memorized the song so I did not want to be reading the score, I was trying to play by ear and she scolded me. It’s horrible. And so I stopped studying music, then at five or so years old, I was like this. I fought for music.”

Through Carrilho’s family connections to the choro community, he was eventually able to have guitar lessons with some of the top players in the late 1960s. After unsuccessful lessons with Horondino José da Silva, better known as Dino Sete Cordas [Dino Seven Strings], Carrilho began studying with Jayme Florence, better know as Meira. Both of these guitarists played and recorded with the top Brazilian popular musicians from the late 1920s until their deaths, Meira passing in 1982 and Dino Sete Cordas passing in 2006. Carrilho had these privileged opportunities due to, in part, his family’s connection to the choro community.

**Carlinhos Leite**

The oldest informant in this study is Carlinhos Leite, whose importance to this project, and more importantly to choro music in general, cannot be overstated. Leite was one of the

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86. Luciana Rabello, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 5 December, 2011.
guitarists in Jacob do Bandolim’s group, Época de Ouro. He came from a large family in a small town in the interior of Brazil. On his mother’s side of the family, everyone played music. No one played music on his father’s side of the family. Out of eleven siblings, he was the only one to take up music. He learned music by playing instrumental choro music at weekly family gatherings, learning by the methods of observing and imitating family members playing in the house, and then through playing popular vocal and instrumental music at parties. He says the way he learned music was through attending rodas de choro and trying to copy what more proficient musicians were playing.

“There were meetings every week. We gathered a small group and “beat” the guitar there, family. There I was, I was raised that way. Then I started to pick up the guitar when they went away I tried to do those things they did, and like this, I was learning…it was choro. Only choro! Some sung music as well. I was playing in parties, after I was a child, and I played in parties, all those things.”

Ronaldo Souza

Another contemporary chorão that comes from a musical family is Ronaldo Souza, better known as Ronaldo do Bandolim [Ronaldo of the mandolin]. While the Souza family has many musicians, Ronaldo and Rogério are the most successful, playing in the groups Trio Madeira Brasil and Nó em Pinga D’Água respectively (two contemporary choro groups that have performed and recorded since the 1990s). Ronaldo do Bandolim also plays with Época de Ouro, beginning in 1973, replacing Déo Rian, who had replaced Jacob do Bandolim in 1970. As discussed earlier, Época de Ouro was Jacob do Bandolim’s group and is the longest lasting choro ensemble still active. Ronaldo is one of the few contemporary “stars” of choro music. Here in the interview, his mother interjects to talk about their family of musicians.

Ronaldo: “It is a family of musicians.”

Lúcia Souza: “The musical family is from my father. My father was a saxophonist after being a violinist. So my father was a musician and yet his brothers, all were musicians. Then, I was still a girl, I was five years old and today my sons are musicians.”

Ronaldo: “The brothers were also playing as well, one mandolin, the other guitar, the other accordion.”

Lúcia Souza: “Rogério, Ricardo, Beto, Roberto cavaquinho, right? Rosalvo plays guitar, Rogério guitar, Ricardo guitar, and mandolin Ronaldo.”

Murray: “And they played together at home, all the brothers?”

Ronaldo: “We played!”

Lúcia Souza: “Since they were little, yes! Ronaldo was twelve years old.”

**MUSIC SOCIETIES AND COMMUNITY BANDS**

Aside from learning music through family, many Brazilians begin to learn music and choro through school programs, either local conservatory-style schools and bands, or through music programs at colleges and universities.

**Marcílio Lopes**

Marcílio Lopes’s musical formation is quite common for Brazilians. He is from a family of amateur musicians, as several of his siblings play music. Growing up, he listened to recordings of music, both popular Brazilian and International music, and his sister played piano and his brother played guitar. Like many young musicians aspiring to play popular music, he began by learning from anyone available to teach him. He was not serious at first, moving from guitar to cavaquinho, just enjoying learning through experimentation on his own.

“I used to play some sambas on guitar and I decided to buy a cavaquinho to try. I asked a brother-in-law if he could loan me some money to buy a cavaquinho, a very cheap one, and there was a musician that lived with my aunt, who had rented rooms. I asked him to tune it for me. I didn’t know how to tune. He told me the tuning. I went home and tried to

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89. Ibid.
do the chords. I liked to play, but it was only marginal to school, sports, and my life. I wasn’t aiming for some kind of professional goals, just for fun.”

After seeing a picture of the bandolim, an unexplainable affinity inspired him to purchase one and learn to play it. His brother bought him one and he began to learn on his own. Eventually he learned through the local music society or club, where courses are offered in basic music instruction in conjunction with local band performances.

“I applied to study piano in a small club that has lessons and bands, sociedade musical [music society], a club for music. There was a teacher and a small band. I applied for piano and there was a piano at home. Then I began studying musical theory. It was never with the goal of playing [professionally].”

Like Marcilio, many Brazilian woodwind and brass musicians get their start through local musical societies that offer lessons and playing opportunities in bands. Thiago Osório and Antônio Rocha both learned and gained playing experience in these music clubs.

**Antônio Rocha**

In my interview with Rocha, he explains his experiences growing up in a family of musicians, his father plays guitar and cavaquinho and his mother sings. His mother’s father was a trumpet player and his father’s family all played music as well. After taking advantage of the musical education opportunities at the local music club, Rocha began studying privately with the principal flautist of the Symphonic Orchestra of the Municipal Theater, Marcelo Bomfim. He credits the music club as being the source of much of his musical training. As he explains, he went from being a student to being the director of the band.

“I am from the concert band, like my friends here also, and since I was young, the band there in my city of Valença when I was sixteen years old. And this year I’m completing ten years as the conductor of the band. It is not a famous band, but it teaches students in various areas in terms of music. It is like any other band in Brazil. The function of the bands is to play the role of a music conservatory, but the people have access, without having to pay anything for it. So I started participating in the band more. I think that it

91. ibid.
was the band that opened doors for many things in my life. I did not have an arranging or instrumentation professor. I learned through practice really, doing it and hearing people play and giving lessons, because I have my students there. And like this, it’s important in my life. So I play a little saxophone, a little clarinet, I also like to play tuba sometimes, just for fun. But my instrument is really the flute." 92

Rocha discusses further how he began studying choro, pointing out how popular music fits seamlessly into the overall repertoire of the civic band. He claims that learning music through “classical music methods,” helped him play popular music, and vice versa.

“I began studying choro, but through the influence of my professors at that time. I was studying through classical music methods, so concertos, I was studying music [sheet music, European and Brazilian art music repertoire], but there was this other side, all [Brazilian] popular. I think with time, not that I had passed to only play popular music, but I think that one thing helps to reinforce the other. The technique from the study of classical music serves in the performance of popular music. So I think this helped me a lot." 93

Thiago Osório

Thiago Osório explains that he was adopted, and therefore he does not know if he inherited his musical interest. The family that raised him did not play music. He developed an interest in drums at the age of seven, but his family could not afford to buy him a drum set. Instead, he was encouraged to take advantage of the local music school, where he ended up playing trombone and eventually euphonium and tuba.

“My mother said there is a music school, which has a teacher. Let us go there and we will study with him and see what he suggests you can study. I wanted to play trumpet. I saw a trumpet and said, “My God, it is this instrument that I want.” The teacher saw me and said, “you have big lips so you are going to play trombone.” I said, “I want to see what a trombone is,” and so he gave me a valve trombone…The old folks always have their reasons. He brought the valve trombone. The following year I was already playing in the school band that was only for children. I was playing the solo of “Bolero,” already I was beginning to have the pleasure that music brings to people…At twelve, I already had an interest in tuba. I wanted to play tuba. I saw the tuba and said, “My God, I want to play this instrument.” Only that, hey, new instruments arrived in the band that I was playing in from my city and they would not buy [a tuba] because it is an expensive instrument. They were not going to put it in the hands of a child. So the conductor at that time said, “do the

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93. Ibid.
following, study the euphonium.” He gave me a euphonium and so I played the euphonium. It was a great phase, a phase in which I studied a lot.”

The community music society and bands in Brazil offer music education at little to no cost and also provide performance opportunities. Beyond these types of institutions, many students now take advantage of the musical opportunities provided by formal music programs at colleges and universities.

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Music in Brazilian higher education programs has been dominated by European art music until recently. Lucas Porto’s beginning experiences with music were at an early age and with European art music. While his parents were not musicians, they appreciated music greatly and supported their son’s interest in music by giving him violin classes for children at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro when he was eight years old. He eventually lost interest in the violin and gave it up to pursue the guitar at the age of fifteen. Eventually, Porto’s interest in guitar led him to study at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, after which he began a career playing and arranging Brazilian popular music, specifically samba and choro.

“I began playing, studying violin when I was eight years old, and I began in the school of music in the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, a course for children. I studied violin from eight to fifteen. But, I always had a guitar in the house, that was a horrible guitar, and I goofed around on it, but I did not know how to play guitar. When I was fifteen I stopped studying violin, I lost interest. I studied violin very seriously, always classical music. I began studying classical music. And at fifteen years old I began to study guitar alone, and at seventeen I had my first teacher. And like this, I began to study guitar seriously. But I always heard lots of popular music at home, beyond classical music, the concertos for violin and orchestra. My father always really liked opera also. We always had lots of discs of popular music at home, principally samba: Chico Buarque, Elis Regina, Milton Nascimento, the first samba discs that I heard were Cartola, Nelson Cavaquinho, Clementina de Jesus, and Donga. When I was a child my father also gave me choro discs of Pixinguinha and Jacob do Bandolim. So I liked it a lot, always liked it a lot. I admire choro primarily. I always greatly admired it for the complexity that it has.

It is very complex and difficult to play. Whoever wants to play choro has to study a lot.”

João Camarero also took up choro after years of music studies in a conservatory. As he explains, he had courses that taught him about harmony and theory of the Western music system, so he was already equipped with useful musical knowledge before he started studying choro specifically.

“I got out of high school and I was playing already and I wanted to study music. I went to this conservatory of music and then I started studying classical guitar and a little bit of choro and some other kinds of music, but I was already doing music, so when I started to play choro I was studying music already. So that was a good thing for me because I studied harmony and theory and all that stuff, so I came here [to choro] with a good preparation.”

Pedro Paes also began his music studies at fifteen years old. He eventually switched instruments, from guitar to clarinet, because of the opportunities to play as a soloist. Because of his two sisters studying guitar, he began playing as well. He mentions a music school, Frama Brasilia, where his sisters studied for free. Like many institutions in Brazil, the school is free, but to be accepted, prospective student usually take entrance exams, this is due to limiting the size of the classes.

“I started when I was fifteen. I had two older sisters that started studying music early at a great public music school (Frama Brasilia). It was difficult to get in because there were too many people interested and because it was free. So I didn't get to study there until I was almost leaving Brasilia when I was like seventeen or eighteen. I started playing guitar by ear and started getting interested in classical on guitar. At first I picked up the guitar and just tried to play melodies off the TV or the radio. Then I had two sisters who did study classical guitar and sang. I moved to São Paulo when I was eighteen. I went to study at USP (University of São Paulo) and then I studied there for four years, but it wasn't what I was looking for.”

PRIVATE LESSONS

Romulo Aguiar, began studying saxophone when he was in his twenties. Like many choro musicians, Aguiar does not make a living playing music. He had no idea what choro music was, and found out through his private teacher when his teacher gave him the option to learn choro instead of scales and arpeggios.

“I started to play the saxophone about eight years ago in 2003. I was doing private lessons. Well, I’m not a musician as you know, I’m an engineer. I was going to private lessons once a week. I was playing jazz and bossa nova, things that required long notes, not things that required a lot of technique. Then after three years, in 2006, my teacher realized I was getting bored, I wasn’t excited about studying anymore, and his way of teaching was always through music. So we came to a point that [the teacher said], “I need to teach you something new.” So he gave me two options. One would be scales and arpeggios. The other one was to learn choro. My first question was, what is choro? So I had no clue, except for the very popular stuff like Carinhoso, Lamentos, or Doce de Coco, I had no idea what choro was. So he gave me a CD, Evando e Seu Regional, a serious CD, actually LP from the 70s, and I loved it. So I agreed [to start learning choro].”

SELF TAUGHT

The last two community members presented are guitarists. They began playing music like many guitarists, learning autodidactically, e.g. listening, playing, reading books and magazines, observing, and immitating. Iuri Bittar began learning music by ear, playing rock and roll. His mother’s record collection lead Bittar to the recordings of the great Brazilian guitarists Baden Powell and Rafael Rabello, and he continued to learn by ear. He decided to take music more seriously and take college entrance exams for music. In order to pass the exams he learned to read music. In college, he began to play choro because of other students that he knew. He started a duo with a flute player.

“I began studying guitar really, learning some rock and roll by ear. So as I was improving on the guitar, I went looking for other guitar repertoires really. I became interested in some Brazilian things. I had access to my mother’s records, records of Baden Powell and Rafael Rabello. And I started getting interested in it. I began to learn some [more] things by ear. Also, my dad had some songbooks, those of Almir Chediak. I knew nothing about harmony, but I was learning those chords and some bossa novas and such. And I was familiarizing myself with that repertoire of Brazilian music already. By ear, I already was able to make some samba rhythmic patterns. I would transcribe by ear. I would imitate. When I was 18 I really began to study music to take exams to enter college. I learned to read [sheet music]. In the beginning, I already began to learn more instrumental repertoire of the guitar and erudite music, and other choras, already some through sheet music. But it was in college that I began to play choro, I knew other people. There was a guy that played flute, and we began to make a choro duo, guitar and flute.”

Wellington Krepke Duarte also started playing popular music and learned by himself in 1957. He first learned music by playing electric guitar in a party band. After quitting music for fifteen years because of a job, he began learning music again, but this time he began studying classical music. He lived in the capital city Brasília, where one of the first choro clubs began, during the choro revival of the 1970s. Like many musicians, he feels the learning process never ends as he states he continues to learn.

“I began, in truth at eighteen years old. This was in 1957. I began with electric guitar in a party band. It was a sextet. I began to learn like this, learning by playing, without a formal music education. Everything by ear. This was in ’57, and in ’62 I began working for Bank of Brasil, from there I abandoned music. I went to the interior of Paraná [state] and stayed there for fifteen years. So I stayed fifteen years outside of the instrument practically. Then I returned in ’77, and in ’77 I began relearning, but by then it was acoustic nylon-string guitar, to study a little classical guitar technique. In 1978-79 I began to frequent the Choro Club of Brasília, and began to devote myself to choro. In ’86 I began the seven-string guitar, and I am up till now studying (laughs).”

DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

To compliment the profiles of current choro practitioners, the following information was gathered through questionnaires distributed to students of EPM. The average age came to thirty-

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100. Wellington Krepke Duarte, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 24 June, 2011.
eight years old, the youngest being eleven and the oldest being seventy-one. Figure 4 below represents the answers to the question: How were you introduced to choro? Respondents could check the answers; “through my family,” “through my friends,” “through my studies,” “through the Internet,” or “other” with a space provided to describe the first contact. Only two people responded with “other;” One respondent described their first contact as hearing choro on the radio, the other respondent described their first contact as hearing audio recordings. Like the interviewees above, the majority (61%) of the questionnaire respondents contacted choro through family and friends, the rest finding choro through school and media.

![Figure 4: First Contact with Choro. Data from author’s questionnaire.](image)

Below, Figure 5 displays two sets of data. The color black represents the number of years the respondent played a musical instrument and grey shows the amount of time the respondent has played choro music. The vertical axis represents time in years and the horizontal axis represents the respondents—two respondents left at least one of their questions blank, resulting in fifty-one out of fifty-three. The data is arranged beginning with the respondents with the least amount of time and ending with the greatest amount of time—a little over two months to fifty-five years. While there are a few respondents that have played choro from the beginning of their musical experience, the vast majority played various types of music, and in some cases different
instruments, before learning choro music. The grey is strongest with some of the newest students because of beginning their music studies at EPM, and with the oldest students who also began studying choro when they began studying music.

![Graph: Comparison Between Respondents' Time Playing Music and Choro](image)

Figure 5: Comparison Between Respondents’ Time Playing Music and Choro. Data from author’s questionnaire.

The dominance of the black indicates more time spent with music in general. The “spikes” of grey show the minority of musicians who have spent most of their musical life playing choro. The dominance of the grey for respondents 1-21, is an indication that recently musicians have begun studying choro as a means to learning music.

Figure 6 shows the types of music the respondents play. Only 2% only play choro, while the rest play a variety of genres, in some cases all of the available choices—“classical” or European art music and the rest, different forms of Brazilian popular music: samba, bossa nova, and MPB. For “other,” the genres the respondents listed were rock, salsa, bolero, jazz, blues, funk, and gospel.

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101. MPB is a catchall phrase for Brazilian popular music that mixes International popular music styles with Brazilian popular music styles.
The majority of musicians participating in choro music come from strong musical backgrounds, in many cases studying different types of music before beginning choro. Family is a major influence in the musical lives of choro practitioners, as are the local communities wherein musicians live.

SOCIAL AND MUSICAL PROCESSES RELATED TO COMMUNITY

I end this chapter with a discussion of the social and musical processes defining the choro music community’s members. To better define the choro community, I use the taxonomy of social and musical processes developed by Kay Shelemay to help describe the complexities inherent in music communities. She proposes that the processes of descent, dissent, and affinity offer a “typology of musical communities,” which can be considered “as existing along a continuum that can move in different directions or become part of a multidimensional framework” to help analyze the social and musical relationships of community members.\(^\text{102}\) Her

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taxonomy helps describe the complexities of the choro music community by providing several layers to defining its collective identity.

I begin with the processes of descent, which pertain to processes that lead to collective identities based on ideas of origination. As Shelemay points out, communities that are established through processes of descent, tend to be based on historical beliefs related to ethnic or religious background. While choro has no religious ties, it does however have historical ties to Rio de Janeiro and the people, known as cariocas. Whether or not cariocas constitute an ethnic group is debatable, and the cultural practices of the time, namely the social dances inspired by European based popular music, were not limited to Rio de Janeiro, let alone Brazil. In terms of descent, most scholars agree that the birth of choro is considered to be in middle to late nineteenth century Brazil, and specifically in the music scene in the city of Rio de Janeiro. As choro is connected to Rio de Janeiro from its inception, chorões and choro admirers all over Brazil associate the music with the city. As choro music is acknowledged to be one of the main roots of popular music, the environment that produced it is given special status in the minds of Brazilians.

Another idea about choro that can be described as a descent process are the associations of musicians with promiscuous behavior. In the period between the 1870s and 1920s, at the parties where choro was played, lines were blurred between professionals and amateurs. The “soundtrack” to a night of eating, drinking, conversing, singing, and dancing was instrumental dance music and popular romantic vocal songs called modinhas and serestas. Sometimes professors from the conservatory would play music alongside postal workers, cigarette-makers, and other ignoble professionals who were also, for the most part, highly skilled amateur musicians at house parties attended by people of all class levels. Because of their ties to parties,

103. Ibid., 367.
which could involve merrymaking in the form of dancing and drinking alcohol, popular musicians became associated with bohemian behavior. To this day, the concept of malandragem is tied to musicians who were connected to the Brazilian popular music community. While it is true that malandragem became a more familiar concept in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s through samba lyrics and the general transmission of popular culture, today its concepts are associated with musicians that play both choro and samba. Currently, it is not uncommon to see choro groups dressed as malandros [vagabonds or bohemians],\textsuperscript{104} or to attend parties/rodas de choro which entail drinking alcohol and playing music late into the night or sometimes morning.

Another aspect of descent processes is the choro community’s fascination with and admiration for their predecessors with the valorization of the past. This is seen with the first book published exclusively about choro and its practitioners entitled \textit{O Choro: Reminiscências dos Chorões Antigos} [The choro: Reminiscences of Old Choro Musicians] (1936), and again in the 1940s with the radio program discussed above called \textit{O Pessoal da Velha Guarda} [The Personnel or Gang of the Old Guard]. In both cases, the idea of “old” is used to emphasize the idea of tradition and a connection to the past. Jacob do Bandolim’s group that he started in 1964 is called Época de Ouro [Golden Age], referring to “the good old days” of the past.

Another process of descent that gives identity to members of the choro community is the idea that choro is one of the main foundations of Brazilian popular music, especially represented through rhythm and harmony. While the European polka is one of the initial rhythms associated with choro, polka slowly transformed through Brazilian interpretation. Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia state that many scholars believe Afro-Brazilian rhythm and dance influenced the

\textsuperscript{104} Malandros are usually represented as characters with style, well dressed in a white suit and boater hat.
transformation of polka into *lundu, maxixe*, and *choro*. In turn, these duple-metered syncopated rhythms, and many of the musicians involved in the popular music community, influenced what would lead to the samba rhythm. Samba is clearly one of Brazil’s national identity markers, established in the 1910s and 1920s, and for some members of the choro community, being involved with an antecedent to samba gives them an amount of authentic cultural currency in the realm of “Brazilian” music.

The above examples of processes of descent describe origination ideas through which members of the choro community identify and bond. One part of the choro community’s identity hinges on its members belief in their connection to the past, but these are not the only factors that consolidate the community. Processes of dissent describe processes in which a community shows difference or reaction toward phenomena outside the community. Shelemay explains, “dissent communities do generally emerge through acts of resistance against an existing collectivity.” Examples of these processes can be seen in the reactions against foreign musics, especially the perceived North Americanization of Brazil. The radio program *O Pessoal da Velha Guarda* provides an example for understanding the choro community, although in this instance as one of the factors in the processes of dissent. McCann writes that the program, “expressed a new protectionism, defensive and resentful of foreign influence.”

A more recent example of dissent is found in the choro revival of the 1970s, thoroughly addressed by Tamara Livingston-Isenhour. She writes, “revivalists position themselves in opposition to aspects of the contemporary cultural mainstream, align themselves with a particular historical lineage, and offer a cultural alternative in which legitimacy is grounded in reference to

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106. Shelemay, 370.
107. McCann, 162.
authenticity and historical fidelity.” My personal experiences with certain members of the choro community confirm a sentiment of opposition to non-Brazilian influence. Some of the younger members of the community perform choro music and incorporate jazz style improvisation, i.e. performing new melodic material over the chord progressions. While this practice is obviously acceptable to the performers doing it and has an audience that supports it, a substantial faction exists in the choro community that views it as nontraditional and less authentic. In choro, composed melodies are generally longer and contain more notes than jazz compositions, and interpretation of the melody, having an extensive repertoire, and being able to compose, is valued over spontaneously creating new material over chord progressions. Another example of partitioning off unauthentic choro practice from authentic is a statement by EPM regarding instrument types acceptable in the school. Cavaquinho students are advised, “Students must attend classes with the cavaquinho instrument. Banjo [a modified cavaquinho used in a type of popular samba called pagode] is not accepted.” As an expression of dissent, the choro traditionalists view the “true” practice of choro as not incorporating outside influences, e.g. jazz-style improvisation and contemporary popular samba, and therefore bond over ideas of authenticity.

Processes of affinity are the last, and strongest, group of factors contributing to what defines the choro community. Shelemay explains that these factors are “individual preferences” which lead to “a desire for social proximity or association with others equally enamored.” Quite possibly the most frequent expressions I have heard about choro music are related to its beauty and difficulty. Aside from its aesthetic attraction, ideas about choro’s history—being

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110. Shelemay, 373.
Brazilian, traditional, instrumental, bohemian—provide a romantic allure to its community. This point is extremely important to understanding the foundation of the community. As will be seen in the following section, which expounds on the learning contexts and processes during its founding, choro is a reflection of polarities in Brazilian culture—elite/poor, erudite/bohemian, African/European. The production and consumption of ideas, concepts, and behaviors that define a nationalistic view of Brazilian popular culture are rooted in a dichotomy of formal and non-formal/informal processes and contexts, where the reality is a paradox. Musicians in the choro community produced music in social environments where alcohol and food were constantly a factor. Amidst the merrymaking, choro musicians played high quality, difficult music. The composers of the music, most of the time being musicians themselves, were often educated privately or in schools. These erudite musicians mixed with amateur musicians, many times the accompanists (e.g. guitarists and cavaquinhists), who were affiliated with music of the lower classes.

The difficulty involved in playing choro music is another affinity factor. The challenge of learning choro music, coupled with the admiration received in performing music at a high level is probably one of the strongest factors bonding the choro community. Musicians that are able to call themselves chorões are the most respected musicians in Brazil.

Finally, the instruments used in choro may also contribute to its allure. Musicians who play flute, saxophone, clarinet, bandolim, guitar, cavaquinho, pandeiro, or accordion, may be attracted to the choro community because of these instruments’ prominence in the genre. Many mandolin players begin learning choro music after hearing the music of Jacob do Bandolim. The same attraction is true for guitarists hearing Dino Sete Cordas or Rafael Rabello, or flautists hearing Altimiro Carrilho, for example.
In sum, the various factors described above are processes of descent, dissent, and affinity, which unify the members of a community involved with choro music. Today, there are many routes into the choro community, and all entail processes of learning. This study will now focus on how choro is currently being taught. Today, “traditional” and new methods and processes of transmission and reception are being used to teach and learn choro.
CHAPTER IV: HOW CHORO IS TAUGHT AND LEARNED

Before institutions of education, novices went to masters for apprenticeships to learn specific types of knowledge and ability. In the arts, knowledge and ability needed for its production were often considered special or “secret,” and the only way to learn the knowledge and ability was to learn through the experience of doing the art through practice and performance. In the realm of music, these seekers of knowledge would learn musical codes of communication through actively participating in the practice, performance, and preservation of musical/social rituals. The oldest methods of learning, through experience, actively doing—participation by observation and imitation—are still valued and practiced, regardless of the establishment of pedagogies and institutions. In India, for instance, Hindustani classical music is now systematically taught in universities and schools, while the traditional method of learning from a single guru, a master performer and authority on the tradition, is still considered ideal; students sit with their guru and learn by rote—observing and imitating. In various capacities, musicians participate and experiment through playing with other musicians as a means of learning the musical codes that constitute genres. In many music traditions, musicians learn autodidactically, they are “self-taught,” acquiring musical knowledge and ability through various processes and contexts outside of schools. Some of these processes are performed individually while some are performed in groups. In Brazil, experiential learning continues in cultural traditions such as candomble, jongo, capoeira, and in most, if not all, Brazilian musics; and yet, increasingly, institutions are being established to fulfill the role of agent for these traditions.

Those who play choro music continue to learn through traditional methods of participation through observation and imitation; and, recently, choro schools have begun to develop formal curriculums and pedagogies, offering aspiring choro musicians new learning
environments and processes. These new choro institutions offer unique contexts for the choro community to practice and promote their tradition while also stimulating an atmosphere for innovation and creation. Choro music has changed over its one hundred and forty years of existence, being shaped by technological advancements and community organization, which in turn, has influenced the way it is now conceived, learned, and practiced. I turn to education literature to establish a useful nomenclature to categorize modes of learning.

LEARNING

People are constantly learning. But what is learning? I believe learning involves social processes situated in contexts and agree with Stewart Ranson et al., when they write:

There is no solitary learning: we can only create our worlds together. The unfolding agency of the self always grows out of the interaction with others. It is inescapably a social creation. We can only develop as persons with and through others; the conception of the self presupposes an understanding of what we are to become and this always unfolds through our relationship with others; the conditions in which the self develops and flourishes are social and political. The self can only find its identity in and through others and membership of communities.\(^{111}\)

As discussed at the end of chapter three, social processes give communities their collective identity. In order to be accepted, community members, or people wanting to become community members, need to know the ideas, concepts, and behaviors that define the community. People gain and create this knowledge through processes of learning situated in contexts. Three learning perspectives, or “metaphors,” prevail in educational research—acquisition, participation, and knowledge-creation.\(^{112}\)


The oldest and most common perspective of learning is knowledge acquisition, where students’ minds are filled with knowledge given to them by teachers. From this perspective, knowledge is already established and defined. The participation learning perspective views knowledge as tradition, passed from old to new community members in “cultural practices.”

Both the acquisition and participation perspectives have been conservative in viewing knowledge as fixed phenomena, and therefore, new forms of knowledge are not accounted for. The knowledge-creation perspective accounts for innovations in knowledge. Paavola et al. summarizes the differences between the three:

Speaking very generally, the acquisition perspective focuses on knowledge and knowledge structures in learning and processes of learning within individuals’ minds. The participation perspective emphasizes the meaning of social practices and activities as bases for learning. And the knowledge-creation perspective focuses on analyzing the processes whereby new knowledge and new mediating objects of activity are collaboratively created, whether in schools or at work.

Paavola et al. do acknowledge that recently, both the acquisition and participation perspectives have adapted for issues of innovation, and all three perspectives offer ways to understand knowledge and learning.

**FORMAL, NON-FORMAL, AND INFORMAL LEARNING**

Whether learning autodidactically or with groups, the information one gains and creates is based on the concepts and behaviors from sources in contexts. Sources of information can be defined as people, written documents, analogue and digital audio/visual recordings, radio, television, and the Internet, all of which are situated in contexts or environments. The survey I conducted of general and music education literature exhibits the common use of the terms formal

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113. Ibid., 569.
114. Ibid., 573.
115. Ibid., 569.
and informal to describe processes and contexts related to learning. This dichotomy is usually viewed as two opposite poles of a spectrum. While formal learning is characterized by the organization or systematization of information, with intended transmission and reception usually in schools and institutions, informal learning is not as easily defined. If formal learning normally describes “in-school” learning, informal learning describes “out-of-school” learning. Most people spend the majority of their time learning out-of-school. To further define modes of learning, some scholars use a third category, non-formal learning, to describe structured learning that is out-of-school. While the categories of formal/non-formal/informal are frequently used to describe modes of learning, some scholars object to their use due to the informal category’s ambiguous nature and some scholars’ preferences for other terms.116

In relation to music, which involves specialized information, people learn during specific times and in unique ways. British music educator Lucy Green uses the formal/informal dichotomy, and states “informal music learning” and “formal music education” are not “mutually exclusive social practices,” but should “be conceived rather as extremes existing at the two ends of a single pole.”117 Timothy Rice also derives the formal/informal learning dichotomy from his findings in a survey of the topics of learning and teaching in ethnomusicology research. From his findings, Rice claims formal processes use “active teaching” in “institutionalized settings such as apprenticeships, schools and conservatories, private music lessons, and rehearsals for rituals, ceremonies, festivals, concerts, competitions, and the performance of new compositions.”118

Formal learning involves instances when information is transmitted to aspiring performers directly from musicians who are usually more experienced or knowledgeable in the subject of

music and are intentionally teaching. In other words, formal music learning inherently involves established environments or contexts, formed with intention for the transmission and reception of musical information.

Rice defines informal learning as processes that involve instances where music is “learned but not taught,” relying on methods of “observation and imitation.” He proposes that music is learned informally when a person seeks information through the experience of performance, whether alone or in the presence of other people, without being directly taught by another person. “Self-taught” musicians are usually describing their informal learning processes, where they have received information by their own accord and not through processes involving systematic and intentional instruction. Examples of informal learning include instances of acquiring musical knowledge through experiencing live or recorded performances and through the acts of practicing and performing. Rice suggests that ethnomusicologists view informal music learning as directly linked to oral traditions, where music is not written, and musicians learn by rote method, i.e. observation, imitation and repetition. But does informal learning only entail oral learning? Does the system of music notation place its use only in the formal learning category? Although music notation is a didactic system created to instruct musicians on what to play and therefore could be at times associated with formal processes and contexts, I believe the act of learning by means of reading and or writing music notation can be an informal process due to the act’s subjective nature. Musicians can learn to read on their own. Musicians learning music through reading notation have control of the process and can approach the task however they want. Furthermore, reading music is at times informal when the act is not evaluated.

Rice does not acknowledge the non-formal category of learning mode and I have not found its use in music education scholarship. According to Dudzinska-Presmitzki and Grenier,

119. Ibid., 77.
the “non-formal” learning classification is considered an intersection between formal and informal types of learning, and was coined in the 1960s to describe adult and continuing educational programs and contexts outside of traditional formal institutions. Haim Eshach also adds the non-formal category to the polarities of formal and informal learning. Eshach begins his argument by pointing out the dichotomy between in-school and out-of-school processes and environments. He states that formal learning describes “in-school” learning with its inherently structured approach, while informal learning describes “out-of-school” learning with its inherent denotation of a lack of structure, e.g. “situations in life that come about spontaneously…within the family circle, the neighborhood, and so on.” But he argues for non-formal learning as a third designation to describe the type of learning that takes place out-of-school and yet is structured nonetheless. For science education, these places would include museums, zoos, planetariums, and other places where people learn in a semi-structured environment. Furthermore, he states that non-formal learning “shares the characteristic of being mediated with formal education, but the motivation for learning may be wholly intrinsic to the learner.” I believe the addition of the non-formal category is useful in further defining modes of learning. Non-formal learning describes the instances between completely structured learning (formal) and unstructured learning (informal).

Due to the various out-of-school learning processes and contexts involved in choro that are “semi-structured,” I believe the non-formal category of learning is useful in the discussion of

122. Ibid., 173.
123. Ibid., 173.
learning choro music, as it helps to further define the modes of learning, specifically the roda de choro and ensemble rehearsals, e.g. Bandão, the Big Band at EPM.

Many musicians use informal processes to learn music, especially popular or vernacular music genres. Often, when musicians claim to be “self-taught,” they are describing how they learned informally, autodidactically, without the help or direction of a private teacher or classes in a school. Through this subjective approach, the process can be described as supportive in the sense that the learner is in control of the information they are seeking to absorb and understand. Put another way, the informal learner chooses freely what they are learning, largely unobstructed by repressive forces. Informally trained musicians are motivated to seek and glean information several ways, and often the motivation is innate and the learning is self-directed. In informal processes, the learning is not evaluated per se, as this type of learning is subjective, although some musicians may engage in self-evaluation. Informal learning can be unstructured and spontaneous, but again, the amount of self-imposed structure depends on the individual. Lastly, while learning is a process, suggesting a sequential progression, the subjective nature of informal learning allows for non-sequential progress.

The contexts for informal learning are divided between home and public spaces. At home, musicians learn informally through method books, transcribing audio recordings, reading exercises and compositions through notated sheet music, and through a wide array of media available on the Internet. The Internet is multi-faceted regarding informal education. Musicians are able to access information through audio/video, multimedia websites, social networking sites, and blogs. Informal learning also happens in public spaces such as concert halls, parks, museums, bars/restaurants, and rodas de choro as an audience member, only observing.
The most common informal learning method is observation and imitation, and this can be accomplished in the presence of musicians, seeing and hearing them play their instruments “in the flesh,” or through listening to audio recordings or hearing and seeing audio/video. Observable phenomena can be seen and heard. Finger technique, finger positions, vibrato, posture, embouchure, and various physical gestures are some of the observable information through sight. Musicians can learn through hearing observable sound information such as timbre, intonation, and various aspects of sound expression, e.g. melody, harmony, and rhythm. A major factor in using the observation and imitation method is context—one that allows the imitation component. In most performance contexts, imitating the performer is unacceptable. Aspiring musicians can observe music performances and then later attempt to imitate what they saw and heard through individual practice. Figure 7 graphically represents choro’s informal contexts.

Figure 7: Informal Choro Learning Contexts.

Non-formal learning processes are collaborative, structured, and usually supportive, meaning these processes are largely governed by the learner’s subjectivity. At times, being peer lead, these processes can be repressive in regard to information. Motivation to learn non-formally is governed by both internal and external forces. Non-formal learning is structured and prearranged. The non-formal learner usually voluntarily participates in these processes. Finally,
non-formal choro learning processes are typically non-sequential and the learning is usually not evaluated.

Typical contexts for non-formal learning are rodas de choro and ensemble rehearsals, contexts that allow learning musicians to observe and imitate are in non-formal gatherings. Arguably, the most important learning environment for choro musicians is the roda de choro, which offers an extension to observation and imitation, also allowing aspiring musicians to participate in the music performance. Furthermore, the act of socializing with musicians at these gatherings can offer opportunities for learning. Rodas de choro can either be private or public. Private rodas normally occur in peoples’ homes or apartments, although they can happen in any space, but in the “private” context, the spaces would be closed to the general public and therefore participants are usually invited. Public rodas take place in cafés/bars/restaurants, museums/parks, music stores, and spaces that allow an audience to observe. Ensemble rehearsals are also contexts for non-formal learning. Generally ensemble rehearsals are private and happen in a variety of spaces. Figure 8 illustrates non-formal contexts.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 8: Non-formal Choro Learning Contexts.**

Formal choro learning is prearranged and teacher led, although the teacher often acts more as a guide than an a dictating master. Formal learning processes are structured, often systematized by level, and organized into instrument specific classes. Information is often
compartmentalized by topic, e.g. theory, history, and practice, in formal learning processes.

Private lessons are more subjective as teachers often draw from a conglomeration of different methods. The formality of schools and/or private lessons tends to impress a sense of compulsory responsibility and/or motivation to learn, otherwise, what is the purpose for a person to engage in the learning? Formal learning is evaluated by teachers, and in the case of schools, peers as well, and therefore the motivations are often more extrinsic; although intrinsic motivations are always present. Formal learning can at times be repressive, meaning the teacher(s) and established curriculum may have an authoritative attitude towards the information they are transmitting. For example, some teachers may regard certain composers and their music with greater esteem than other composers, or some teachers may disregard or dismiss certain composers and their music. Simultaneously, students have opinions too, and can choose to believe or disagree with their teachers.

Formal learning usually occurs in schools and private lessons, but also at choro music festivals and workshops. With its musical system based in European tonal music, choro music is learned in schools other than specifically choro schools, e.g. universities, colleges, conservatories, and general music schools. Formal choro learning also happens in private lessons, which traditionally take place face-to-face, while recently, computer software and the Internet have allowed for virtual private lessons.

Figure 9: Formal Choro Learning Contexts.
LEARNING INSTRUMENTAL CHORO

The process of learning music is often thought of as a chronological process. To gain proficiency in a musical system, people experience a beginning stage of learning. With continued involvement, musicians enter a stage of intermediacy. Rigorous study and practice can lead to advanced levels of performance. Bruno Nettl also defines the stages in the learning process of European art music as chronological, "a musician moves from beginner to intermediate student, advanced student, beginning professional, full-fledged professional, master, star." He continues, "Few individuals follow this line precisely; some move from professional to nonperforming teacher, and few ever become stars."\(^{124}\) Obviously, the amount of time spent and which types of processes a person chooses are relative to individual musicians. I have used all three types of learning in my instrumental choro music trajectory. Below is a description of the processes and contexts I was involved with learning choro, reaching the advanced student/beginning professional stage in Nettl’s chronology of the process of learning music.

MY EXPERIENCE LEARNING CHORO

The first private choro music guitar lesson I had was in 2006 with Rogério Caetano, and it was rather disappointing, although it is fair to attribute the letdown to a lack of communication. At the time, my understanding and speaking ability of Portuguese was marginal, and Caetano did not speak any English. To make matters worse, I did not have an instrument, so we had to share his guitar. This lesson was the first time I tried to play a seven-string guitar and it was at this point that I realized just how different a six string guitar is from one with seven-strings. Needless to say, I did not play very much, but I was very interested to learn about how to play choro and

samba. After warming up with a song, Caetano started to demonstrate various baixarias, the sixteenth note bass lines idiomatic to seven-string guitar. He notated three baixaria examples based on a IIIm7-V7-I chord pattern in the key of C major and three examples based on a IIIm7(b5)-V7(b9)-Im chord pattern in the key of C minor. I was instructed to transpose the baixarias into all twelve keys. He also made a list of samba and choro albums that had great seven-string guitar playing. What struck me at the time, and even now, was that the methods he used for teaching me seemed similar to jazz. With its use of functional tonality, major and minor II-V-I patterns are common in choro, but I had no idea what songs to play or how to play them. The seven-string guitar’s role of providing sixteenth-note baixarias is exciting, and perhaps Caetano figured that is what I wanted to learn. I did not ask him how he learned choro, and I can only assume he may have had experiences learning jazz through the myriad method books available, and he used the II-V-I approach because he figured it was a method of learning with which I was familiar.

My second private lesson with a choro musician occurred a couple days later, with Lucas Porto. Porto’s approach met my expectations about what I should be learning as a beginner in choro music. He gave me the lead sheet (melody with chord symbols above) to Pixinguinha’s famous song “Cochichando.” Then he wrote the samba rhythm that I should use to accompany the melody. Porto also wrote two baixarias over the chord progression of Am-E7-Am, a common chord sequence.

After spending my first two weeks in Brazil, and meeting many people, especially involved in music, I was armed with new information on how to learn this music. I began trying to play the rhythms, both by myself, accompanied only by a metronome, and while listening to
recordings. After working on just the chords and rhythms, I began to include short bass run passages in my accompaniment.

In late December of 2006, I returned to Brazil for a little more than three months. My Portuguese skills were better, although I was hardly fluent. I bought a seven-string guitar and quickly realized the added low string was more of a challenge than I had anticipated. I had to relearn to visualize the fingerboard and learn new chord shapes. Also, the choro music charts that I was acquiring from friends had many inversions, which I was not used to playing. I would spend hours practicing rhythms and chord progressions while reading lead sheets, alone at home.

Having a formal music education afforded me the theoretical knowledge of European tonal music, making the process of learning inversions more of a memorization exercise than trying to understand the concepts of Western tonal music theory. I would attempt to participate at rodas de choro without sheet music, only to sit with the guitar in my lap, most of the time observing instead of playing. Cliché chord progressions and rhythms started to become recognizable, but usually the musicians played at such an impressive pace, the tempo was too fast for me to actually execute. For me, the beginning stage of learning choro is marked by intensive self study and practice, mixed with some direction from other musicians, books and recordings; a mixture of both formal and informal approaches. I tried using non-formal processes, only to realize the roda de choro was too advanced for my level of ability.

Regarding non-formal processes of learning choro, what helped me the most was starting a choro band/club that performed choro in Northeast Ohio from 2007-2010. To start the club, I decided to form a nucleus of players because absolutely no one living in Northeast Ohio played choro. I was able to recruit mandolin player Jon Mosey and clarinetist Sara Tamburro. My colleague Jason Little on pandeiro and I on seven-string guitar rounded out the group. When the
group began, we relied on sheet music to learn the music. Each person in the band created a binder of the sheet music for our repertoire. The repertoire was based on songs that I thought were the most popular, or songs for which the band members or I simply had an affinity. We rehearsed once every week or two and then started hosting a monthly roda de choro at a local restaurant/bar. Over the course of two years, most of the members had many of the songs memorized. Jon Mosey and I began composing choro compositions. As a private guitar instructor, I began incorporating choro music in some of my student’s lessons.

Today, I have memorized the chord progressions for around thirty choro standards and melodies for about five complete songs, as well as parts of melodies for another ten. I know many cliché baixarias and try inventing them sometimes when I feel comfortable trying to improvise and the context is appropriate. Living in Porto Alegre for the past two years has given me the opportunity to occasionally play in rodas de choro, where I am now able to simultaneously perform and learn. Every roda that I attend challenges my ability to hear and anticipate chord changes. Usually, every roda brings compositions that I have never heard, and I get inspired to learn the songs for the next roda. Also, I learn rhythms and variations, as well as ideas for arranging the music.

I enjoy playing choro, but doubt I will ever be able, or even want for that matter, to dedicate the time to reach the professional level, strictly playing music for a living. Many musicians will probably stay at the beginning professional level—performing, teaching, arranging, composing and continually learning choro. The goals of an chorão are to become a better player, learn more songs, perform the songs in a band or bands, and therefore arrange the songs, play in rodas de choro, be able to hear rhythmic and chordal progressions based on melodies, and maybe compose some pieces. A musician at this stage has enough knowledge to
help beginners, and therefore, some intermediate stage musicians begin teaching. Once the choro basics are learned and a repertoire starts being built, many musicians begin learning and playing samba and other popular Brazilian music genres, if they have not already been involved. Many musicians associate with the same groups of people because the choro music community is not very large. This is a period of refinement and self-discovery in relation to choro. When I attend rodas de choro with better guitarists than me, I rarely bring sheet music. I try to learn by ear and by sight, watching their hands to see what chords are being played. Sometimes, sheet music is provided, especially for music that is not well known, such as participants’ compositions, obscure compositions (never or rarely recorded), or complex arrangements of compositions. In situations where there are no adequate accompanists, and I need to be the foundation for the rest of the group providing consistent accompaniment, I usually use sheet music in case I forget a chord.

INFORMAL PROCESSES AND CONTEXTS IN CHORO

Marcílio Lopes’ comments below refer to how he and many others learned choro. He is from the generation that began learning in the later 1970s and early 1980s, when choro was going through a revival. People had very limited access to information about choro in the period from the 1960s until the late 1990s. The main sources of information were the few chorões, very few written examples (often hand written) possessed by the chorões, and audio recordings; available on vinyl in the 1970s and then cassette tape in the 1980s.

“The main approach to the process of learning is self-taught. A lot of listening and transcribing records, going home and listening and trying to study, to find the harmony and the right rhythm, everything. Because we didn’t have much information about it, and then I realized that that kind of information about how to play, that wasn’t anywhere, even in Rio de Janeiro you could go anywhere and nobody would know, “how do you
play that? There is sheet music for this?” “No, go to the recordings.” It was the main, the principal way of learning.”

Today, there are many learning options, beginning with the traditional methods—through family and friends, or possibly private lessons or choro clubs. As is seen in Lopes’ comments, and as will be elaborated below, audio recordings have become one of the main sources used for learning choro, but now there are also method books and songbooks available, for those musicians wanting to learn through reading music, as well as play-along collections, which enable the user to simultaneously read and listen to the music. Information about choro is easily accessed on the Internet through Youtube, blogs related to choro, social networking sites, personal and band webpages, and now choro schools. It is possible for a musician to learn choro completely alone, and yet this would go against everything choro stands for. For a chorão, choro is ensemble music, and although playing it takes dedicated individual practice, the ultimate goal for a musician wanting to become a chorão is to dominate their instrument and communicate musically with other chorões in rodas de choro.

This part of the chapter discusses how a person begins from the standpoint of the self-taught learner, acquiring the information through informal and personal means. A survey of available learning material for the choro initiant follows—audio recordings, sheet/digital music collections, method books, play-along CD/books, and information available on the Internet. After discussing the individual learning methods, I focus on non-formal learning methods, first in the roda de choro, followed by the formal program for beginner students at Escola Protátil de Musica (EPM). I use my experiences within the beginning stages to punctuate important information.

AUDIO RECORDINGS

In 2007, during my second fieldwork trip in Rio de Janeiro, my friend and guitar teacher, Lucas Porto, gave me a disc of mp3 files of choro music recordings. He explained that the disc contained eighteen classic recordings. This is a list of the artists and their albums:

Figure 10: Choro Album Collection From Lucas Porto

Abel Ferreira- *Chorando Baixinho* (1962)
Altamiro Carrilho- *Choros Imortais* (1964)
Altamiro Carrilho- *Choros Imortais No. 2* (1965)
Canhoto da Paraíba- *O Violão Brasileiro Tocado Pelo Avesso* (1977)
Copinha- *Copinha Interpreta Bonfiglio de Oliveira* (1979)
Galo Preto- *Galo Preto* (1981)
Jacob do Bandolim- *Era De Ouro* (1967)
Jacob do Bandolim- *Isto é Nosso* (1968)
Jacob do Bandolim- *Vibrações* (1967)
Joel Nascimento- *Chorando de Verdade* (1987)
K-Ximbinho- *Saudades De Um Clarinete* (1980)
Os Carioquinhas- *Os Carioquinhas No Choro* (1977)
Paulo Moura- *Carimbó do Moura (Confusão urbana, suburbana e rural)* (1976)
Paulo Moura- *Mixtura e Manda* (1983)
Radamés Gnattali e Camerata Carioca- *Tributo A Jacob Do Bandolim* (1979)
Trio Madeira Brasil- *Trio Madeira Brasil* (2005)

While the list above is in no way comprehensive, it is a veritable *Who’s Who* of choro, spanning the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. During my interviews with Maurício Carrilho and Anna Paes, as well as my interview with Luciana Rabello, both expressed their preference for Altamiro Carrilho’s album *Choros Imortais No. 1*, and Jacob do Bandolim’s album *Vibrações*. While I was interviewing Maurício Carrilho, Anna Paes mentioned Luis Otávio Braga’s preference for those discs as well. Carrilho, Braga, and Rabello were all a part of the younger generation who began learning and performing choro in the 1970s, and were part of the famous choro group Camarata Carioca.
Carrilho: “This disc [Choros Imortais] is special, I loved the pieces of music, I was thinking like this, I was finding the beautiful timbres—accordion, the flute, the guitars voiced in thirds, the rhythm, I thought everything was good. I do not know why. I had some references like this from choro, but in truth I think that it is his disc that taught me, like the fundamentals of choro really.”

Paes: “Funny, because when I went to have a guitar lesson with Luis Otávio Braga, he always gave these two references here, like how to listen to choro, he said it was Choros Imortais and Vibrações. It became a mark for everyone who wanted. It was like ... a watershed moment, as well.”

Carrilho: “I think that they are the two discs that have the most perfect accompaniment, and discs with soloists playing very well. I think that there are various [discs], but from this period, right, and technically they have great [recording] resolution for technology from the period, a beautiful sound. I think that the discs are special. For me, the best disc of Altamiro, and the best disc of Jacob, Vibrações—repertoire, everything.”126

Luciana Rabello also lists these two discs as important references. At home, she learned through listening and copying what she heard. She also learned through attending rodas de choro.

Murray: “How were you learning in the beginning?”

Rabello: “In the rodas and with the discs at home. Lots of discs, I listened a lot. Never had a very big variety. They were the same discs incessantly. So, Choros Imortais volume 1 and 2, Vibrações do Jacob, cannot be missed. In some discs that were released by Marco Pereira, there were some interesting things, Abel Ferreira and such. And the rodas. So we put on the disc, and while we could not do everything at the same time, it wouldn’t stop. And there were weeks on top of the discs, months, to find all the little things, exactly the same. We didn’t have computers, that today the computer plays in slow motion, without changing the pitch. Imagine how wonderful. We didn’t have it. And we studied alone. Rafael and I studied together a lot at home. And in the street were the rodas.”127

Rabello raises some interesting points in this excerpt. In the 1970s, when her generation was learning choro from recordings, the medium was vinyl records. It was impractical to start and stop the LPs while playing at the same time. They listened to the recordings constantly, from beginning to end, picking out the different parts. Rabello, her brother, and all the 1970s

generation spent their time learning through repeated listening of audio recordings and imitating what they heard. Rabello mentions studying alone, and by using “we,” she is referring to her generation. I interpret this sentiment as being opposed to schools and the group-learning environment. She admits she was able to study with her brother Rafael, which exemplifies her acknowledgment of the power and support of collective learning. Aside from learning from the recordings at home, their generation would also learn by playing in rodas de choro at various places outside her home, discussed further below.

When musicians attempt to learn by listening to recordings, especially recordings made prior to the digital recordings of the 1980s and 1990s, many times they are confronted with tuning discrepancies, i.e. instruments tuned to A 440 will not be in tune with the instruments of the recording. Most of the time this issue is due to the fact that audio recording was made using tape and somewhere during the process of recording and mastering the audio, the tape’s speed was altered. Many of the “classic” choro recordings, now digitized, are off by fifty to sixty cents in some cases. Students must tune by ear, or use hardware or software that allows for pitch adjustment.

Picking out specific parts to transcribe is also a challenge for the listener. On recordings made after the 1950s, soloists (usually bandolim, flute, clarinet, saxophone, or accordion) and seven-string guitar are the most present instruments, making them the easiest to hear. Instruments with mid-range frequencies are more difficult to hear (i.e. cavaquinhos and six-string guitars). Usually using technology (e.g. equalizers and various sound software), musicians can manipulate the sound to either amplify or isolate the specific instruments they are trying to hear.

After adjusting the sound and tuning their instruments, musicians can begin to glean the wealth of musical information from the masters. Another advantage musicians have using this
method is that they can start and stop the recordings. As Luciana Rabello mentioned above, prior to digital technology, this option was either not available, or it was extremely tedious, with digital recordings, stopping and starting, or just moving throughout the recording is easy. Added to this, some computer software programs, and some digital audio devices, enable users to slow down the speed of recordings without changing the pitch of the music. Fast passages, which pass so quickly it is nearly impossible to hear individual notes, can now be slowed down to a speed in which everything is discernable.

Whether or not the transcriber writes down what they are transcribing depends on the individual, their ability to do so and/or their intentions. Some musicians just want to memorize their parts, others want to write out the parts for analysis, as a memory aid, to publish, or for posterity.

Wellington Duarte, another chorão learning in the 1970s and 1980s, affirms the importance of recordings in the pedagogy of this period. But he concedes to the importance of music literacy by explaining he began working on learning how to read and notate music in 1986. By then, Duarte was well past the beginning stage of learning choro. Although he does not state it, I interpret his dedication to learning musical literacy as a sign of his interest in improving his understanding of how music works, music literacy allowing for a more comprehensive access and approach to music.

“It was like the learning of the majority of the people, without reading. Everything by ear. See, learn, and if a person explains to us how it is, that song, we memorize, assimilate, make a parallel between other music: “ah, the harmony of this music is similar with that.” And with this we develop the harmonic progressions. Everything from memory, causing the neurons to work. Nothing written. In ’86 was when I began working on reading and writing. From ’86, when I got the seven-string guitar, I made this work of reading, to learn musical division to write. I started to write the low guitar accompaniment. I wrote the chord names, and below the chord names I wrote the bass lines corresponding to the
recordings that I was hearing. After writing the bass lines, I began to write some melodies, to copy, listening to the disc and writing the melody. But basically it is this.”

Learning through recordings is still one of the main learning methods practiced by aspiring chorões. João Camarero talks about how he resolved to learn choro by listening to recordings after his failed attempt at playing in a roda de choro. He went beyond just choro and also began learning the accompaniments to famous samba recordings as well. This is due in part to his devotion to the seven-string guitar idol Dino Sete Cordas.

“The next step was to start to listen. So then I went to this teacher in the conservatory, and I knew he had a lot of recordings of choro, and I asked him for every single recorded song he had. I started to listen to everything I could and try to learn the old samba and stuff and mainly with things with Dino playing. That’s when I started to know more about Dino. I already liked him since when I started studying the guitar because I heard those Cartola albums from ’74 and ’76, and I fell in love with that guitar. That was it. I started studying mainly through the recordings.”

Flautist Antônio Rocha also began learning choro through listening to his favorite artist on flute—Altamiro Carrilho. He explains that learning by ear and then comparing what he heard to written music helped him understand music better.

“My first connection with choro came from my family, but my first connection with a flautist in choro was Altamiro Carrilho, I would listen to recordings of Altamiro. So I knew how to read a little sheet music, very little, and I had some choro albums and had a disc, a CD, there were already CDs at that time. I was listening, already playing by ear the melodies and comparing them with what was written. I learned many things alone this way. Before having a teacher, outside of what was there.”

**NOTATED MUSIC**

The dichotomy between hearing and reading music has long been a topic of discussion in music, and in choro music, it is continues to be a popular topic. Below, Romulo Aguiar describes

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how he began learning music by reading, but as he progressed, he learned that the written music was intended for a reference point from which the performer interprets.

“I was always reading music. But, in choro, you never play what is written, pretty much. Even the interpretation itself, like which notes to enhance and how to interpret each phrase and stuff, and the rhythm divisions I learned by listening to it. I started to go to rodas, not for playing, but just to listen. And also, I started to listen to a lot of CDs of different artists, different kinds of choros too. Technically, just reading. I mean, I can pick up a choro by ear, but it takes me a lot of time. So it was always through sheet music. Then after playing a lot I tried to memorize it.”[13]

**Choro music books**

As of 2011, there are several sheet music collections, “play-along” collections (i.e. sheet music with audio recordings), and instrument method books which students can use to learn choro. These collections are only a recent phenomenon. In the past, musicians could get published sheet music, but only from a few select composers, and usually of individual songs. Traditionally, some musicians would write out the melodies and chord symbols to songs in the choro repertoire, and this continues today. Luiz Machado, the organizer of the choro/MPB workshop in Porto Alegre, has an extensive collection of song chord progressions that he has made to help the students of Oficina do Choro [Choro Workshop] in Porto Alegre. In 2007, I was given a CD of choro sheet music files entitled, “Baú do Panda” [Treasure Chest of Panda]. The files are digitized sheet music, arranged by composer, rumored to have been compiled for a Portuguese reed player who moved to Rio de Janeiro in the late 1980s and who was given the nickname “panda.” *Baú do Panda* is the choro music equivalent of the old *Real Book* in jazz, considering that the collection has been written anonymously, skirting formal copyright laws, and it is passed on from chorão to chorão, free of charge.

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Sheet music collections

Currently, there are several publishing companies that offer choro sheet music collections. Brazilian publisher, Irmãos Vitale Editores, has published two sets of choro music collections, the three volume set *O Melhor do Choro Brasileiro* (1997) by various contributors and the more recent three volume set *Songbook Choro* (2009) by Almir Chediak, organized and coordinated by choro musicians Mário Sève, Rogério Souza, and Dininho.\(^{132}\)

In the *O Melhor do Choro Brasileiro* series, each book contains sixty songs in concert pitch, written in lead sheet style (i.e. melody and chord names above the staff). While the repertoire is quite extensive, most choro musicians I have talked to about this collection give it a negative review, pointing out that many of the suggested harmonies are wrong. My personal assessment confirms that many of the harmonies are inaccurate compared to famous recordings and accepted practice at rodas de choro.

Chediak’s three-volume set *Songbook Choro* is unique in its arrangement. Each song is written using the grand staff, not for piano, but instead like a miniature score as the bass section is used for chord names and baixarias, either inherent in the compositions, or suggestions by Rogério Souza or Dininho, Dino sete cordas’s son. Volume I includes several writings and interviews discussing choro’s history.

Irmãos Vitale Editores also publishes song collections of composers. Jacob do Bandolim, Waldir Azevedo, and two different collections of Pixinguinha’s music *O Melhor de Pixinguinha* and two volumes of *Choro Duetos- Pixinguinha and Benedito Lacerda*.

*Tocando com Jacob: Partituras e Playbacks dos LP’s de Jacob do Bandolim: Chorinhos e Chorões (1961) e Primas e Bordões (1962)* [Playing with Jacob: Sheet Music and Playbacks of

the LP’s of Jacob do Bandolim] is a play-along series, designed for students to listen and play-along to the tracks with or without the bandolim (melody instrument). This play-along is special because the recordings are of Jacob’s band Época de Ouro. He had them record the accompaniment tracks before he added the melodies. The music is written in lead-sheet style and in concert pitch and Bb. The book contains several bibliographic writings as well as vignettes and pictures, all making this edition an important educational tool. The book also contains some of the improvised sections of the melodies, played by Jacob.

In the Choromusic.com play-along series, students can learn the music of legendary choro composers and play along with recordings of professional choro musicians. In the realm of choro music education, the company Choromusic.com has surpassed all offerings currently available publishing a whole series of play-along books and CDs. Founded in 2005 by Daniel Dalarossa, the company has offices in Brazil and the United States. Their website can be read in Portuguese, English, and Japanese (Japan has a substantial choro scene), and the stated goal of the publisher is to “globalize choro.” To date, Choromusic.com currently publishes songbooks for eight of choro’s most important composers, as well as several other novelty collections titled, “Choro Meets Bach,” and “Choro Meets Ragtime.” Each book contains biographical information about the composers, interviews, and the parts are written in concert, Bb, and Eb pitches.

In 2003, Maurício Carrilho and Anna Paes compiled unpublished compositions of choro music composers, mostly written at or before the turn of the twentieth century, titled Cadernos de choro: princípios do choro, vols. 1-5 [Choro Notebooks: Principles of Choro] (2003). Companion audio recordings are available for all the songs as well, but are sold seperately. This document is historically important, bringing long unpublished compositions, written when choro

ws developing into a music genre, to choro musicians today. Beyond the music, Carrilho and Paes include little biographies of the composers taken from Pinto’s *O Choro*. The text is written in both Portuguese and English.

**Method books**

To date, there is only one published choro method book that is not instrument specific, although its focus is on melody and therefore geared towards soloists as opposed to accompanists. Mario Seve’s book, written in both Portuguese and English, *Vocabulario do Choro* [Choro Vocabulary] (1999) is divided into two parts—“studies” and a “Choro suite.” Part I is divided into two sections: 1.) Preliminary Studies, which covers rhythmic phrasing, accents, ornaments and articulations, accompaniments, and structures and melodic sequences; and 2.) Melodic Studies, which covers arpeggios, beginnings and endings, rhythmic phrases, chromatic phrases, diminished and dominant chords, and harmonic sequences. Part II, the “Choro Suite,” provides examples of compositions, written in various rhythms common to choro (choro, waltz, samba), and also incorporating rhythms from northeast Brazil (frevo and baião). Seve’s studies are written in all twelve keys which is interesting in that many, if not most, of the common choro repertoire are in keys with no more than four sharps or flats.

Adomo Prince’s *Linguagem Harmônica Do Choro* [Harmonic Language of Choro] (2011) discusses the various rhythms in choro and provides analysis of choro’s various harmonic sequences. Some of choro’s classic songs are used as examples for analysis.

**Instrument specific method books: Guitar**

There are several recently published method books for seven string guitar. *O Violão de 7 Cordas: Teoria e Prática* (2002) by Luiz Otávio Braga is the oldest book and the most comprehensive in respect to discussing the instrument’s history, including the important fact that
there are two distinct types of seven-string guitars—one made to be strung with a mixture of nylon and steel strings\textsuperscript{134}, he calls típico, and the second one, he calls solista, made with nylon strings like a classical guitar. The book is divided into three parts—Parte I: As Danças Do Choro [Part I: The Dances of Choro], Parte II: Aspectos Teórico-Práticos [Part II: Theoretical-Practical Aspects], and Parte III: Transcrições [Part III: Transcriptions]. All music examples use standard notation. Tablature is not used. Chord diagrams are given in the appendix. In the first part, Braga covers the major dance genres that make up the different rhythms in choro music—schottish, polka, maxixe, choro, waltz, lundu, modinha, and samba. After giving short four to eight measure examples, he gives full song examples of each one. In the second part, Braga give advice on the function and general aspects of playing the seven string guitar—the role of the instrument and how to fulfill the role, both theoretically and practically, with written advice, describing what and what not to do as a player, and then providing short examples. Part two is concluded with a section on scales, exercises, and phrases. The final part of the book is devoted to transcriptions of seven string parts from famous recordings of choro standards. Most of the transcriptions are of Horondino José da Silva (a.k.a. Dino sete Cordas), considered to be responsible for solidifying the seven string guitar in the choro ensemble in the later half of the twentieth century, and of Rafael Rabello, who is arguably the most important and influential Brazilian guitarist of the last thirty years. These transcriptions are extremely helpful to the aspiring seven string guitarist when used in conjunction with the actual recordings, although it can be argued that while they elevate the arduous task of having to transcribe the solos, the student does not benefit from the struggle of figuring out the parts on their own, by ear.

\textsuperscript{134}. Violão sete cordas típico is strung first two strings (notes E and B) made of nylon, strings three through six (notes G, D, A, E) made of steel, and a cello C note string for the seventh string (traditionally note C, currently note B and others are used, depending on the player’s preference).
Marcos Bertaglia has written several guitar method books related to choro—*O Violão de 7 Cordas* (2007) and two volumes of *Violão-Samba, Choro, e Cia.* In contrast to Braga’s method, Bertaglia’s seven-string guitar book dispenses with historical information and fine details and suggestions, focusing on the applied practice of *baixarias* [bass line counterpoint phrases]. All examples employ notation, tablature, and diagrams, and have audio examples on two accompanying CDs. With all the focus on the *baixarias*, there is no attention given to the full rhythmic accompaniment. After a thorough explanation of how to read notation and tablature, the book begins with scales. Next, he gives examples of common seven string phrases at the end of songs divided into the lines for songs ending on major chords and songs ending on minor chords. Bertaglia’s method is to deconstruct the phrases of the seven-string guitar into small segments and then build them back to fast, densely noted bass lines. The bulk of the book is devoted to bass line exercises. They begin with large note values (half notes), and over the course of fifty-eight examples, progress to small note values, ending at thirty-second notes. Five choro standards are included at the end.

A third seven-string guitar method book, recently published in 2011, is written by one of the top young seven-string guitarists, Rogério Caetano, with the help of Brazilian guitar performer and pedagogue Marcos Pereira, called *Sete Cordas: Técnica e Estilo* [Seven Strings: Technique and Style] (2011).

**Cavaquinho**

*Escola Moderna do Cavaquinho* [Modern School of the Cavaquinho] (1988) by Henrique Cazes is the most popular method book for cavaquinho. The book is more of a comprehensive method for cavaquinho in Brasil popular music than a method for playing choro music. He gives the strumming patterns and rhythms for the main dance rhythms of choro and a list of composers
and their compositions he feels provides a start for players wanting to begin a solo repertoire of choro melodies. ¹³⁵

**Bandolim**

Afonso Machado’s *Método do Bandolim Brasileiro* [Method of the Brazilian Mandolin] (2004) is a comprehensive bandolim method book. The book can be considered specific to choro as bandolim is used mostly to play choro in Brazil. The book is thorough in presenting observations about how to position the hands properly, technical exercises and studies for both hands, ornaments and effects, scales, arpeggios, and chord diagrams. Twenty five choro songs are given at the end of the book.

In 2010, Marilynn Mair, from the United States, teamed up with Brazil’s Paulo Sá for *Brazilian Choro: A Method for Mandolin and Bandolim*, which includes a CD. Written in both English and Portuguese, the book is intended to aid Brazilian bandolim players already playing choro and introduce choro to mandolin players of different styles. They give a lot of attention to choro performance practice and its oral history. A large part of their method is based on modal scale and rhythm exercises.

**INTERNET SOURCES**

As of 2012, the amount of information on the Internet pertaining to choro is staggering. Personal blogs, Youtube videos, websites, and social networking sites all contribute to the information available to persons interested in learning about choro. Making a search of Youtube for the term “choro” garners more than forty-five thousand results, many of which are of groups playing in bars or on stage as well as rodas de choro.

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Internet blogs have video examples of how to play basic rhythms or write about choro history.\textsuperscript{136} There are websites dedicated to some of choro’s great composers (e.g. Chiquinha Gonzaga and Ernesto Nazareth), which include comprehensive biographies, audio examples, and complete collections of sheet music, available for free downloading.\textsuperscript{137} Non-profit cultural institutes like, Instituto Moreira Salles, have websites with online archives and blogs pertaining to choro.\textsuperscript{138} All of this information acts as access points to the choro music community, and deserves a study unto itself.

\textbf{NON-FORMAL PROCESSES AND CONTEXTS}

\textbf{Roda de choro}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{roda_de_choro.jpg}
\caption{Roda de choro. Private home, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2007. (Photograph by author).}
\end{figure}

While interviewing Maurício Carrilho, I asked him why so many choro musicians claim that the roda de choro is the true classroom for learning choro. He thought for a while and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{138} Instituto Moreira Salles, ims.uol.com.br (accessed 31 August, 2012).
\end{itemize}
responded in typical Brazilian fashion by relating the topic at hand to *futebol* [soccer], and the roda de choro to a pickup street game of football.

“I think the roda is a space for exercise and for expansion of the repertoire. You get to know new songs and you exercise the reflex of using your knowledge in the music you're hearing for the first time, for example. But I think the great learning experience of the musician is done outside of the roda, it is done more by listening to recordings, playing along, repeating. Because sometimes in the roda de choro there is no time, there is no time to make this happen. I think these two studies are very important. The musicians who perform well in roda de choro normally are musicians who usually hear a lot, that play with recordings, abstract the accompaniments, learn by listening to the recording. This will expand the knowledge of the language that they put into practice in the roda. So the roda is like a game of soccer in the street. Free. “A naked” [a pickup game], as we call it. But the guy learns to stick intimately with the ball playing alone—kicking the ball on the wall, controlling the ball, juggling the ball. After, he exercises this playing in the street. I think it's similar with choro, with improvised music. You must work individually beyond the roda, only [trying to learn in] the roda does not educate anyone. But the roda is an exercise space for fellowship. You have the opportunity to see the musician who plays better and learn something he is doing, but you need to work individually as well.”

While the ultimate goal for choro musicians is to be able to play in the roda de choro, exercising their knowledge, there is limited space for beginners. As Maurício states, the roda de choro is great for putting into practice what the student has already studied, and it is a place to attempt new things based on the previously learned knowledge. He maintains that there are two types of practice—alone and in the roda. For musicians to participate or practice in the roda, they must have a repertoire. So beginners need to attend rodas to learn through experience, but they will be participating through watching, listening, and fraternizing with the other participants more than actually playing.

Below, João Camerero explains his first experience at a roda de choro. Although being proficient on his instrument, he did not have a choro repertoire and consequently could not participate because he did not have the choro vocabulary to converse with the other musicians.

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Camerero’s experience humbled and inspired him to continue going to rodas and learn as much as possible:

“My very first experience, that I remember, I came with my guitar in this big roda with these old chorões. It was that air of respect and everyone was so serious and quiet and I got there with my guitar and I couldn’t play anything. But since then, I promised myself that I would go to every roda I could and I would stay from the first to the last song, till I learn everything. I had to go and learn and I think that was my first experience in a roda, because I got my ass kicked so bad, and I said “Oh, I have to be in every roda and learn as many choros as possible.” But everyone was very receptive and it was a good experience.”

As Maurício pointed out above, for Camerero to learn in the roda, he would have to practice alone, building a repertoire, learning choro’s musical codes. At rodas, soloists and accompanists will begin to hear what songs are popular in the current repertoire. They will see the roles of the various instruments and how everyone interacts with each other—soloists with other soloists and accompanists and vice versa.

There are many things a beginner can learn from just watching and listening to more advanced players. In the roda, musicians are playing with the music—embellishing phrases, varying the rhythms, adding notes, subtracting notes, using silence, holding their instruments a certain way, playing with certain techniques, as well as talking about different composers, music, and musicians. The roda de choro is a place created by the choro community, which acts as a space for passing on history visually and orally.

Below, Marcilio Lopes describes how musicians learn in the roda de choro, pointing out how the different interpretations of songs, preserved in recordings, have influenced players. In the roda, the different interpretations of the songs are shared. Lopes also states how important seeing musicians play can help in the process of learning, especially from the perspective on a

plucked string instrument player as different positions can be used to play the same thing. Some positions are easier for executing certain passages than others.

“You learn by seeing the guys play, to hear the guys play. The gestures, all the things that are involved because it’s oral culture. Everyone has learned by hearing some recordings that some other guy plays, and when he arrives at the roda and plays, he has a different approach for maybe the same song. In some instances, you can say how the guy learned the music. The musical gestures he has learned to play that song from the recordings of Luiz Americano or he learned the gestures from recordings Jacob do Bandolim. There are the small details of the melodic line. So you have to learn that [the differences]. The guy isn’t playing wrong, he is playing different from you. There isn’t this wrong concept. It’s different concepts of the same song. You have to learn seeing the guys solutions for a lot of problems. I had so many problems trying to find [the way to play something] and then you see the guy, a small gesture. Do you know the choro, “Vibrações?” There is a place that where the guitars go…[sings the part, second B section]

Example 3.1: Transcribed by author.

I learned seeing a guy here in Niteroi, an older guy that used to play guitar in a group with me. He learned from an older guy than him. It’s very easy to do, just two fingers and open strings, and I learned by seeing him do that. I was in Cabo Frio and there was this 7 string guitarist, a good friend, we shared lots of beer, and he started to do the same thing with a lot of difficulty, the fingering on the left hand was difficult, and I said it’s not that, it’s here. He said, “I’m so stupid for not seeing that, I have to stop playing guitar and become a bricklayer.” (laughing) These are the kinds of things you learn by seeing the guy. I’m not a guitar player, but I saw the guy and the solution is with two fingers, that’s the solution. It’s very easy to do. I saw this Japanese guy I learned with. There’s always a different approachs for the way you are hearing, the impediment that leads you to a different way of playing. I was playing something awkwardly, and I thought I had a better solution, [but then I saw him] and I said shit, that’s the way. Why be so stubborn and stay with the wrong way, I had a lot to learn from this guy. You are lucky enough to be with these masters. When I’m at these big rodas, I like to play less and to try to catch every information, gestures and harmonies, basically pay attention to everything. I’m not the kind of guy to go to a roda to play every song. I like to enjoy, to listen, to see everybody playing.”

When I created the Ohio Choro Club in 2007, I began hosting a roda de choro once a month at The Water Street Tavern in downtown Kent, Ohio. I realized I had to explain to beginners, and all non-Brazilians, that the roda de choro was a choro jam session with certain “rules” that needed to be followed for it to function properly. I thought of writing a list of rules for the participants, but the other members advised against it, warning that rules may be too formal and could possibly deter people from coming. Recently, while doing Online research, I discovered the following picture, which shows a plaque stating rules for a weekly roda de choro at Bandolim de Ouro [Golden Mandolin] in downtown Rio de Janeiro, a music store operating since 1929.
Figure 13: Music store Bandolim de Ouro’s roda de choro rules. From their website: http://www.aobandolimdeouro.com.br/(accessed 23 November, 2010).

(Translation of Figure 13)

Statute

1st article- It is expressly prohibited to sing.

2nd article- The instrumental participants are divided into soloists and accompanists.

1- The soloists should take turns soloing, it is mandatory that everyone perform the same number of songs.

2- The soloists can participate in the solos of the other musicians, since they would be making counterpoint or a second voice, with the volume lower, without disturbing the soloist taking his or her turn.

3- The accompanying guitarists, both 6 and 7 strings, and cavaquinists can accompany all music.

4- It is mandatory that pandeiro players should take turns.

3rd article- It is mandatory that the roda de choro “turn.”

1- The direction of the rotation should be clockwise.

4th article- The repertoire should necessarily be choros.

1- Known, unknown, and unpublished choros are permitted

5th article- The instruments should be electronically tuned to 440 Hz.

6th article- It is necessary for all present to stay absolutely quiet during the performance of each piece of music.
Figure 13 explicitly states some of the latent principles of musical behavior expected at rodas de choro, but it is in no way representative of all rodas de choro. At most rodas that I attended, some singing is acceptable if there is a singer present. Depending on who is present at a roda, other styles of music may be played, but this is rare, and there are usually some chorões who will either verbally or non-verbally express their disapproval. Silence and attention to the music is expected at most rodas, although at rodas de choro in bars this is virtually impossible to enforce.

In conclusion, musicians at the beginning level in the process of learning choro, attend rodas de choro to see and hear the essence of choro music—communicating through the musical codes of choro and fraternizing with the musicians that are a part of this community. Beginners contribute through being there, participating through their interest in the community.

“It is where you learn a lot, because you see people with more experience playing, you will be copying. And you will understand how it works, each one’s turn, each step, passing the solo to another. The guy that does not know right, the others rescue. So it is something close-knit and playful. It is very entertaining.”

Some musicians will begin to attempt to play, and it is inherently easier for accompanists to try and play than soloists, as accompanists can play quietly and soloists are the center of attention when they play. It is important for beginners to start playing in the roda at some point. Pedro Paes explains that he began participating with a very small repertoire, but made it his goal to learn a new piece once a week.

“I probably learned like three or four [choros] and then six or seven or something like that and kept a while like that. I was able to play, but already had this obligation to learn at least one choro per week at least this objective. Sort of like a natural hunger for all the things. I was listening. I wasn’t waiting till I had thirty or forty choros… We learned a lot just listening and going, I mean watching these guys play.”

143. Pedro Paes, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 13 June, 2011.
Musicians enter the non-beginner stage of learning once they have a repertoire of at least five pieces memorized. To echo Paes, for beginners the roda de choro is a place to experience the choro community through presence alone. For a musician to move beyond the beginning stage of learning, they need to be inspired to learn more songs, and motivated to work on acquiring the skills to play the melodies, rhythms, and harmonies of choro’s musical codes in order to begin entering the roda as a musician.

Non-beginner musicians are much more active than beginners because they have at least a basic repertoire to contribute to the collective playing, and they have enough basic information to try and learn by ear and by sight. Ultimately, musicians at this stage want to have memorized their repertoire, but reading music can be acceptable depending on the roda. The many variables that contribute to each individual’s learning and playing, make for a dynamic learning environment, where everyone has their own style or personality yet framed within the context of choro. The types of participants at rodas de choro depend on context, where the roda takes place—home, public space (park, square, or some other non-private space), or bar. Usually, in rodas held in people’s homes, the participants are friends and networks of friends of the host. Groups, either formal bands or informal groups of friends/acquaintances, usually organize rodas de choro that take place in public spaces and bars. These contexts offer slightly different opportunities for learners. For example, there is a roda de choro held every Sunday at Praça São Salvador in Rio de Janeiro. Some students from EPM established this roda around six years ago. The arrangements of the pieces are standard, meaning all songs are played in their most basic forms, i.e. AABBACCA or AABBA, standard tonal keys, and without special introductions or endings. In Porto Alegre and Rio de Janeiro, I have attended some rodas de choro in bars
organized by bands. Choro bands often make arrangements of some of their repertoire and therefore offer a more exclusive environment for playing choro.

What individual musicians bring to rodas de choro is also a factor. All musicians have idiosyncrasies based on how and what they learned, and in turn, how they play. For instance, in relation to accompaniment, some seven-string guitarists play the famous baixarias of songs recorded by Dino Sete Cordas, or saxophonists will play famous counterpoints to songs recorded by Pixinguinha, while some musicians create their own baixarias and counterpoints.

**Leite:** “I think that choro really is learned really is in the roda…”

**Souza:** “It is in the roda, understand? Practicing.”

**Leite:** “It is in the roda that each one has a style of playing.”

**Souza:** “It is true.”

**Leite:** “Each one has a style of plucking the guitar, giving their part, giving the bass. Each one has a style.”

**Souza:** “Each one has his style ... each one has their own. This difference, that is the fact of each one has their own way of presenting oneself, playing choro. And choro is not to be played exactly as the score (sheet music) says. You play, after you close the score and play giving a little touch of your character, your individuality... a process, because each one plays his own ... because it is a music for coming together and then the characteristic beauty is precisely in the harmonic cohesion ... in the end. In the final product of the harmony of all playing. And that's the thing about choro. You do not stick to the music as written, you get a score of Pixinguinha to learn. Then you forget the score because you are actually going to have to play by practicing. When I was a kid, like Charlie too. First I practiced, I missed a lot, practiced ... missed a lot, I do not know. Then you are fixing. You were correcting your melodic mistakes and other harmonic mistakes, there you go fitting the cadences, chord sequences in order to form ... it does not matter, because choro is played in groups, never like, two, three [musicians]. It has always been played within the group. This is the main factor for you ... to develop what is choro. First you watch.”

**Murray:** “without playing?”

**Souza:** “No it’s…it’s…preferable. You watch so you can understand what is the conception of choro…the whole thing. After, you go playing softly. You stay in your
FORMAL LEARNING PROCESSES AND CONTEXTS

Private Lessons

Private lessons are one of the best ways to learn music. The intimacy that occurs between teacher and student, or better, master and disciple, allows for large amounts of information to be transmitted and teachers can evaluate and assess students’ progress in the moment. Students are able to ask questions and receive detailed explanations or demonstrations. Teachers can tailor the information to students’ interests and abilities, and therefore learning through private instruction is more of an intimate experience. Traditionally, private music lessons occur in the privacy of a teacher’s home or “studio,” but recently, live audio/visual software (e.g. Skype, iChat, Facetime, etc.) are being used by teachers for private lessons via the Internet. The following is a post by Rafael Ferrari—multi-instrumentalist, composer, and teacher formed primarily by choro, who lives in Porto Alegre, Brazil:

Classes for mandolin, cavaquinho, and guitar in person and via Skype around the world. I have students in Germany and the United States, lessons with educational materials developed by me in ten years of experience, aimed at teaching differently to give the student the tools to create without the aid of the teacher. Those interested call me or add me on Skype. Many instrumental musicians study with private teachers. Private lessons have always been a common way to acquire information related to choro. My first experiences concerning choro were through private lessons with George Bachmann, studying some of Heitor Villa-Lobos’ guitar music influenced by choro. I took several private lessons with choro/samba guitarists Rogerio Caetano and Lucas Porto.

To elaborate on the subject of private lessons in relation to choro, I turn to Iuri Bittar’s paper titled *A Roda é uma Aula* [The Choro Circle is a Class] (2010), in which he discusses the guitarist Jayme Florence (a.k.a. “Meira”), a Brazilian guitar master active as a professional musician in Rio de Janeiro from 1927 until his death in 1982. Several of his students became Brazilian guitar masters as well—Baden Powell, Rafael Rabello, Maurício Carrilho, and Paulo Sete Cordas.

Bittar’s ethnographic study reveals how Meira taught his lessons. Meira’s classes began in the morning, on weekends, and were divided into two parts. His students recount that the first half involved studies based on the Spanish classical guitar tradition. Accounts from one student reveal Meira used a method book called *Gran Metodo Completo Para La Guitarra* — *Aguado Sinopoli*, compiled by Argentine guitarist Antonio Sinopoli. Other students claim Meira used another method called *La Escuela de La Guitarra* de Mario Rodrigues Arenas. The method books supplied the material for the students to work on technique through exercises and music notation reading studies. For solo guitar work (as opposed to accompaniment), Meira also assigned pieces from the classical guitar canon, from composers such as Dionisio Aguado, Antonio Cano, Napoleon Coste, Fernando Sor, Francisco Tárrega, Agustin Barrios, Heitor Villa-Lobos, and J.S. Bach. Although reading music was a major component to Meira’s guitar lessons, aural training was also an important method of transmission. Both Maurício Carrilho and Paulo Sete Cordas describe instances where they learned without music, where the students observed their teacher and then imitated what they saw and heard. Beyond reading music,

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147. Ibid.
148. ibid., 582-583.
playing by ear, and learning by rote, Meira’s students relate that often, visits to his house for lessons would also entail the participation in rodas de choro. In some instances, these “rodas” involved just teacher vis-à-vis student. Many times, students waiting or finishing lessons would begin playing together, creating a roda de choro. Bittar’s paper reveals how Meira’s teaching methods incorporated both formal and informal aspects for learning how to play music.

**EPM**

EPM provides the opportunity to people who want to learn choro with a comprehensive learning environment. First, the school provides a place for choro musicians of all levels to meet. Beyond the teachers and students, the general public is encouraged to attend Bandão—the afternoon rehearsal/performance of the entire school—held in an outdoor courtyard. Musicians frequently visit the school. Occasionally, musicians who are living in or passing through Rio de Janeiro stop at the school to listen to Bandão, participate in the roda de choro, or give master classes. Second, EPM has established easy access points to all aspects of choro as they have systematically organized theoretical and practical information. EPM’s teachers are professional musicians who have specialized in choro music, and in some cases are “stars” of the choro music community. The structure of the school provides students the chance to watch, listen, and participate in choro at all levels. As Chapter 1 has already introduced the school through discussing its history and objectives, this section focuses on the specific aspects of the school that are relevant to how they teach choro.

Since the school is relatively young, the curriculum is still evolving. Each year, new courses are added and some courses are dropped, but this pertains mostly to the courses offered beyond the basic curriculum. EPM’s curriculum can be divided into five sections—instrument specific group lessons, music appreciation, Bandão, roda de choro, and various extra classes (e.g.
reading, theory, history, composition, etc.). Classes are usually one hour long. EPM’s school year begins in March, after Carnaval, and is divided into semesters of fifteen weeks, meeting Saturdays beginning at 9 a.m., and ending at 5 p.m.. Students have always been charged a nominal fee as EPM is also supported through various private and government grants. The standard tuition pays for the basic curriculum, which entails instrument specific group lessons, music appreciation, the open roda de choro, and Bandão. Extra classes have an additional charge.

Instrument Specific Classes

All students are required to have instrument specific group class. Most of the instrument specific classes are divided into graded levels, depending on demand. Over the years, they have slowly developed a formal distinction of the classes. The guitar is the most popular instrument studied at the school and therefore has the most teachers and the most graded levels. When I studied at the National Festival of Choro in 2007 and 2008, the guitar classes were divided into three sections—beginning, intermediate, and advanced. In 2007 when I studied at the school there were several more divisions. Currently, there are eight levels of guitar taught by seven different teachers. For larger instrument populations (cavaquinho, flute, bandolim, pandeiro) the classes are divided into three graded levels—beginning, intermediate, advanced. The less populated classes (saxophone, percussion, trombone, trumpet, tuba, bass) contain all levels of students. Piano is only offered to advanced students.

While the written curriculum is clearly defined, my experience at EPM has shown that in practice, the classes are more loosely structured. This is due in part to individual teacher’s interpretation and style of the curriculum, the students in the classes, the repertoire chosen for Bandão, and probably most importantly, the inherent informalities of choro itself. Anna Paes, one of the beginning guitar teachers, uses samba with her beginning guitar students. She uses
popular samba songs because many of the beginners need to work on chord progressions and rhythmic accompaniment but do not have soloists to play the melodies of the choro songs they are working on accompanying.

“There are many different teachers at EPM and I don’t think there’s exactly a specific model that every teacher is going to follow. There isn’t a fixed curriculum. We try to do it. We don’t meet to discuss. There are 6 guitar teachers, each one with their own style, what happens is, maybe because of the appreciation classes, the recordings that are shown, you say what is the good reference and you don’t talk about other cultural manifestations, so it’s very restrictive.”

I was able to attend classes with three different guitar teachers throughout my time at EPM and the National Festival of Choro—Luiz Flávio Alcofar, Maurício Carrilho, and Pedro Aragão. Each one had his own style, but generally, the classes focus on becoming a better musician through building a choro repertoire. Some teachers use the compositions that have been selected for Bandão as the basis of their curriculum. Some teachers allow students to contribute song choices for the repertoire. Most use a mixture, begin with focusing on Bandão repertoire and then start learning other compositions. Here, Pedro Paes describes two of the teacher’s different styles.

“Mauricio was really practical- choosing repertoire and just playing through it, playing levadas [rhythms]. And then we had some practice that we would have to prepare a little show for the end of the week, with the repertoire and everything. With Proveta, it was band practice. And just normal class about wind instruments, breathing, really basic things that he always teaches.”

My choro music education through EPM began during my second trip to Rio de Janeiro when I found out about the 3rd National Festival of Choro, taking place in February of 2007. This festival began as an extension of EPM, and I mention this because this encounter was my first exposure to the teaching methods and structure that the school uses. I enrolled and got to the festival with several friends. For guitar, I was placed in an advanced class that was too difficult.
for my abilities. The first exercise Paulo Aragão had us play was from the “tango-habanera” Ali Baba written by Henrique Alves de Mesquita, adapted by Maurício Carrilho. Below is the excerpt the class began working on.

![Example 3.2: Transcribed by author.](image)

At the time, I had trouble playing the two parts simultaneously (Thumb playing the bass line and index playing the melody), and I felt I needed help with the basic accompanying rhythms and chord fingerings on seven string guitar. I also had trouble keeping a rhythm going and reading all of the chord symbols because many of them were inversions—C with an E in the bass, or A7 with G in the bass. Because of the difficulties I faced in the more advanced class, I transferred to the beginning level. There we would work on basic rhythmic accompaniment and chord progressions.

The beginning guitar and cavaquinho classes are directed similarly. Classes have an enrollment of between ten and fifteen students. My teacher was Luiz Flávio Alcofar, a six-string player involved with samba and choro in Rio de Janeiro. He comes from the 1980s generation of players. He is a member of many samba and choro groups, but his most successful is the group Água de Moringa. I studied with Alcofar at the III, IV, and V National Choro Festivals, as well as in some classes at EPM. He is a six-string player exclusively, but teaches both six and seven string guitarists.

After tuning the instruments, which can take several minutes, the teacher chooses a rhythm, such as polka, and demonstrates the basic plucking or strumming pattern. The class
works on the pattern together, usually playing between two chords, the tonic and dominant (C and G7). Below is an example of the exercise:

![Example 3.3: Notated by author.](image)

After playing the rhythm for a while, the teacher would add variations:

![Example 3.4: Notated by author.](image)

Next, the group begins a whole song. At this point, students may have questions about how to play specific chords—fingerings, positions, inversions—or melodic lines, or rhythms. Teachers will show the various options available to the students. EPM created songbooks for the choro festivals, that included several accompaniment rhythm guides—the basic rhythms with variations.

Generally, when the class plays an accompaniment to a song, everyone uses sheet music. Occasionally, students are asked to put the sheet music away and encouraged to play without reading. Sometimes students who are more advanced will begin to work on short bass lines with chords/rhythmic accompaniment. Sometimes Alcofar will ask the more advanced students to try different chord voicings, or point out ways to play chords that lead to more fluid voice leading lines.
Music Appreciation

A part of EPM’s core curriculum is a music appreciation class. The class is open for just about any topic related to music in general but tend to focus on topics related to choro. Several times, music performances were given. Twice, these performances were folkloric in nature and not directly related to choro, but to “traditional” Brazilian music. Other times, the class was lead by a teacher and involved listening to audio recordings and the teacher would lecture, giving background information. Topics would focus on specific musicians, groups, instruments, or recordings. The music appreciation class is not required but it is included in the tuition cost.

Roda de Choro

The roda de choro at EPM lasts several hours and is open for anyone to join. The roda is held in the same space as Bandão, under some trees on the outdoor stone stage. Anyone coming to the school will encounter this space on the way in. Several “monitors” lead the roda, usually a melodic player and several accompanists. Some students use sheet music, but generally, musicians know it is better to have the repertoire memorized.

Throughout the day, a roda de choro takes place in the courtyard of the music department at UNIRIO. Several senior students monitor the roda. Anyone can enter the roda and attempt to play. As stated earlier, the roda de choro is a place to watch and listen, but EPM has tried to make concessions in order for the beginners to participate by playing.

“Nowadays, we have choro schools. Here for example, the Escola Portátil is a school. So we have a roda that has students. When I began, you did not have this. For example, you had rodas, and for you to be able to play in a roda…choro has a characteristic that is a music very difficult technically, it is not an easy music technically. So for you to arrive in a roda, you would have to have already be accomplished on your instrument, at least be reasonably accomplished on your instrument. If not, you would not be able to play there in that environment. I think this changed a little to be honest. I think that today we have rodas, it became more institutionalized, in this sense, we created a project to educate, to
do the learning of choro, so we have a roda and there we give more room for beginners. We try, for example writing a few choros easier for beginners, etc.”

I rarely saw beginners attempting to play in the roda de choro. Usually, the less experienced participants were at least at the intermediate level. On the rare occasion a beginner would attempt to play, they would have the support from all the participants.

**Bandão**

Bandão is one of the most important learning events at EPM, required of all students. The whole school gathers in the courtyard of the music department of UNIRIO, on a cement stage which is an extension of the *pedra do Urca* [rock of Urca], one of the many large, jutting, mountainous protrusions of Rio de Janeiro, under the shade of trees. Various teachers are responsible for the arrangements of each semester’s Bandão repertoire. Parts are distributed to students digitally through email. Most students print the parts and compile them in a folder.

Reading music for Bandão is very common although many students memorize their parts. Teachers usually sit throughout their instrument’s section to help answer questions students may have or to physically demonstrate specific techniques. A teacher normally conducts the ensemble in an informal style, usually counting off for everyone to begin or stay together and occasionally cuing sections for entering or stopping. After playing through a song one time, the conductor or one of the teachers may make suggestions for improvement. The song may be performed again, or specific sections of the song may be worked on.

A palpable feeling of excitement exists for the participants of Bandão, as musicians of all levels get to play with each other. The higher-level musicians give support to the beginners by answering questions and physically showing how to play certain parts. Beginners gain an understanding of the roles of all the instruments, as well as an idea of music arrangement.

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Generally, the arrangements provide challenges for all levels. For the beginners, this may be frustrating, but the arrangements can also provide incentive for striving to improve.

**Extra Classes**

Through the years, EPM has offered classes beyond the basic curriculum, with an added cost per class. Some of the courses that have been offered include “History of Choro,” “Improvisation,” “Composition,” “Voice-leading,” “Counterpoint,” “Reading,” various harmony courses, and various courses related to choro music’s vocal relative—samba. As of 2013, the extra classes offered at EPM are “rhythmic reading, levels 1-4,” “harmony, levels 1-3,” “samba accompaniment,” and “*Samba Novo* [New Samba].”

**CONCLUSION**

EPM and some private teachers incorporate non-formal processes into their teaching methods in the guise of collaborative learning. The nature of choro, being a social ensemble music, requires informal training. The non-formal aspects of its performance, in rodas de choro and at rehearsals, are a unique feature of choro music, preparing its practitioners to be adaptable performers. The goal of a chorão is to master an instrument(s) and music; to be able to adapt to musical situations, harmonically, rhythmically, and melodically. The real experience of learning non-formally is the best because it is in the event of playing or performing. EPM incorporates band rehearsal and the roda de choro in their curriculum. Meira did this with his students. The group accompaniment classes do this. The advanced stages at EPM focus more on professional aspects—arranging, performing harder repertoire.

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CHAPTER V: CHORO’S MUSIC STRUCTURES

I have presented who the choro community is and how they learn. The final issue to be addressed is what choro musicians learn, their musical codes of communication, what many members of the choro community describe as a musical language. Since the 1990s, progress has been made in terms of organizing choro’s musical information. Currently, Books, magazines, audio, video, Internet sources, and school curriculums offer musicians systematized methods for accessing and acquiring choro music information and knowledge. Now, access to choro music’s codes of communication and historical and contemporary information is easier than ever before.

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part one begins with an overview of what musical information musicians confront at the beginning of the process, the general fundamentals, for all participants in the process of learning choro—repertoire choice, song structure and form, rhythms and “groove,” and roles of instruments. Following the general fundamentals, I present the music information specific to each role, first for soloists, second for accompanists. Part one concludes with a discussion of the extra-musical and verbal issues aspiring choro musicians confront. In part two I discuss the information learned past the beginning stage, in the intermediate and advanced stages of learning. The chapter ends with a discussion of the curriculum at EPM.

PART ONE: CHORO FUNDAMENTALS

Musical codes

Like many people trying to describe or define a genre or style of music, some choro musicians claim choro music is a language—replete in vocabulary and grammar. On the EPM
website, choro is referred to as a language which, once learned, will enable the musician to play in “any music style:”

Music training offered by EPM is complete (theory and practice), giving its graduates the opportunity to work within any musical style, not just choro. For this reason, so many applicants are seeking to enroll each year, lured by the unprecedented prospect of promoting music education through the language of choro.153

Brazilian choro musician Mário Sève writes:

The choro, like other musical genres, has its own codes—responsible for its personality—which, through time, has created an equally unique “vocabulary.” However, little is known on this subject due to the absence of published material on the subject, since the predominant method of learning through (increasingly rare) choro circles [rodas de choro]. Pixinguinha is considered the greatest choro composer of all time, a fundamental reference for anyone who wishes to enter the universe of this musical language.154

Beyond these written examples, many of the choro musicians I spoke with described choro as a musical language.

The connections between language and music have been the topic of much research.155

While similarities between language and music exist, the differences between them are far greater, especially what kinds of information are communicated, or not communicated. Music and language are two of the most highly developed forms of human sound communication, but as William Bright has argued, the content conveyed by the two phenomena are different. The content of language “is in part derived from its associations outside of language—from the objects, actions, and relationships to which the sentence refers” and simultaneously from its form, “from the phonological and grammatical relationships between its parts, and between it and other sentences.”156 Bright defines these two types of content as exolinguistic and

155. See List, Powers, Bright, Seeger, and Nattiez to name a few.
endolinguistic respectively. He points out that music is not intended to refer to phenomena outside of music, even though extra-musical associations sometimes exist in music compositions or performances, these associations are derived in cultural context, and therefore, he concludes, “such content is not inherent in the nature of music, as exolinguistic content is inherent in the nature of language.”¹⁵⁷ To conclude, Bright proposes, “we may thus refer to the similar content structures found in music and in language with the term endosemantic, contrasting with exosemantic structure which is an essential part of language but not of music.”¹⁵⁸ Seeing as music and language both have endosemantic structures in their systems, analytical techniques in regard to form may be shared. An example Bright gives for sharing analysis is isolating sounds to their basic sound and grammar structures, in linguistics what are called phoneme and morpheme respectively.

As a musician who has learned diverse musical genres and a member of the choro community, I understand the inclination to use the analogy of music as a language. But the idea of music as language is nothing more than a metaphor. I concur with Charles Seeger when he stated, “what music communicates is a discipline,” and “how musicians communicate the discipline is through play.”¹⁵⁹

Beyond metaphor, choro’s musical cooperative communicative system is constituted by its musical content in the form of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic aspects. Choro’s musical codes of communication are derived from the European art music tradition from the middle nineteenth century, i.e. the twelve-tone equal temperament and consequent functional harmonic system. What separates choro and other music genres that use the same system from one another, are the ways in which the discipline developed in Brazil, being interpreted by a conglomeration

¹⁵⁷. Ibid., p. 29.
¹⁵⁸. Ibid.,
of different cultures from all over the world, but especially from Africa. The musical codes that make choro unique are the rhythms, melodies, harmonies, and expressive musical effects used by Brazilian choro musicians, retained in a specific *repertoire* of compositions which were, and still are, passed down both orally/aurally and in notation. To gain access to choro’s codes of communication, aspiring choro musicians need to learn fundamentals.

**General Fundamentals**

General fundamental aspects of choro exist for all instruments. The various instruments in choro ensembles fulfill the role of soloist, accompanist, or both. Some musicians can accomplish both roles with certain instruments (e.g. bandolim, guitar, cavaquinho, accordion, and piano). Traditionally, guitar and cavaquinho are considered more as accompaniment instruments than solo instruments in the roda de choro, although certain exceptional musicians have been known as soloists as well. Waldyr Azvedo popularized the cavaquinho as a solo instrument in the late 1940s through his compositions and recordings. Raphael Rabello popularized the guitar as a solo instrument in the 1980s through his live and recorded interpretations of choro classics, although João Pernambuco, Dilermando Reis, and Garoto, among others, also played guitar as a solo instrument long before the 1980s. In cases where a musician wants to act as both soloist and accompanists, they will be confronted with all the issues each role faces. On the other hand, exceptional soloists can also fulfill both roles of soloist and accompanist, although the nature of non-harmonic instruments, playing single notes, limits the style of accompaniment to melodic accompaniment, e.g. counterpoint lines, guide-tone lines, and rhythmic figures. As multi-role choro musicians execute advanced technique, section two will deal with them further.

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As technique is one of the fundamental aspects beginners work on, it should be mentioned that in choro, the end justifies the means. While having good instrumental technique has its advantages, in choro, probably because of the informal or popular influence, unorthodox techniques are acceptable, as long as the end result functions musically.

When I was taking lessons with Lucas Porto, I asked him about not being able to play as fast as I was used to playing using “classical” finger-picking guitar technique; my musical abilities as an electric guitarist, playing with a plectrum, far exceed my abilities as a finger-picking guitarist. Through the process of learning to play with my fingers, I discovered I am able to play faster by using an unorthodox technique where I use my index finger like a guitar plectrum; classical guitarist would cringe at the sight of this. Porto explained, as long as musicians sound good, the techniques used to execute the music do not matter. Marcílio Lopes supports this thinking. Here he discusses his unorthodox bandolim picking technique, “I tried to find a better way of picking. I don’t have a regular way of grabbing the pick because I use two fingers with the thumb. I began with no one to tell me. I know there are some guys that have this way of picking, but you can’t pick with the same freedom. But I thought it was the right way and I began studying.”161 In the end, a musician needs to use whatever techniques possible to be able to execute the music at a high level. The beginning choro musician needs to choose songs to learn to build a repertoire.

**Repertoire**

Musicians wanting to play choro need to begin learning the idiomatic melodies, rhythms, harmonies, as well as the forms and structure of choro compositions. To do this, musicians need to begin building a repertoire of choro compositions. Ary Vascancelos had catalogued nearly 3,000 choro compositions by 1984, but his work was unfinished, so the number was actually

larger. Thousands more choro compositions have been written since then and are continually being written. Many choro musicians are composers, but few are well known outside of the choro community. One of the most prolific choro composers today is Maurício Carrilho, who has composed literally hundreds of compositions. In 2005 and 2009, Carrilho made a choro composition every day for those years; he alone has written well over seven hundred songs.

The most famous choro songs, familiar to the general public and choro community, are usually the pieces choro novices learn first because of their recognition as the most popular, the most heard, or most remembered; although the repertoire a musician chooses to learn can be rather arbitrary. Many different factors are related to how musicians form their repertoires. For example, the same categories of processes used to define music communities used in Chapter II—affinity, descent, and dissent—can be used to help describe musicians’ repertoire choices. Musicians may choose songs to learn based simply on processes of affinity, attraction to the entire composition itself, a part of the composition, or a recording and consequent arrangement of a composition. Individuals may simply be attracted to a song’s chord progressions or composed counterpoint. Some people choose certain compositions to learn based on processes of descent. Two examples are instrument-specific repertoires and regional or local repertoires.

Certain musicians and their compositions or recorded interpretations are references for specific instruments—Pixinguinha, Altamiro Carrilho, Benedito Lacerda, and Copinha for flautists; K-ximbinho, Abel Ferreira, and Nailor “Proveta” Azevedo for clarinet; Dino sete cordas, Rafael Rabello, and Yamandu Costa for seven-string guitar; Jacob do Bandolim, Luperce Miranda, Joel Nascimento, and Hamilton de Holanda for bandolim; Waldiro “Canhoto” Frederico Tramontano, Jonas Silva, and Waldir Azevedo for cavaquinho; Zé da Velha for trombone; Silvério Pontes for

trumpet, and of course again, Pixinguinha for his saxophone counterpoint lines. Audio recordings of these musicians, and in some cases video recordings, have enabled musicians to copy performances. Some songs have been made famous through recordings on specific instruments. “Brasileirinho” and “Pedacinhos do Céu,” both written and recorded by Waldir Azavedo are often thought to be essential for cavaquinho players. Some songs are famous because of specific interpretations preserved through audio recording. These arrangements have become standard for performance in rodas de choro. For instance, “Lamentos” by Pixinguinha has rhythmic “hits” at the beginning which all the accompaniment instruments play and has become standard in rodas de choro (Example 4.1).

![Example 4.1: Transcribed by author.](image)

The same is true for certain accompaniment roles—baixarias, harmonies, etc. The Seven-string guitar baixarias recorded by Dino Sete Cordas are some of the most practiced counterpoints in choro performance. Dino provides the baixarias to some of the most famous choro and samba recordings. Recordings of Pixinguinha playing baixarias on tenor saxophone are also popular for musicians to learn.
Some songs are written specifically for certain instruments. For example, the song “Lingua de Preto” by Honório Lopes was originally written for flute and employs constant octave jumps, which are difficult for other instruments to execute, especially string instruments.

Example 4.2 below is the first eight measures of “Lingua de Preto.”

![Notated music example]

Example 4.2: Notated by author.

Many songs are written for string instruments, specifically bandolim and cavaquinho. These songs are difficult for wind instruments to perform as they sometimes do not account for breaths. Regardless of the intended instrument, musicians generally do not discriminate the melodies they play, but arrangements and/or technical adjustments must be made for some instruments and performers. Regarding regionalism, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, compositions written by local composers are popular, and the same is true for other regions and cities throughout Brazil.

Certain rodas de choro, choro clubs, groups of friends, bands, and schools may act as conduits for repertoire choice in descent processes. Examples of dissent processes in song choice are instances when musicians choose distinct repertoire from others, e.g. unfamiliar over popular, unorthodox over common, new over old.

The songs a musician chooses to learn are relative to their tastes, ability, desires and environment. Below, Clarinetist Pedro Paes discusses how he first started to learn choro through building a repertoire.
“Amoroso” by Garoto was the first melody I learned. I learned really simple ones because I didn’t have any technique. “Vou Vivendo” I think was the second. “Ingênuo.” I was playing other repertoire too like Hermeto Pascoal at this time, some popular themes. I used to play with this friend of mine from São Paulo at this time, who plays accordeon, Philip, he’s been to some of the festivals. We used to do like forró instrumental, stuff like that. Some jazz too, standards. I was interested in the choros that weren’t so well known, like I didn’t feel like playing “Brasileirinho” or “Pedacinho do Céu.” So I learned a lot of repertoire that people wouldn’t know. Later on I had to catch up and learn all the familiar choros that you have to know. You end up learning from listening.”164

Paes’ statement shows the complexity of describing the process of learning a repertoire, as it can be very subjective. After first studying guitar, Paes switched to clarinet in 2000 when he began learning choro because he saw a necessity for soloists. He mentions his lack of technique on clarinet, but it should be made clear that his musical knowledge was well past being at a beginner’s level, having earned a bachelor’s degree in music in 2000. By mentioning his friend who plays accordion and forró (a Brazilian music from the Northeast in which the accordion is a main instrument), he is referring to a specific regional repertoire and style, which he used in conjunction with choro and jazz to better his clarinet technique. Paes mentions learning “other repertoire,” also studying the compositions of Hermeto Pascoal, the modern progressive Brazilian instrumental music composer who has written in many genres, including choro.

Mentioning “Brasileirinho” and “Pedacinho do Céu,” compositions by Waldyr Azvedo, Paes is referring to two famous choro compositions that would fit into the popular choro repertoire. He concludes by explaining his desire at first to resist the popular repertoire, only to acknowledge that eventually, everyone learns the “classics” or popular repertoire, mainly by participation through listening.

Possible Songs For A Beginning Repertoire

Figure 14 is a list of possible songs for a beginning choro repertoire. These twenty five songs were chosen based on my experiences with choro—attending rodas de choro as both a participant and observer, drawing from interviews with choro musicians, attending choro music concerts, playing in bands in Brazil and the United States, and having a familiarity with albums by choro artists. These songs are written by some of choro’s most famous composers, recognized both by the choro community and by the general public. Pixinguinha, Jacob do Bandolim, K-ximbinho, Waldyr Azvedo, Ernesto Nazareth, Chiquinha Gonzaga, Altimiro Carrihlo, Anacleto de Medeiros, and Garoto are the famous composers and interpreters responsible for making famous the following compositions. This list is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive. After compiling this list, I discovered a list compiled by Ary Vasconcelos in 1984, of “classic” choro songs. He based his list on the amount of times a composition was recorded by different artists. Without giving all the details, it is worth noting that fourteen of the twenty-five songs below are on Vasconcelos’ list.165 All the compositions on the list are written before 1970, a significant fact because they precede the choro revival of the 1970s.

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Structure and Form

Becoming involved in the process of learning choro, after choosing songs to learn, aspiring musicians will begin to notice the ways choro compositions are constructed. Aside from waltz, written in 3/4 or 6/8 meter, and schottish, written in 4/4 meter, all of the other choro rhythms are written in 2/4 meter. Being a tonal music, commonly used major keys for the songs are C, F, G, Bb, and D and their relative minor keys A, D, E, G, and B. Parallel major and minor keys are also common. Other keys are used as well, but seeing as choro is instrumental, the music has traditionally been written for the common keys for which instruments were built, and therefore the keys best suited for choro’s common instruments.
In general, choro compositions use one of two possible forms—the more traditional modified rondo form (ABACA), usually practiced with repeating sections as AABBACCA, and the ternary form (ABA), usually practiced with repeating sections as AABBA. Each section is usually sixteen measures long. The sections are usually in a major or minor key with the following sections related by proximity to the first key (e.g. if section A is in the key of C-major, section B may be in the relative minor key of A-minor, section C may be in the close key of F-major). During performances in rodas de choro, the form can be rather flexible. Sometimes musicians will physically call out one of the sections after the standard form has been played. This is done either because a mistake was made earlier and a musician wants to attempt to play the section correctly, or sometimes a musician wants to have a turn playing the melody of that section. In rare cases, sections are called out in order for musicians to create entirely new melodic material over the section’s chord progression.

**Rhythms and Groove**

The dance rhythms used in choro are one of the defining characteristics of the genre. Both accompanists and soloists begin learning the distinctions by listening to the music. As discussed earlier in chapter one, the main dance rhythms used for choro compositions are waltz, polka, schottish, maxixe, Brazilian tango, lundu, and samba. Other regional dance rhythms have been adapted to choro music as well (e.g. frevo and baiao from the northeast and milonga from the south). With the exception of the waltz, the common denominator or the underlying “groove” or “feel” of the music is represented by constant sixteenth notes. Below, Ted Falcon describes the importance of feeling the underlying sixteenth notes. He mentions Pedro Amorim, one of the founders and teachers of EPM advising students to try playing percussion instruments, beyond their own instrument, to get a better idea and feel for the constant underlying sixteenth notes and
the various accents that create the specific rhythms. The basic pandeiro pattern is exemplary of the 2/4 meter divided into sixteenth notes, as is a variation on the choro accompaniment pattern, exemplified further below.

“I think Pedro Amorim was saying it’s important for us [non-Brazilians], if you’re going to try and play Brazilian music, to have your hands on an instrument where you’re not playing any chords. So you’re playing rhythm, so you get the swing, because the swing is not anything that we have. The closest thing we have in the US to choro is funk, only because it’s based on 16th notes. If I was playing a guitar rhythm in funk, I’d be going [sings syncopated 16th note funk rhythm]. If I’m playing choro, every 16th note is marked. In jazz it’s 8th notes. In most music, it doesn’t breakdown to the 16th note. So the parallel would be that, funk and choro are rhythmically similar. One of the lessons I learned is when you’re playing this music, it’s good to have that kind of 16th note feeling, even if I don’t hear it. So if I don’t have that feeling when I’m playing it’s going to be square, it won’t have the swing. I think the most important part to this music is having the rhythm. It’s all about the groove. All the notes do not matter. I can change all the notes, but if I have the groove it fits. If I don’t have a clue about the rhythm, I’m done, it won’t fit.”

Understanding and applying the rhythmic common denominator of sixteenth notes is invaluable to learning the endless syncopations found in the melodies and rhythms in choro. The basic pandeiro rhythm is a perfect example for beginning choro musicians to learn as it marks all the sixteenth notes and, in its most basic form, the two downbeats of the duple meter (Example 4.3).

![Example 4.3: Notated by author.](image)

**Fundamentals for soloists**

The most common solo instruments are flute, bandolim, clarinet, and saxophone (soprano, alto, and tenor), although any instrument that can be tuned to the twelve-tone equal temperament system could be a soloing instrument. Instruments such as guitar, cavaquinho, and

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accordion are usually accompaniment instruments, although they too are capable of playing solos as well. Regardless of the instrument, this section focuses on what a soloist must learn in the beginning stage of learning choro.

**Reading versus hearing**

Reading music is not required of soloists, although musical literacy is extremely helpful to the process of learning melodies, as it gives the musician another access point to the music. Soloists usually memorize their repertoire, and this can be achieved by rote or reading. Repetition is the most used method for memorizing. In my experience, I never met a choro soloist who does not read music at least at a basic level.

**Basic choro melodies**

To call a choro melody basic might be considered an oxymoron as all of the melodies require a substantial amount of technical ability on the part of soloists. A choro soloist should be able to at least play some scales and scalular patterns. Ideally, soloists are able to play major and minor scales in all keys, but this is not necessary to begin playing choro. In addition to scales, the soloist should also be able to play arpeggios. Scales and arpeggios should be played in sixteenth notes at a tempo of at least sixty beats per minute, with a quarter note beat. Other types of scales (e.g. chromatic, diminished, altered) and chord arpeggios are important for soloists to practice as well, but in my interpretation of the process of learning, this other material falls into the later stages of learning.

**Melodic Structure**

In general, melodies are organized into rondo form or ternary form. The sections of these forms are usually grouped in sixteen measures, with phrases generally grouped in measures of four. Waltzes might be the easier melodies to learn as they generally are played at a slower
tempo and with notes of longer durations. All of the other dances are in duple meter and usually have melodies made predominantly of sixteenth notes.

Brazilian saxophonist Romulo Aguiar claims, “My first choro was “Sempre” by K-Ximbinho. It took me like 7 months to barely play it…so by the end of the year, I could play maybe three choros, but barely.” Figure 4.1 below is K-Ximbinho’s “Sempre,” taken from Baú do Panda, a digital collection of lead sheets, notated by an anonymous author(s). “Sempre” is a newer choro, written at least by 1952, when ternary form was becoming more popular for compositions, and is representative of choro’s melodic style—mostly sixteenth notes, many arpeggios, sequential phrases, mostly diatonic, use of diminished chords, and contrasting, related keys; in this case F major with its relative minor, D minor.

Fundamentals for accompanists

Beginning accompanists need to learn two things—how to form basic chords (triads, dominant sevenths, and diminished chords) and how to play basic rhythms. Knowing how to read sheet music is not essential for the beginner, but it is advantageous in speeding up the overall process of learning. A much simpler form of notation for accompanists is reading chord names (Portuguese: *cifras*) from lead sheets (i.e. chord names over the written melody). The first
chords plucked-string instrument musicians learn to form are in “open” positions, i.e. using unfretted notes or “open” strings (see Figure 4.2, notice the hollow circles indicating “open” strings).

![Chord Diagram](image)

Figure 16: Chord diagrams by author.

Besides forming chords, accompanists also need to learn to pluck or strum the rhythms. Figure 4.3 below is Pixinguinha’s “Cochichando,” the first choro I learned to accompany. It is to be performed in modified rondo form—AABBACCA. The A-section is in the key of D minor, B-section in F major, and the C-section in D major. The accompaniment rhythm I was taught to use with “Cochichando” was samba. Samba is one of the more complex rhythms used in choro, being the most syncopated of the core rhythms and also longer, taking two measures per cycle.

![Example 4.4](image)

Example 4.4: Notated by author.

Adding to the complexity, the accompanist needs to play the first chord of the second measure a sixteenth note before the downbeat of the measure, anticipating the chord of the second measure. The bass notes are played on the downbeats. Alternating bass notes between the root of the chord to the fifth or third is also a common practice, but not necessarily for beginners. Example 4.5 below is a four bar example of what a guitarist would play for the Pixinguinha composition “Cochichando” using samba rhythm. Measures 13-16 are used as they have two chords per measure, making for the most complex section of accompaniment.
Using a samba rhythm for this song is not implicit. The only way a musician would know this rhythm is used for this song would be hearing it live, listening to recordings, or through the counsel of another choro musician. To complicate matters, the two measures of the samba rhythm can be flipped, depending on the melody of the song, like the Afro-Cuban clave pattern. I was completely unaware of this fact when I began playing Brazilian music. The two different sambas were brought to my attention when a fellow musician pointed out that my accompaniment sounded strange. The problem was that unbeknownst to me the song’s melody (“Benzinho” by Jacob do Bandolim) implied a samba rhythm where the first part of the phrase was off the beat. In other words, the two measures are switched. Below is an example of the samba that begins off the beat. The first two measures are the same as the last two, only that the last two show how the anticipated sixteenth is connected to the end of the phrase (Example 4.6). Example 4.7 illustrates how the accompaniment rhythm fists with the melody, in this case, the first four measures of Jacob do Bandolim’s “Benzinho.”
The other rhythms beginning accompanists learn are the basic choro rhythms, waltz, schottish, Brazilian tango, and maxixe. In practice, variations of the rhythms are played during the performance of songs. Bass notes and chord voicings are also manipulated. As musicians becomes more familiar with how to interpret the rhythms and songs, they move into the next stage of learning, discussed in part two below.

Choro 1:

Example 4.8

Choro 2:

Example 4.9

Waltz:

Example 4.10
Schottishe:

Example 4.11

Brazilian tango:

Example 4.12

Maxixe:

Example 4.13

Brazilian polca:

Example 4.14

The rhythmic cells above, examples 4.8-4.14, represent the complete rhythms (bass and three note chords) for guitar, but can be applied to any instrument that can play bass and chords. These cells have been adapted from Maurício Carrilho’s interpretations of the rhythms, published by EPM in their repertoire collections for the National Festivals and songbooks used during the year. The rhythmic and chordal accompaniment for cavaquinho and bandolim is slightly different as these instruments are plucked and strummed with a single plectrum and do not employ bass. Here are the same rhythms for the plectrum-strummed/plucked string.

168 The songbooks are published privately by EPM and are not distributed outside the school. During my stay for the Brazilian spring semester (August-December) of 2010 and Brazilian fall (March-June) semester of 2011, the songbooks had been discontinued for reasons unknown to me.
instruments. “D” indicates a downward pick stroke, “U” represents an upward pick stroke. These examples have been adapted from Henrique Cazes’s *Escola Moderna do Cavaquinho* (1998).

Polca:

Example 4.15

Maxixe 1:

Example 4.16

Maxixe 2:

Example 4.17

Brazilian Tango:

Example 4.18

Waltz:

Example 4.19
Accompanists must learn to play these rhythms while playing chord progressions to songs. These represent most of the basic rhythms a beginner needs to learn, although learning to play just the waltz, choro, and samba rhythms would be adequate for a good portion of the current choro repertoire being played in rodas de choro. Eventually, the beginning accompanist will learn to make variations on these basic rhythms—using chordal inversions, altering various parts of the rhythm, adding melodic or bass lines, and using dynamics. As the process of learning is quite relative to who is learning, the degree to which musicians advance past the beginning stage depends on the person—what they focus on, how long they practice, how they are learning (reading or by ear), and who they are learning from and playing with. I should also note that
there are other rhythms and their variations used in choro performance today, but in regard to learning the fundamentals, these are the core rhythms.

**Extra-musical and verbal issues**

Extra-musical issues in choro need to be learned by anyone entering the choro community, but as many of these issues deal with Brazilian verbal and non-verbal communication skills, these issues are more applicable to non-Brazilians’ processes of learning. I discuss these issues because they are important for developing and maintaining relationships within the choro community.

While Portuguese fluency is not necessary for studying and playing choro music, basic verbal and non-verbal communication skills are helpful in gaining the respect of the people in the choro community and Brazilians in general. More than once, I experienced negative feelings from Brazilians toward non-Brazilians, especially Americans from the United States who could not speak Portuguese. In general, because of choro’s identity as a specifically Brazilian tradition, many choro musicians have nationalistic tendencies, especially toward English and the United States. While non-Brazilians’ intentions of learning choro can be perceived as a sign of respect and adoration, not knowing or not attempting to acquire basic Portuguese skills can be perceived as a sign of disrespect and insensitivity towards Brazilian culture. Knowing Portuguese words for “hello,” “goodbye,” “please,” “thank you,” as well as short phrases like—“where are you from?” “My name is…” “What is your name?” “I am sorry.”—will definitely give the person positive “cultural currency points.” The more a beginning non-Brazilian choro musician is able to communicate with other musicians, the more likely their chances are of being accepted in the choro community and invited to participate in choro events.
Beyond reading music, Brazilian musicians use fixed-Do solfege to discuss musical ideas. This system can be confusing to people unfamiliar with it, especially native English speakers. In Portuguese, the syllables are (with pronunciation in parenthesis): Do, Re (Hey), Mi, Fa, Sol, La, and Si (See). More than once, I began playing in the wrong key or started playing the wrong chord because someone said, “Si” to indicate the tone “B,” and I thought they meant tone “C.”

Non-verbal ettiquet issues are just as important or maybe more important than verbal issues. One of the hardest things for me to acclimate in Brazil, as a non-Brazilian, was greeting women with kisses on each cheek. Over time, the kissing greeting becomes natural—always begin on the left side. Sometimes, just one kiss is sufficient; it is less formal and usually done between friends. When using a toothpick in Brazil, which is as common to Brazilian tables as salt and pepper on tables in the United States, it is recommended to use one hand to mask the mouth while the other hand picks the teeth. Thumbs up is a non-verbal sign for “good” or “OK.” Never use the thumb and index finger together, making a circle, with the other three fingers sticking out for an “O.K.” sign, as this is offensive in Brazil. Choro musicians like to socialize by going to bars for beer and snacks. Unlike in the United States, where people order their drinks and food individually, the common protocol in Brazil is to share both beer and food. These social conventions may seem trivial, but not abiding by them can jeopardize a person’s acceptance into the choro community.

PART 2: PAST THE BEGINNING STAGE

Musicians past the beginning stages of learning are building their repertoire, refining their technique, and cultivating their listening and performing skills. By the time musicians are
past the beginning stage, they have a small repertoire and have listened to enough choro to know which new songs they want to learn. Generally, their repertoire will be influenced by the contexts in which they are performing. For example, musicians will be influenced by the repertoire of the musicians attending regularly scheduled weekly or monthly rodas de choro. Being involved in a band will also influence a musician’s repertoire, depending on who is in the band and the performance contexts in which the band will be playing. The recordings a musician listens to will also have an impression on a musician’s repertoire choices.

In rodas, non-beginners will start to recognize which songs are popular and the common ways those songs are interpreted. Certain arrangements and performances from recordings are the basis for performance practice in rodas de choro, as pointed out at the beginning of the chapter. In bands, musicians have the opportunity to experiment with arranging songs, e.g. using aspects of previous arrangements, adding introductions or endings, changing keys, changing rhythms.

Another aspect to building a repertoire is memorizing the songs. Ideally, musicians learn both the song’s melody and harmony, but this is usually not the case. Soloists tend to memorize only the melody and accompanists usually memorize only the chord progressions.

Like beginners, exactly what non-beginner choro musicians learn depends largely on the musician’s role as either a soloist or accompanist. In many cases, musicians at more advanced levels of learning are trying to become complete performers, being able to perform both accompanist and soloist roles. Below, I detail what types of musical information is learned at the more advanced stages of learning, starting with the soloists’ role, followed by the accompanists’ role.
Soloists

Non-beginner soloists have three major musical tasks to practice learning. Memorizing a melodic repertoire is the most essential task for soloists as the other musical aspects are related to repertoire. While working on melodies, non-beginner soloists will begin to practice interpreting the melodies, working on the endless ways to embellish and ornament melodic lines. As clarinetist/saxophonist Pedro Paes states below, through memorizing a large repertoire, becoming adept at interpreting the melodies, and participating in ensemble performances, non-beginners will learn how to play in ensembles, having the proper sound and playing in-tune and with the proper volume, creating spontaneous melodies by adding counterpoint and guide-tone lines, and “conversing” with the other musicians performing together.

I started playing at these groups with the repertoire that I had. I have a facility for memorizing music and so the repertoire was always my way to the music and the instrument. Because I know that I had to have a big repertoire to stand, hang in there, the roda. So it was always a strong point as as opposed to the technical aspects of the instrument.\textsuperscript{169}

Below, saxophonist Romulo Aguiar explains his goals for playing choro. His goals reflect what non-beginning choro soloists want and need to learn to ultimately fulfill the expectations of respected members of the choro music community, i.e. to have a high level of competence on an instrument, have an expansive repertoire, which in turn allows the soloist to be able to spontaneously interact with others in performance.

My first goal is to go to any roda and play for three hours without reading. It’s something that nowadays is touchable. I have about twenty to thirty choros memorized right now, maybe about an hour and a half. I’m halfway through, so that’s something touchable. The other goal, which is more like a long term process, is to fully understand the chord progressions and even if I don’t know the choro, I can put a melody, choro style, but not the original melody, and be able to do that.\textsuperscript{170}

\textsuperscript{169} Pedro Paes, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 7 June, 2011.
\textsuperscript{170} Romulo Aguiar, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 19 May, 2011.
Soloists: Melodic repertoire memorization

Advanced soloists need to memorize a great number of melodies. Some set goals for themselves for learning and memorizing at least one composition a week. Non-beginner soloists work on advanced techniques such as ornamental effects (e.g. trills, slides, etc.), melodic and rhythmic embellishment, and improvisation. In rodas, they may begin to try accompanying by playing counterpoint lines or voice-leading lines. In rodas and practicing at home, soloists are usually working on refining their ears, trying to play melodies “by ear” by means of transcribing various artists’ interpretations of melodies. Below, French flautist Aline Soulhat explains how regularly attending a weekly roda de choro inspired her to memorize new songs every week.

I can say that the fact of playing in the roda makes me learn and memorize a lot of tunes. If you don’t play you forget. For example, two years ago there was a roda every Monday in Naiomi’s house. It was very nice because each week I was memorizing two choros to play in this roda, to vary the repertory. Now there is no more and I’m not memorizing. It gave me incentive.\textsuperscript{171}

Soloists: Interpreting melodies

The act of expressing composed melodic ideas is a subjective phenomenon. Each new performance of a melody will be different and unique at least in the subtlest details. It is the goal or even duty of choro music soloists to give their interpretation of composed melodies, it is what soloists work on beyond memorizing the melody in the first place. Below, Soulhat describes a turning point in her process of learning choro. As a flautist who studied European art music, she could read music very well. When she began learning choro, reading sheet music was her primary access point. After studying and playing choro for several years, she was still struck by the difference between choro’s written melodies and the melodies she heard on recordings and in live performances.

\textsuperscript{171} Aline Soulhat, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil 7 May, 2011.
I think the most difficult was to understand what I was playing, reading, was different from what I was listening to. I knew it was different but I didn’t know why. I remember when Hamilton de Hollanda was in Paris, in 2003 or 2004, I made one class with him and he was the first to talk with me about anticipation. I remember it was in [Pixinguinha’s] Vou Vivendo. It was one of the first choros that I played. It’s written like this [she sings the first four bars of the melody, Example 4.23]. Hamilton was the first to tell me I could be able to play it like this [she sings Example 4.24]. It helped me a lot. I think he may have helped me earn time. I should have understood, perhaps earlier. I understood quickly that the sheet music is only to support, to help you play. You must not play how it is written. I was seeing too that listening to various interpreters, that it was different, always.¹⁷²

Pixinguinha

![Example 4.23: Measures 1-4 from “Vou Vivendo,” written by Pixinguinha.](image)


![Example 4.24: Hamilton de Hollanda’s interpretation of “Vou Vivendo,” as sung by Souhat.](image)


Aguiar supports Soulhat’s statement, pointing out what soloists learn from reading is different than what soloists play while performing. Like Soulhat, Aguiar eventually realized the best way for a soloist to learn how to interpret choro melodies is by listening to both live performances and audio recordings.

I was always reading music. But, in choro, you never play what is written, pretty much. Even the interpretation itself, like which notes to enhance and how to interpret each phrase and stuff, and the rhythm divisions I learned by listening to it. I started to go to rodas, not for playing but just to listen. And also, I started to listen to a lot of CDs of different artists, different kinds of choros too.¹⁷³

¹⁷². Ibid.
Soloists: Ensemble performance

Armed with a repertoire, soloists will head to rodas de choro to join in the music making. Non-beginners have already spent many hours, honing their technique and memorizing melodies, practicing alone. Entering the roda, performing with others, brings a whole new set of variables that non-beginners will need to address. A part of a successful roda de choro performance hinges on the musicians spontaneously communicating with each other through musical codes. When multiple soloists are in the same roda, they take turns playing the principle melody and also, if they are competent enough, perhaps provide melodic accompaniment through counterpoint or guide tone lines. Furthermore, soloists need to work on their technique to be loud enough for others to hear. Pedro Aragão explains what he learned attending rodas de choro, not being a beginner.

I remember when I went to play and I realized that it was very different because I trained at home alone, but when you play with others it is very different because you have to be in dialogue with other instruments, and also it is a matter of sound, the volume of sound. I drew a very soft sound, I could not hear properly with pandeiro, with guitar, etc. So I had to learn to make more sound from the instrument to make myself heard in the rodas. This is an important learning issue.

Accompanists

Being a good choro accompanist is very demanding because they are expected to know how to accompany any song, even if they need to figure out the song by ear. Often, choro compositions use similar harmonic progressions, and therefore the amount of songs an accompanist knows will enable him to adapt on the spot if he is asked to accompany a composition he has never accompanied before. Pedro Paes’ statement below supports my position.

There’s one thing about having a good roda is that you got to have the accompaniment, they have to know the repertoire of every soloist in the roda, so the degree to which this

roda is going to work depends on this, on their ease of, “I already know this,” and so that you’re able to play choros that you never played before that you learned recently, but they’re not the same choros that everyone plays, the same ten or twenty.\textsuperscript{175}

Non-beginner accompanists are refining their rhythms, adding rhythmic variations, working on memorizing chord progressions as well as melodic phrases, counterpoint, harmonizing, and chord inversions. Ideally, advanced accompanists have gained keen ears from learning such an expansive repertoire of cliché chord changes that they are able to anticipate chord progressions while hearing melodies for the first time. Plucked string accompanists eventually learn all the possible chord inversions, their positions, and fingerings. Guitars, both six and seven string, cavaquinhos, and bandolims each have their own tuning relationships between strings. Based on alphabetical note names, six-string guitars are tuned (EADGBE), seven-string (CEADGBE), cavaquinho (DGBD), and bandolim (GDEA), therefore, each string instrument has its own unique chord shapes corresponding to the chords. Many non-beginning accompanists have the goal of learning melodic solos as well, although it is far more common for cavaquinho players to play melodies than guitarists in rodas de choro.

**Chord Progressions**

The progressions follow the rules that govern tonal music, i.e. the use of tonic/dominant chord relationships, diatonic chords, secondary dominant chords, and close key modulations. The more song chord progressions an accompanist learns, the more they will be able to hear the common chord sequences, eventually giving them the ability to anticipate chord progressions to melodies they are hearing for the first time. Figure 17 lists the common chord sequences in choro. Roman numerals are used to avoid specific keys, as these sequences are used in a variety of keys, the common ones listed earlier in this chapter. Below Figure 17 is a sample of common chord progressions (Figure 18).

\textsuperscript{175} Pedro Paes, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 7 June, 2011.
Figure 17: Common Chord Sequences Used in Choro.
V7 – I or V7 – i
ii – V7 – I or iiø7 – V7 – I
IV – iv6 – I
I – #I dim – I (or V7)
I – I dim – I
i – V7 – bVI7 – V7
I – vi (or V7/ii) – ii (or V7/V7) – V7 – I

Figure 18: Excerpt of pdf handout emailed to EPM students showing common chord progressions.

Guitars

After learning the fundamentals, guitarists continue working on bass and chord plucking patterns, inversions, and baixarias. Seven-string guitarists tend to focus more on baixarias in open position at the bottom of the guitar neck while six-string players tend to focus on chords and harmonization in positions higher up the guitar neck.

Chord inversions for plucked string instruments pose unique problems in fingering. For guitar, with six or seven strings, the guitarist has several options to play the same chords. Example 4.25 illustrates the various options for position and fingering for the same notes.
Example 4.25: enharmonic note fingering on guitar neck.

Example 4.26 illustrates possible positions for inversions using the “first position” on the guitar neck. Three other standard position possibilities exist within the twelve frets of a guitar neck.

Prior to studying choro I knew all my chords from having extensive formal training in guitar, but learning seven-string guitar forced me to learn new fingerings. Learning choro, where chord inversions are prominent, I had to learn new chord shapes and positions. In terms of plucking, although I studied classical guitar technique, I had to learn new plucking patterns and work on variations. Below are two examples of typical guitar accompaniment in choro rhythm. Examples 4.27-4.29 show a comparison of basic to more advanced guitar accompaniment over a four-measure chord progression in a choro rhythm. In example 4.27, everything is fundamental, from the use of “open” chords to the root and fifth bass notes to the lack of variations and bass lines. In Figure 4.28, the rhythms vary, the chords are played the same with arpeggiation, and short bass runs are used between some of the chords. Figure 4.29 is an expansion of Figure 4.28.
Non-beginner guitarists also learn standard chord and bass rhythmic combinations that pose more technically demanding challenges. These rhythms are usually associated with older repertoire because they are essentially the lundu or maxixe rhythms, and requisite for certain songs (e.g. Nazareth’s “Brejeiro,” Gonzaga’s “Corta Joca (Gaúcho),” or Bomfiglio de Oliveira’s “O Bom Filho à Casa Torna”). Examples 4.30 and 4.31 show two variations of guitar accompaniment.
Another more advanced technique non-beginner guitarists learn is bass voice leading with chord inversions. Examples 4.32 and 4.33 are cliché chord and sequential bass pattern used in several choro standards. The compositions “Vibrações” by Jacob do Bandolim, “Murmurando” by Fon Fon and Mário Rossi, “Cheguei” by Pixinguinha and Benedito Lacerda use the ascending sequence in Example 4.30


PART 3: ESCOLA PORTÁTIL DE MÚSICA

With only thirteen years of existence, EPM is still a work in progress, although their curriculum has long been established. As the goal of the school is to train musicians to be adaptable in musical situations, they strive to be comprehensive in their approach, covering both
theoretical and practical aspects of music through the study of the choro genre. Clearly, the material and topics discussed above in this chapter are taught at EPM. This last section explains the school’s educational philosophy and goals, as well as how they organize the content. I begin with a discussion of what the school’s objectives are and conclude by explaining what their courses teach.

**EPM’s objectives**

“The objective of EPM is to give to the student educational, professional, social, and emotional foundations, so that he can lead a successful career and a productive life as and artist and as a citizen.”¹⁷⁶ This statement reveals a concern for both social and musical intentions. As Maurício Carrilho explained in one of our interviews, originally the goal of the five musicians that started the school was to lead a roda de choro to give an opportunity to young people who wanted to learn choro because in the late 1990s no one was offering classes teaching choro and rodas de choro were rare. When rodas de choro did happen it was with veteran chorões in private homes. They began with around fifty students and they made a roda de choro. They divided the students into their respective instrument groups and instructed them in their various roles, e.g. the various rhythms for accompaniment, ways to play melodies. After some time, everyone would come together and form a big roda de choro. Carrilho claims that the first year, everything was taught “by ear.” Students who wanted to write their parts were welcome to do so, but the teachers did not give out sheet music. In the second year, the population grew to around one hundred students and they developed a system using sheet music. The larger group forced the teachers to separate the students into classes as well as different levels. The teachers began to select a repertoire based on the different periods of choro (elaborated below) for Bandão, the “Big band” composed of the teachers and students. This prompted the teachers to begin making

arrangements of the pieces, taking advantage of the many instruments. More teachers were added as more students started attending. In turn, the teachers added more classes. Through the process of establishing the school, Carrilho explains they had to organize or systematize the information and elaborate on the topics. For instance, beyond the basic rhythms, the school added possible variations. The school began making an audio music library allowing the students to borrow CDs. EPM kept growing, and the teachers would create new classes for what they felt was missing. Theory, history, reading, composing, improvisation classes were added. During my interview with Carrilho, he described one of the more recent classes he was offering to advanced guitar students:

I'm teaching a class this semester for a group of students, who already did a course in harmony, theory, [it is] practical harmony without thinking about theory, sharing my personal experience of how to harmonize. How it is that you harmonize a song. How do you reharmonize. In what way you can do this. It's been a very curious class because the class is all improvised by me. But students are discovering many things. I'm also discovering. It was something I had never done. So we train to get a traditional choro song, to harmonize with a chord in each measure, then with a chord on every beat, then a chord with every eighth note. So the harmony has to walk more. There begins to appear chromaticism, chromatic approach. Once we begin to harmonize each melody note, collectively, as like a section of saxophones, but without using rules or theories, using only intuition, perception. It is a very interesting class.177

Each semester, new classes are added to EPM’s curriculum. The new offerings are usually geared toward students that have been attending the school for some time. EPM is growing. Near the end of our interview, Carrilho describes how the school’s current goal is to become officially recognized by the government of Brazil as a technical school, or college accredited.

Repertoire

Below, Mauricio Carrilho describes his philosophy concerning choro repertoire, which the school puts into practice.

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It is important people are aware of the repertoire from all the periods. I think we can divide them into four periods, four well defined periods: 1) The nineteenth century, composers from the beginning of choro; 2) The generation of Pixinguinha, in the twentieth century; 3) Choro from the years 40-50, where enters Garoto, Jacob, Altamiro, Orlando Silveira and it already has a harmonic language different from the language of Pixinguinha and that the pioneers used; 4) And contemporary choro. So I think there are four very distinct repertoire groups and people need to play them in different ways, in style. They have things in common, but there specific things in each period. So it is important in repertoire of the roda, you consider each of this periods for you to have contact with this thread of the history of choro and creating this music. I think it's cool for people who are studying.  

Prior to 2010, the school printed sheet music collections for each semester. After 2009, the school stopped providing these books, instead using the Internet as a means to distribute sheet music in the form of pdf files for Bandão, as well as pdf files for sheet music and exercises used in the instrumental classes. Table 4.3 shows the repertoire of the sheet music collection I received for the National Festivals of Choro in 2007. The different periods Carrilho describes are listed after each song to confirm the school use of songs from all four periods.

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Figure 19: Contents of the III National Festival of Choro Songbook (2007).

“A Despedida” by Anacleto de Madeiros (period 1)
“A Diva é uma Flor” by Nelson dos Santos Alves (period 1)
“Ali-Babá” by Henrique Alves de Mesquita (period 1)
“Alzira” by Bonfiglio de Oliveira (period 2)
“Anita Sapecá” by Álvaro Carrilho (period 4)
“As Diabruras do Souto” by Arthur Camillo (period 1)
“Atlântico” by Ernesto Nazareth (period 1)
“A Vida é um Buraco” by Pixinguinha (period 2)
“De Bem com a Vida” by Luciana Rabello (period 4)
“Em Ti Pensando” by Anacleto de Medeiros (period 1)
“Está se Coando” by Anacleto de Medeiros (period 1)
“Homenagem à Velha Guarda” by Sivuca (period 3)
“Intrigas no Boteco do Padilha” by Luiz Americano (period 2)
“Olimpia” by Cincinato (period 3)
“Ora Veja!” by Antônio da Costa Nascimento (period 1)
“Pagão” by Pixinguinha (period 2)
“Perdi o Juízo” by Achiles dos Santos (Caboclo) (period 1)
“Plenilúnio” by Erothides de Campos (period 2)
“Schottisch Pro Gaban” by Maruício Carrilho (period 4)
“Sempre” by K-Ximbinho (period 3)
“Treme-Treme” by Jacob do Bandolim (period 3)
“Três Estrelinhas” by Anacleto de Medeiros (period 1)
“Velho Amigo” by Jonas Pereira da Silva (period 3)

Course content

The Escola Portátil de Música website provides the content of their courses for perspective students to know what exactly the school teaches. While the written curriculum is clearly defined, my experience at EPM has shown that, in practice, the classes are more loosely structured. This is due in part to individual teacher’s interpretation and style of the curriculum, the students in the classes, the repertoire chosen for Bandão, and probably, most importantly, the inherent informalities of choro itself. Below are translations of some of EPM’s course descriptions from website online, detailing the content students learn at graded levels for each instrument.179 Currently, the school teaches twelve divisions of instruments—bandolim, drum-

set, cavaquinho, clarinet/saxophone, contrabass, transverse flute, pandeiro, percussion, piano, trombone/tuba/euphonium, trumpet, and guitar.

Guitar

As of 2012, EPM has seven guitar teachers, all of them accomplished choro musicians and most of them formally trained at the university level. Nearly 40% of the students at EPM are guitar students, by far the largest instrument population, requiring the most graded levels and consequently the most detailed curriculum. As the guitar’s role in choro is mostly as an accompanying instrument, the lower and intermediate level classes deal mostly with harmony and rhythm. The advanced guitar levels also work on accompaniment skills, but they also focus on melodic/solo material. Below is a translation of the guitar curriculum.

Guitar
Study and practical training of various rhythms conforming to choro—polka, maxixe, waltz, schottische, etc.—and their offshoots, such as samba and frevo. Study of repertoire representative of each period of its history.

Guitar I
• Formation of chords.
• Exercises for placement of left and right hands.
• First harmonic sequences (C, Am)
• Exercises for changing chords fluently
• First rhythmic patterns (waltz, choro)
• Simple repertoire to follow without the use barre chords

Guitar II
• Harmonic sequences (G, Em, D, Bm)
• First arpeggio exercises
• Rhythmic patterns for polka and tango
• Simple repertoire, accompanying with barre chords

Guitar III
• Harmonic Sequences in the keys of F, Dm, A, F#m
• First scales in major
• Sonority exercises
• Intermediate repertoire
• Integration with ensemble practice through the repertoire of Bandão
Guitar IV
- Minor scales (melodic and harmonic) Escalas menores
- Intervals (practical exercises)
- Study of chord inversions (third, fifth, and seventh in the bass)
- Harmonic sequences in all keys
- Introduction to melodic reading (choros and waltzes)

Guitar V
- Introduction to the study of the baixarias
- Required basslines
- Plucking/strumming patterns for waltz choro (use of 6/8 in the bar of 3/4)
- Plucking/strumming patterns for schottisch and choro samba
- Exercises for memorizing harmonies

Guitar VI
- Performing melodies of medium difficulty
- Harmonies with the use of tensions (9s, b5, #5, major 7, and their combinations)
- Contemporary repertoire of choro

Guitar VII
- Performing accompaniment (guide-tone lines, bass pedal, higher countermelodies at the top of chords and middle voices in the chords)
- Implementation of more complex melodies
- Rhythmic patterns for samba

Guitar VIII
- Solo guitar
- Repertoire of João Pernambuco, Garoto, and Canhoto da Paraíba
- Duos and trios of guitars

Cavaquinho

Luciana Rabello heads EPM’s cavaquinho department with three other teachers. The cavaquinho student population is much smaller than the guitar population and therefore the curriculum is divided into three levels.

Cavaquinho
The fundamentals of cavaquinho will be transmitted in this class, accompaniment for many Brazilian rhythms from the perspective of choro, with reference to the schools of masters Canhoto and Jonas. Students must attend classes with the cavaquinho instrument, banjo (a newer style of cavaquinho used in a type of popular samba called pagode) is not accepted.

Cavaquinho - level I
Basic level for beginners. Basic chords, chords study. Training elementary rhythms.

Cavaquinho - level II
Introduction of the classic choro repertoire. Basic harmony on the instrument. Rhythmic training for accompanying the genres polka, schottische, tango, choro, samba, and waltz.
Cavaquinho – level III
Study of scales, arpeggios, and right hand technique. Advanced harmony on the instrument.
Expansion of the repertoire

Bandolim

The bandolim is the least populated instrument group of the plucked strings and therefore, is not divided into graded levels.

Bandolim
This course works on the development of interpretative technique through specific exercises for tone, tremolo picking, use of ornaments and building repertoire with the various genres that make up the universe of choro. In the more advanced groups, accompanying and harmony applied to the mandolin.

Clarinet and Saxophone

EPM groups the reed instruments together for classes. While these classes are based in choro, it is interesting to note in the descriptions the emphasis given to Brazilian popular music.

Clarinet and Saxophone
Technical elements and interpretative clarinet applied the language of Brazilian popular music, starting from crying. The main objective of the course is to enhance and enrich the training of musicians in the process of professionalization in the market of popular music.

Clarinet / Saxophone - Level I
Fundamental techniques for Beginners: Breathing, posture, embouchure and sound, applied to the repertoire of basic technical level. Elementary notions of reeds and mouthpieces.

Clarinet / Saxophone - Level II
Intermediate level: melodic perception on the clarinet, scales, arpeggios, articulation, ornamentation and expressive features, applied to the repertoire of medium technical level. Start reading chords, harmonic fields and memorization techniques and building a repertoire.

Clarinet / Saxophone - Level III
Advanced Level: Perception and melodic transposition, transcription of melodies and counterpoints, practical interpretation of [conjunto] regional solos and woodwind ensembles, articulation techniques, ornamentation, flexibility and expressive resources, reading chords, memorization and building an advanced repertoire, counterpoint and fundamental improvisation on historical examples of Brazilian popular music.

Trumpet
The Trumpet course at EPM aims to provide students knowledge about the trumpet, in order to give you technical conditions and interpretations to perform the proposed repertoire, according to the following levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced.
Trumpet - Level I
Technical aspects: Physical part: breathing, embouchure, fingering, tuning. Instrument domain: chromatic scale, major mode and natural minor (up to two octaves), minimum range of 14th (from F # 2), basic articulation (legato and staccato).

Trumpet - Level II
Technical aspects: Physical part: breathing, embouchure, fingering, tuning, endurance. Instrument domain: chromatic scale, scale/arpeggio in the major mode and natural and harmonic minor (up to five alterations), minimum range of two octaves, basic articulation (legato and staccato), dynamics in its various aspects.

Trumpet - Level III
Technical aspects: Physical part: breathing, embouchure, fingering, tuning, endurance. Instrument domain: chromatic scale, scales in all keys, scale/arpeggio in the major mode and natural, harmonic, and melodic minor (all keys), range (F# to D5), basic articulation (legato and staccato), dynamics in its various aspects.

Transversal flute
Technical elements and interpretation of the instrument applied to the language of Brazilian popular music, starting from choro. The main objective of the course is to enhance and enrich the training of musicians in the process of professionalization in the market of popular music.

Transversal flute - Level I
Fundamental techniques for Beginners: Breathing, posture, embouchure and sound, applied to the repertoire of basic technical level.

Transversal flute - Level II
Intermediate level: Melodic perception on the instrument, scales, arpeggios, articulation, ornamentation and expressive features, applied to the repertoire of medium technical level.

Transversal flute - Level III
Advanced level: Practice of specific interpretation for each musical genre (choro, maxixe, waltz, polka, schottische, etc.), with conjunto regional and woodwind ensemble, articulation techniques, ornamentation, flexibility and expressive resources, memorization and construction of advanced repertoire, counterpoint and fundamental improvisation based on the language of choro.

CONCLUSION

Choro’s codes of communication are preserved and innovated in the music composed and performed by members of a music community. Musicians seeking membership to the community negotiate the available modes of learning in order to acquire knowledge of choro’s codes.

Whether musicians learn choro’s codes out-of-school, learning by themselves, or in-school, with the support of a structured environment, the goals are the same—to be able to authentically communicate and perform choro music.
CHAPTER VI: SUMMATION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals how and why the establishment of Brazilian instrumental choro music schools at the turn of the twenty-first century helps sustain and contribute to the choro music community. The schools offer venues for defining and validating the tradition, while simultaneously inspiring an atmosphere for creation and innovation. Inherent within the concept of tradition is the dichotomy of change and continuity. Through a comparison of current and historic pedagogical practices and modes of learning, this study exposed how individuals and institutions negotiate the past and present. Escola Portátil de Música is an example of an institution that emphasizes choro’s traditional informal and non-formal modes of learning in their curricula. Consequently, EPM supports and enhances the instrumental choro music through agency, which is validated by their authenticity.

Choro has survived without institutions since the 1870s. An authentic chorão is autodidactic, gleening information in a variety of ways, e.g. learning through experience, performing with others, mastering their instrument through private practice, memorizing an extensive repertoire, and performing new songs by ear. Two consistencies in the choro community have been choro musicians’ ambition to learn independently combined with socializing within the choro music community. Not surprisingly, technology has played the biggest role innovating informal learning processes. In the 1970s, one of the most common ways to learn choro was through transcribing audio recordings. Chorões continue to use transcription methods, now with the aid of software, making the task easier. Play-along methods also offer ways students can learn independently. Recent technological advances, specifically the Internet and print-music publishing companies, give choro musicians more access points to choro information in the form of learning materials, and in turn, a larger network of community
members. Blogs, social networking sites, Youtube, etc., enhance contemporary informal learning experiences and give the choro music community wider exposure, gaining and supporting adherents throughout the world. Finally, method books used for learning choro have changed. Prior to the 1990s, method books would have been based on the European art music tradition, like most formal music institutions. Within the past twenty years, method books have been written specifically teaching choro music. Some methods offer audio components as well as notated music and examples. These method books provide a system of teaching choro, where before, no system existed.

In terms of non-formal processes and contexts, the roda de choro has consistently provided choro musicians with collaborative learning opportunities. From choro’s beginnings till now, amateur and professional musicians have met in traditional rodas held in private and public spaces. While the roda de choro remains the traditional context for choro musicians to meet and perform, some changes have occurred in its processes and contexts. Using sheet music has always been acceptable at the gatherings, but ideally, musicians have their repertoires memorized for better musical communication, improvisation, and general execution. Today it is more common to see rodas de choro with participants using sheet music to perform. The style of sheet music lead sheets (i.e. notated melody with chords) offers musicians a “crutch” to avoid memorizing melodies and chord changes. Furthermore, using sheet music inhibits collaborative learning opportunities, as musicians reading music tend to focus on reading and not on listening and interacting with other musicians. Another change in the processes of learning and performing in the roda de choro is caused by musicians imitating recorded arrangements. This practice began with the choro music revival of the 1970s, when learning choro was done mainly through transcribing the audio recordings of the masters, especially Jacob do Bandolim’s
recordings with Época de Ouro and Altamiro Carrilho and his bands. This is an example of how knowledge acquisition and participation within tradition can, at times, trump innovation and creation.

Collaborative learning through the non-formal process and context of participation in choro ensembles has not changed from the past till now. Bands are commonly comprised of both professional and amateur musicians. The venues these bands use for performance are similar, although choro bands are rarely, if ever, hired to play house party dances for birthdays, christenings, or baptisms. Since the advent of audio recording, choro ensembles have created unique arrangements of choro standards and/or writing choro compositions and making audio recordings.

Prior to 1998, choro schools did not exist. Formal Brazilian music institutions were conservatories or music departments in universities or colleges, as well as private lessons. These music programs’ curriculums were based, and in most cases are still based on European art music institutions. Through learning European art music as a foundation, musicians gained perspectives on music and could interpret other music genres and styles from these perspectives. Conservatory trained musicians could, and still can, approach choro through the perspective of European art music. Many of choro’s founding musicians and composers came to choro music armed with a European influenced music education. Today, musicians training at EPM or other choro institution have the opposite approach; they gain a musical perspective from choro, albeit based on European classical music, and will interpret other music genres and styles from this perspective.

Pedagogically, choro schools represent innovative formal processes and contexts as the instructors’ formal roles are changing because of choro’s informal and non-formal modes of
learning. Instead of palying the role of expert, EPM’s teachers act more like guides in all the school’s activities. EPM’s pedagogy provides an environment where students and teachers collaboratively acquire and create knowledge through participation, integrating informal, non-formal, and formal learning modes.

The formal processes and context of private lessons have generally stayed the same. Private lessons are flexible. Teachers often tailor their teaching to the student’s wants or needs. Often, students seek teachers based on reputation, e.g. the types of knowledge or experience they have, performance or teaching ability, proximity, or social connections. In terms of choro music information, private lesson teachers of the past relied more on European art music for material and methods, whereas today, choro specific information is available to teachers and students, e.g. method books, sheet music collections, audio, and video. The style and content of choro sheet music has changed. Originally, compositions were often hand written, and just the melody was written. These styles of sheet music would be essentially useless for accompanists unless they were able to derive chords spontaneously from reading written melodies, an easier task for pianists who are normally trained to read notated music, but difficult to impossible for guitarists and cavaquinho players who rarely read notation. Seeing as most accompanists did not read music, this is highly unlikely. The style in which choro sheet music is written today provides the alphabetical chord names with tensions and bass inversions. Often, some of the counterpoint melodies are notated as well.

Bands and music societies that teach music have changed very little in terms of educational processes and contexts related to choro. Like the examples above, more choro resources are currently available while before the 1970s they did not exist. Increased access points—in print and digitally—provide more availability to choro information.
Regarding formal processes involved in choro composition, recent innovations have been made through the influence of art music, beginning in the late 1970s with Radames Gnattali and the ensemble Camarata Carioca. Their contribution lies in bringing choro to the context of chamber music with sophisticated arrangements and performances of old and new choro repertoire. At the forefront of modern choro composition, Maurício Carrilho is making innovations. Carrilho composed a concerto for seven-string guitar, which premiered in Paris, France in 2009. Also, the compositions Carrilho composed and recorded on the album, Choro Ímpar [Uneven Choro], are all in compound meters, e.g. five, seven, nine.

Possible future studies and projects dealing with choro’s pedagogy and learning processes can focus on information organization, collection, preservation, digitization, and translation. Informalities inherent in the community have prevented knowledge of the genre to spread. As information about choro becomes systematized, more musicians are learning the genre. The choro schools, clubs, and communities inside and outside Brazil deserve attention.

Changes and continuities to choro’s learning processes and contexts have enabled the genre to survive and thrive. While choro institutions can be repressive in certain respects to repertoire and performance practice, EPM’s inclusion of non-formal and informal contexts and processes in their curricula ensure the tradition will continue and new knowledge will be created. Individuals will be constantly pushing and pulling the boundaries of the genre, sometimes in favor of tradition, sometimes in favor of innovation. Brazil’s instrumental choro music tradition will remain authentic through its preservation in live performances, print, audio recordings, and schools. Innovations in the genre will occur through its practitioners, as they acknowledge the boundaries that define choro and simultaneously push, and at times break, the limits of those boundaries. As long as rodas de choro and choro bands exist, and the compositions of the older
generations are learned and played, the choro music tradition will continue, in spite of innovations made by its practitioners and its institutions.
Chapter 2:

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O choro, ele existe na minha concepção como um hábitat de um animal, como o seu habitat. Ele é cultuado aqui, e ele é muito tocado aqui… Você tem que estar, ser muito bom de violão ou bom no seu instrumento para depois começar a tocar choro. Não adianta você fazer uma formação erudita e de repente pegar e sair tocando choro. Você vai ter que se acostumar com uma série de hábitos de comunicação musical.

Choro, it exists in my mind like a habitat of an animal, as their habitat. It is worshiped here, and it is played a lot here… You have to be very good on guitar or good on your instrument and then begin to play choro. It is no use if you do classical music training and suddenly grasp and take off playing choro. You will have to become accustomed to a variety of habits of musical communication.  

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Quasi todos os dias se publicam peças de musica, e, nesse ponto, pôde dizer-se que o movimento das producções musicas no Rio de Janeiro é comparativamente superior ao de qualquer capital, incluindo mesmo os grandes centros de actividade artistica como Milão, Pariz, Vienna, Londres, etc. Mas que composições são essas que aparecem? Polkas, valsas, contradanças, lundús, que inevitavelmente mostram duas cousas: muito talent e pouco estudo. Pelo que respeita á execução, vemos invariavelmente tambem: muitos pianistas soffriveis e muito poucos bons. A cultura da arte musical é para nós um méro pass-tempo e nada mais.

Almost every day we publish pieces of music, and at this point, it can be said that the pace of musical output in Rio de Janeiro is comparatively higher than that of any capital, including even the great centers of artistic activity such as Milan, Paris, Vienna, London, etc.. But what are those compositions that appear? Polkas, waltzes, contradances, lundus that inevitably show two things: talent and very little study. In respect to the execution, we find invariably also: many poorly trained pianists and very few good ones. The culture of musical art is for us a mere hobby and nothing more.  

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Hippolyte Vannier, professor especial de harmonia pratica aplicada ao piano, 36 rua Evaristo da Velga. Sera preciso dizer que sem o estudio das regras que regem os acordes e as notas de passage, um instrumentista não pode vencer as dificuldades da leitura á primeira vista, nem da transposição indispensavel para poder acompanhar, nem tão pouco comprehender o competente character de cada escola de musica? Em resumo, é tão necessario, a um instrumentista, o

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conhecimento das regras da melodia e da harmonia, como é necessário o conhecimento da grammatical de uma língua, para falla-la correctamente.

Hippolyte Vannier, special teacher of practical harmony applied to the piano, 36 Evaristo da Velga Road. Will it be needed to say that without the study of the rules governing the chords and notes in passing, an instrumentalist can not overcome the difficulties of sight-reading, nor indispensable transposition in order to accompany, neither to understand the relevant character of each school of music? In a nutshell, it is as necessary, for an instrumentalist, to understand the rules of melody and harmony, as it is necessary to understand grammar of a language, to speak it correctly.¹⁸²

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Anacleto, foi um grande leccionador de musica, assim como um mestre de muitas bandas particulares deixando muitos discipulos que fizeram honra a seus dotes de professor eximio. Como mestre da Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros elle immortalizou-se, com a sua inteligencia e devotamento, trabalhou corrigindo, modellando e aperfeioando, todos os seus comandados com a magia de uma grande vara usada por elle nos ensaios a guisa de batuta que fazia obedecer os seus alunos. Como maestro ensaiador transformou a Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros em um conjuncto de musicos professores que o respeitavam e o obedeciam, na maior rispidez de suas energias, pois Anacleto, era um director de musica caprichoso e violento.

Anacleto was a great music professor, as well as a leader of many private bands, leaving many disciples who did honor to his gifts as an expert teacher. As Master of the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiro he immortalized himself. With his intelligence and dedication, he worked, correcting, shaping, and refining, all his players with the magic of a big stick used by him in the rehearsals, in the guise of a baton, which made his pupils obey. As a master conductor he transformed the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiro into an ensemble of music professors who respected and obeyed the greater harshness of his energies, for Anacleto was a capricious and tough music director.¹⁸³

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não havia lar que fazendo um baptizado, anniversario, casamento, etc., que não désse um baile, puxado ao leitão, ao peru, gallinhas, muitas bebidas, como sejam cervejas, vinhos, licores, etc. De fórmá que os chorões daquella época não passavam necessidades, comendo bem, e bebendo melhor.

…there was no home doing a christening, birthday, marriage, etc., that did not throw a dance, pull the pig, or the turkey, chickens, many beverages such as beers, wines, liquors, etc.. So that the chorões of that time lacked nothing, eating well and drinking better.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³. Pinto, 78.
¹⁸⁴. Pinto, 48.
Vê-se assim que o aprendizado de Pinto se deu através de uma relação mestre-discípulo: ainda que Videira não soubesse ler partituras, conhecia “regularmente” o violão e o cavaquinho, o que provavelmente quer dizer que o flautista-charuteiro dominava não só um repertório de formação de acordes, como os caminhos harmônicos e o repertório de acompanhamento rítmico-harmônico (“levadas”) dos dois instrumentos. Dessa forma, andando sempre com Videira, Alexandre conseguiu repertoriar um vocabulário de estruturas de acompanhamento que o permitiu se tornar um instrumentista “respeitado na roda dos tocadores batutas.”

It is thus seen that the learning of Pinto came about through a master-disciple relationship: although Videira could not read music, he had a [merely] fair mastery guitar and cavaquinho, which probably means that the flautist/cigarette-maker mastered not only a repertoire of chord formations, but also the harmonic progressions and the repertoire of harmonic/rhythmic accompaniment “levadas” [accompaniment rhythmic patterns] of the two instruments. In this way, always walking with Videira, Alexandre [Pinto] was able to compile a vocabulary of accompaniment structures, which enabled him to become a musician “respected in the circle of great players.”

Ventura Caréca, violão de fama, que tocava com bastante amor e gosto, e quando acompanhava um chôro, ou uma modinha, não admittia que lhe desse o tom, tal a confiança que elle tinha no seu ouvido.

Ventura Caréca, guitar[ist] of renown, who played with much love and taste, and when accompanied a choro, or a modinha, did not accept that the key be said, so great was the confidence that he had in his ear.

“Eu posso ser um finalista do concurso internacional tocando violão mas não sabia música Brasileira, a minha música. Não. Quero aprender essa música.”

“I can be a finalist in an international competition playing guitar but I did not know Brazilian music, my music. No. I want to learn this music.”

Então, era violão ou piano com ele em casa…ensinou música para todo mundo, e ele era apaixonado por música, ele trabalhava no banco, era contador. Sabe o que é isso, fazia a

185. Aragão, 214.
186. Pinto, 113.

So, there was guitar and piano with him [grandfather] in the house...he taught music to everyone, and he was passionate about music, he worked in a bank, he was an accountant. But his passion was music, and he listened to lots of music at home. He listened to lots of classical, erudite music. He listened to lots of great quality Brazilian music—Jacob do Bandolim, Atáulfo Alves, Noel Rosa, lots of Luiz Gonzaga, Jackson do Pandeiro, Dorival Caymmi. So, we were at home playing and listening to music. You were eating breakfast and hearing the music, not like, sit here and now you are going to hear. No! He was listening. You were hearing it because you were in the house. He had great respect for music, and so whoever might arrive to where the music was playing, had to stay quiet. If you did not want to stay there, you did not need to, but you had to keep quiet. When he was going to study guitar it was by himself in his room, and he would not let anyone enter, because there were many children. But he let me. “No! Let her” [he said] because I stayed quiet, listening. So to these grandchildren, to these children that went more, he gave more, but it was not an obligation. [In the sense] “you have to sit here, you have to hear.” No! You did not have to do this. It was playful. It was free. That music, this never leaves, this that you hear when little. And you begin to have a palate, a taste. Your taste will be refined.188

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E aí eu fui estudar piano, me levaram para uma aula de piano, que foi horrível. Que foi, era uma mulher horível professora. Ela não admitia que tocasse nada de ouvido. Botava mais músicas chatas que eu na primeira vez que tocava, ela tocava uma vez eu já tinha decorado a música então eu não queria ficar lendo partitura, eu ficava tentando tocar de ouvido e ela, me repreendia. É horrível. E aí eu parei estudar música, então com cinco anos e pouco, eu fiquei assim. Briguei pra música.

And so I went to study piano, they took me to a piano class that was horrible. It was a horrible teacher. She did not allow playing anything by ear. She would put the most boring songs I played the first time, she played one time I had already memorized the song so I did not want to be

188. Luciana Rabello, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 5 December, 2011.
reading the score, I was trying to play by ear and she scolded me. It’s horrible. And so I stopped studying music, then at five or so years old, I was like this. I fought for music.\footnote{189}

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There were meetings every week. We gathered a small group and “beat” the guitar there—family. There I was, I was raised that way. Then I started to pick up the guitar when they went away I tried to do those things they did, and like this, I was learning…It was choro. Only choro! Some sung music as well. I was playing in parties, after I was a child, and I played in parties, all those things.\footnote{190}

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**Ronaldo:** é família de músico

**Dona Lúcia:** família de música é a de meu pai, né?! Meu pai era saxofonista, depois violonista. Então meu pai foi músico e ainda seus irmãos todos foram músicos Ai, eu era menina ainda, tinha uns 5 anos e hoje meus filhos músicos.

**Ronaldo:** Os irmãos dela todos tocavam também, um bandolim, outro violão, outro acordeon


**Murray:** E eles tocaram juntos em casa todos os filhos?

**Ronaldo:** Tocávamos!

**Dona Lúcia:** desde pequenininhos, é! Ronaldo tinha 12.

**Ronaldo:** It is a family of musicians.

**Lúcia Souza:** The musical family is from my father. My father was a saxophonist after being a violinist. So my father was a musician and yet his brothers, all were musicians. Then, I was still a girl, I was five years old and today my sons are musicians.

**Ronaldo:** The brothers were also playing as well, one mandolin, the other guitar, the other accordion.

**Lúcia Souza:** Rogério, Ricardo, Beto, Roberto cavaquinho, right? Rosalvo plays guitar, Rogério guitar, Ricardo guitar, and mandolin Ronaldo.

**Murray:** And they played together at home, all the brothers?

**Ronaldo:** We played!

**Lúcia Souza:** Since they were little, yes! Ronaldo was twelve years old.\footnote{191}

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Eu sou de banda de música, como os amigos aqui são também E desde de muito novo eu assim a banda lá da minha cidade lá em Valença quando eu tinha 16 anos. Entrei para a banda com 16 anos. E este ano eu estou completando 10 anos de regência da banda. Não é uma banda famosa, mas forma alunos para diversas áreas em termos de música. É como qualquer outra banda do Brasil. A função da banda de música é desempenhar um papel de um conservatório de música, mas que o povo tenha acesso, sem, de repente, pagar nada por aquilo. Então eu comecei praticando mais na banda. E acho que foi a banda de música que abriu caminho para muitas coisas que hoje eu tenho na minha vida. Eu não tive professor de arranjo, de instrumentação. Eu aprendi na pratica mesmo, fazendo e ouvindo o pessoal tocar e dando aula, pois tenho meus alunos lá. E assim importante na minha vida. Então eu toco um pouquinho de saxofone, um pouquinho de clarinete, também Eu gosto, as vezes de pegar uma tuba para brincar. Mas meu instrumento mesmo é a flauta.

I am from the concert band, like my friends here also, and since I was young, the band there in my city of Valença when I was sixteen years old. And this year I’m completing ten years as the conductor of the band. It is not a famous band, but it teaches students in various areas in terms of music. It is like any other band in Brazil. The function of the bands is to play the role of a music conservatory, but the people have access, without having to pay anything for it. So I started participating in the band more. I think that it was the band that opened doors for many things in my life. I did not have an arranging or instrumentation professor. I learned through practice really, doing it and hearing people play and giving lessons, because I have my students there. And like this, it’s important in my life. So I play a little saxophone, a little clarinet, I also like to play tuba sometimes, just for fun. But my instrument is really the flute.

Eu comecei tocando choro. Mas por influência dos meus professores da época. Eu estudava no método de música clássica. então concertos, eu estudava a música, mas tinha esse lado todo popular. acho que com o tempo, não que tenha passado a ser só a música popular, mas acho que uma coisa ajudou a fortalecer a outra. A técnica do estudo da música clássica atua na execução da música popular. Então acho que isso ajudou muito para mim.

I began studying choro, but through the influence of my professors at that time. I was studying through classical music methods, so concertos, I was studying music [sheet music, European and Brazilian art music repertoire], but there was this other side, all [Brazilian] popular. I think with time, not that I had passed to only play popular music, but I think that one thing helps to reinforce the other. The technique from the study of classical music serves in the performance of popular music. So I think this helped me a lot.

193. Ibid.
Minha mãe falou, “tem uma escola de música. dentro do colégio tem um professor. vamos lá vamos estudar com ele e ver o que é que ele sugere que você possa estudar.” Eu queria tocar trompete. Vi o trompete e disse: meu deus, é esse o instrumento que eu quero. O professor olhou para mim e disse: você tem os lábios grossos, você vai tocar trombone. Falei: trás o trombone, então, que eu quero ver como é esse trombone. Ai me deu um trombone de pistão...Os antigos sempre tem as suas razões. Ele trouxe o trombone de pisto. No ano seguinte eu já estava tocando na banda escola, que era só com as crianças. Tocava, fazia o solo dos boleros, já estava começando a ter o prazer que a música proporciona para gente. Poder sentir essa alegria que ela trás. Foi passando o tempo, isso com 7 anos, com 12 anos eu já tive interesse pela tuba. Queria tocar tuba, vi a tuba e disse: meu deus quero tocar esse instrumento. Só que poxa, chegaram instrumentos novos na banda que eu tocava na minha cidade e ele não abriram mão porque é um instrumento muito caro. não tinham como colocar na mão de uma criança. então o maestro da época falou: faz o seguinte, estuda o bombardino. Me deu o bombardino, ele tocou o bombardino. Foi uma fase ótima, fase que eu estudei bastante.

My mother said, “there is a music school, which has a teacher. Let us go there and we will study with him and see what he suggests you can study.” I wanted to play trumpet. I saw a trumpet and said, “My God, it is this instrument that I want.” The teacher saw me and said, “you have big lips so you are going to play trombone.” I said, “I want to see what a trombone is,” and so he gave me a valve trombone…The old folks always have their reasons. He brought the valve trombone. The following year I was already playing in the school band that was only for children. I was playing the solo of “Bolero,” already I was beginning to have the pleasure that music brings to people...At twelve, I already had an interest in tuba. I wanted to play tuba. I saw the tube and said, “My God, I want to play this instrument.” Only that, hey, new instruments arrived in the band that I was playing in from my city and they would not buy [a tuba] because it is an expensive instrument. They were not going to put it in the hands of a child. So the conductor at that time said, “do the following, study the euphonium.” He gave me a euphonium and so I played the euphonium. It was a great phase, a phase in which I studied a lot.194

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Eu comecei tocando, estudando violino quando eu tinha 8 anos de idade. E comecei na Escola de música da UFRJ, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Um curso para crianças. Eu estudei violino dos 8 aos 15. Mas eu sempre tive um violão em casa, que era um violão muito vagabundo e eu toca de brincadeira nele, mas eu não sabia tocar violão. quando eu fiz 15 anos eu parei de estudar violino, me desinteressei. Eu estudei violino muito a sério, sempre música clássica. Eu comecei estudando música clássica. E com 15 anos eu comecei a estudar violão sozinho, e com 17 eu tive meu primeiro professor. Ai sim, eu comecei a estudar violão a sério. Mas eu sempre escutei muita música popular lá em casa, além de música clássica, os concertos para violino e orquestra. meu pai sempre gostou muito de ópera, tambémb A gente sempre teve muitos discos de música popular em casa, principalmente, muitos disco de samba: Chico Buarque, Elis Regina, Milton Nascimento, os primeiros discos de samba que eu ouvi foram Cartola, Nélson Cavaquinho, Clementina de Jesus e Donga. Quando eu era criança o meu pai, também, me deu

um disco de choro do Pixinguinha, do Jacob do Bandolim. Então, eu gostava muito, sempre gostava muito. Admirava o choro principalmente, eu sempre admirei muito pela complexidade que ele tem. Ele é muito complexo e difícil de tocar. Quem quer tocar choro tem que estudar muito.

I began playing, studying violin when I was eight years old, and I began in the school of music in the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, a course for children. I studied violin from eight to fifteen. But, I always had a guitar in the house, that was a horrible guitar, and I goofed around on it, but I did not know how to play guitar. When I was fifteen I stopped studying violin, I lost interest. I studied violin very seriously, always classical music. I began studying classical music. And at fifteen years old I began to study guitar alone, and at seventeen I had my first teacher. And like this, I began to study guitar seriously. But I always heard lots of popular music at home, beyond classical music, the concertos for violin and orchestra. My father always really liked opera also. We always had lots of discs of popular music at home, principally samba: Chico Buarque, Elis Regina, Milton Nascimento, the first samba discs that I heard were Cartola, Nelson Cavaquinho, Clementina de Jesus, and Donga. When I was a child my father also gave me choro discs of Pixinguinha and Jacob do Bandolim. So I liked it a lot, always liked it a lot. I admire choro primarily. I always greatly admired it for the complexity that it has. It is very complex and difficult to play. Whoever wants to play choro has to study a lot.195

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eu comecei estudando violão mesmo, tirando de ouvido uns rock n’ roll. Daí conforme eu fui melhorando no violão eu fui procurando outros repertórios mais de violão mesmo. Fui me interessando por umas coisas brasileiras. Eu tinha acesso aos discos da minha mãe, discos do Baden, do Rafael e comecei a me interessar por aquilo. daí comecei a tirar umas coisas de ouvido também. Meu pai tinha uns songbooks, aqueles do Almir Chediak. Eu não entendia nada de harmonia mas fui aprendendo aqueles acordes e umas bossa novas e tal. E fui me familiarizando com aquele repertório já de musica brasileira. De ouvido eu já conseguir fazer umas levada de samba, ia tirando de ouvido. Ia imitando. Quando eu tinha uns 18 anos eu comecei a estudar musica mesmo para prestar o vestibular, para entrar na faculdade. Aprendi a ler. No início eu já comecei a tirar mais repertorio instrumenta de violão e erudito, outros choros. Já alguns através de partituras. Mas foi na faculdade que comecei a tocar choro, conheci outras pessoas. Tinha um menino que tocava flauta, e a gente começou a fazer um duo de choro. Violão e flauta.

I began studying guitar really, learning some rock and roll by ear. So as I was improving on the guitar, I went looking for other guitar repertoires really. I became interested in some Brazilian things. I had access to my mother’s records, records of Baden [Powell] and Rafael [Rabello]. And I started getting interested in it. I began to learn some [more] things by ear. Also, my dad had some songbooks, those of Almir Chediak. I knew nothing about harmony, but I was learning those chords and some bossa novas and such. And I was familiarizing myself with that repertoire of Brazilian music already. By ear I already was able to make some samba rhythmic patterns, I would take by ear. I would imitate. When I was 18 I really began to study music to take exams to enter college. I learned to read [sheet music]. In the beginning, I already began to learn more

instrumental repertoire of the guitar and erudite music, and other choros, already some through sheet music. But it was in college that I began to play choro, I knew other people. There was a guy that played flute, and we began to make a choro duo, guitar and flute.\footnote{Iuri Bittar, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 21 June, 2011.}


I began, in truth at 18 years old. This was in 1957. I began with electric guitar in a party band. It was a sextet. I began to learn like this, learning playing, without a formal music education. Everything by ear. This was in ’57, and in ’62 I began working for Bank of Brasil, from there I abandoned music. I went to the interior of Paraná [state] and stayed there for fifteen years.. So I stayed fifteen years outside of the instrument practically. Then I returned in ’77, and in ’77 I began relearning, but by then it was acoustic nylon-string guitar, to study a little classical guitar technique. In 1978-79 I began to frequent the Choro Club of Brasília, and began to devote myself to choro. In ’86 I began the seven-string guitar, and I am up till now studying (laughs).\footnote{Wellington Krepke Duarte, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 24 June, 2011.}

Chapter 3

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Carrilho: Esse disco em especial, eu adorava as músicas, eu achava assim, eu achava os timbres lindos—acordeom, a flauta, as vozes em terças de violões, o ritmo, eu achava tudo bom. Não sei dizer porque. Eu tinha algumas referências assim de choro, mas na verdade eu acho que esse disco que me ensinou, assim os fundamentos do choro mesmo.

Carrilho: This disc [Choros Imortais] is special, I loved the pieces of music, I was thinking like this, I was finding the beautiful timbres—accordion, the flute, the guitars voiced in thirds, the rhythm, I thought everything was good. I do not know why. I had some references like this from choro, but in truth I think that it is his disc that taught me, like the fundamentals of choro really.

Paes: Engraçado, pois quando eu fui ter aula de violão com Luis Otavio Braga, ele sempre dava essas duas referências assim, como o que escutar de choro, ele falava era os “Choros Imortais” e
“Vibrações.” Virou, uma marca, para todo mundo quisesse. Era como se fosse um… divisor de águas, assim.

**Paes:** Funny, because when I went to have a guitar lesson with Luis Otávio Braga, he always gave these two references here, like how to listen to choro, he said it was *Choros Imortais* and *Vibrações*. It became a mark for everyone who wanted. It was like … a watershed moment, as well.

**Carrilho:** Eu acho que são os dois discos que tem os acompanhamentos mais perfeitos de choro. E discos com solistas tocando muito bem, acho que tem vários, mas dessa época né, e tecnicamente eles são muito bem resolvidos pra tecnologia da época, um som bonito. Eu acho que os discos são especiais. Pra mim, o melhor disco do Altamiro, e o melhor disco do Jacob, “Vibrações.” Repertório, tudo.

**Carrilho:** I think that they are the two discs that have the most perfect accompaniment, and discs with soloists playing very well. I think that there are various [discs], but from this period, right, and technically they have great [recording] resolution for technology from the period, a beautiful sound. I think that the discs are special. For me, the best disc of Altamiro, and the best disc of Jacob, *Vibrações*—repertoire, everything.198

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In the rodas and with the discs at home. Lots of discs, I listened a lot. Never had a very big variety. They were the same discs incessantly. So, *Choros Imortais volume 1 and 2, Vibrações* do Jacob, cannot be missed. In some discs that were released by Marco Pereira, there were some interesting things, Abel Ferreira and such. And the rodas. So we put on the disc, and while we could not do everything at the same time, it wouldn’t stop. And there were weeks on top of the discs, months, to find all the little things, exactly the same. We didn’t have computers, that today the computer plays in slow motion, without changing the pitch. Imagine how wonderful. We didn’t have it. And we studied alone. Rafael and I studied together a lot at home. And in the street were the rodas.199

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199. Luciana Rabello, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 5 December, 2011.
Foi como o aprendizado da maioria do pessoal, sem leitura. tudo de ouvido. Vê, aprende, e se a pessoa explica para a gente como é que é aquela música. A gente decora, assimila, faz um paralelo entre outras música: ah, a harmonia dessa música é parecida com aquela. E com isso vamos desenvolvendo os caminhos harmônicos. Tudo de memória, fazendo os neurônios funcionarem. Nada escrito. Em 86 foi que eu comecei um trabalho de leitura e de escrever. A partir de 86, quando eu peguei o violão de 7cordas. Eu fiz este trabalho de leitura, aprender divisão musical para escrever. Comecei a escrever os baixos do violão do acompanhamento. Escrevia a cifra, e embaixo da cifra escrevia os baixos correspondentes das gravações que eu ouvia. Depois, escrevendo os baixos, eu comecei a escreve algumas melodias, a copiar - ouvindo o disco e escrevendo a melodia. Mas basicamente é isso.

It was like the learning of the majority of the people, without reading. Everything by ear. See, learn, and if a person explains to us how it is, that song, we memorize, assimilate, make a parallel between other music: “ah, the harmony of this music is similar with that.” And with this we develop the harmonic progressions. Everything from memory, causing the neurons to work. Nothing written. In ’86 was when I began working on reading and writing. From ’86, when I got the seven-string guitar, I made this work of reading, to learn musical division to write. I started to write the low guitar accompaniment. I wrote the chord names, and below the chord names I wrote the bass lines corresponding to the recordings that I was hearing. After writing the bass lines, I began to write some melodies, to copy, listening to the disc and writing the melody. But basically it is this.

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A minha primeira referencia com o choro veio da minha família Mas a minha primeira referencia como flautista no choro foi o Altamiro Carrilho, eu escutava os discos do Altamiro. Então eu sabia ler um pouco de partitura, muito pouco e tinha alguns álbuns de choro e tinha um disco, um CD, já era CD naquela época Eu escutava, já tocava de ouvido aquela melodia e comparava com o que estava escrito. Ali eu aprendi bastante coisa sozinho. Antes de ter professor, fora daquilo ali.

My first connection with choro came from my family, but my first connection with a flautist in choro was Altamiro Carrilho, I would listen to recordings of Altamiro. So I knew how to read a little sheet music, very little, and I had some choro albums and had a disc, a CD, there were already CDs at that time. I was listening, already playing by ear the melodies and comparing them with what was written. I learned many things alone this way. Before having a teacher, outside of what was there.

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Eu acho que a roda é um espaço de exercício e de expansão do repertório. Você conhece novas músicas e você exercita o reflexo de usar o seu conhecimento na música que você está ouvindo pela primeira vez, por exemplo. Mas eu acho que o grande aprendizado de músico é feito fora da roda, ele é feito mais ouvindo gravações, tocando junto, repetindo. Porque as vezes na roda de choro não dá tempo dá tempo de acontecer isso. Acho que esses dois trabalhos são muito importantes. Os músicos que tocam bem em roda de choro normalmente são músicos que ouvem muito, que tocam com disco, tiram os acompanhamentos, aprendem ouvindo a gravação. Isso vai ampliando o conhecimento da linguagem que ele poem em prática na roda. Então a roda é como se fosse um jogo de futebol na rua. livre. uma pelada, como a gente chama. Mas o cara aprende ater intimidade com a bola brincando sozinho. Chutando a bola na parede, controlando a bola, fazendo embaixada. Depois ele exercita isso jogando na rua. acho que é parecido com o choro, com a música improvisada. tem que ter um trabalho individual além da roda. só a roda não forma ninguém. Mas a roda é um espaço de exercício de confraternização. Você tem a oportunidade de ver o músico que toca melhor e aprender alguma coisa que ele está fazendo, mas você precisa trabalhar individualmente também.

I think the roda is a space for exercise and for expansion of the repertoire. You get to know new songs and you exercise the reflex of using your knowledge in the music you're hearing for the first time, for example. But I think the great learning experience of the musician is done outside of the roda, it is done more by listening to recordings, playing along, repeating. Because sometimes in the roda de choro there is no time, there is no time to make this happen. I think these two studies are very important. The musicians who perform well in roda de choro normally are musicians who usually hear a lot, that play with recordings, abstract the accompaniments, learn by listening to the recording. This will expand the knowledge of the language that they put into practice in the roda. So the roda is like a game of soccer in the street. Free. “A naked” [stripped, a pickup game], as we call it. But the guy learns to stick intimately with the ball playing alone—kicking the ball on the wall, controlling the ball, juggling the ball. After, he exercises this playing in the street. I think it's similar with choro, with improvised music. You must work individually beyond the roda, only [trying to learn in] the roda does not educate anyone. But the roda is an exercise space for fellowship. You have the opportunity to see the musician who plays better and learn something he is doing, but you need to work individually as well.202

É onde se aprende muito, porque você vendo as pessoas mais experientes tocar, você vai copiando. E vai entendendo como funciona a vez de cada um, cada passo, passar o solo para outro. O cara não sabe direito, o outro socorre. Então é uma coisa bem entrosada e brincalhona. É bem lúdico.

It is where you learn a lot, because you see people with more experience playing, you will be copying. And you will understand how it works, each one’s turn, each step, passing the solo to

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another. The guy that does not know right, the others rescue. So it is something close-knit and playful. It is very entertaining.\(^{203}\)

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**Leite**: Eu acho que Choro mesmo se aprende mesmo é na roda...
**Leite**: I think that choro really is learned in the roda...

**Souza**: é na roda, entende? Praticando.
**Souza**: It is in the roda, understand? Practicing.

**Leite**: é na roda que cada um tem um estilo de tocar
**Leite**: It is in the roda that each one has a style of playing.

**Souza**: ...é verdade.
**Souza**: It is true.

**Leite**: cada um tem um estilo de puxar o violão, dar o saque, dar o baixo. Cada um tem um estilo.
**Leite**: Each one has a style of plucking the guitar, giving their part, giving the bass. Each one has a style.

**Souza**: Cada um tem seu estilo... cada um tem o seu. Esse diferencial, que é o lance de cada um ter um jeito próprio de se apresentar tocando choro. É o choro não é para se tocar exatamente como a partitura diz. Ele... você toca, depois você fecha a partitura e toca dando um pouco do seu caráter interpretativo... um andamento, porque cada um toca no seu... porque ele é uma música para se agrupar e então o caráter de beleza nele está justamente na coesão harmônica... na finalização. No produto final da harmonia de todos tocando. É esse é o lance do choro. Você não se prende a partitura, você pega uma partitura de Pixinguinha para aprender. Aí depois você esquece a partitura porque na verdade você vai ter que tocar praticando. Eu quando era garoto, como o Carlinhos também. Primeiro pratei, errei muito, praticava... errava muito, não sei que. Depois foi corrigindo. Foi corrigindo seus erros melódicos e outros os erros harmônicos, aí você vai encaixando as cadencias, sequências de acordes para poder formar... tanto faz, porque o choro é tocado em grupo, nunca assim, dois três. Sempre foi tocado dentro do grupo. Esse é o principal... fator para você desenvolver o que é choro. Primeiro você assiste...

**Souza**: Each one has his style... each one has their own. This difference, that is the fact of each one has their own way of presenting oneself, playing choro. And choro is not to be played exactly as the score (sheet music) says. You play, after you close the score and play giving a little touch of your character, your individuality... a process, because each one plays his own... because it is a music for coming together and then the characteristic beauty is precisely in the harmonic cohesion... in the end. In the final product of the harmony of all playing. And that's the thing about choro. You do not stick to the music as written, you get a score of Pixinguinha to learn. Then you forget the score because you are actually going to have to play by practicing.

\(^{203}\) Wellington Krepke Duarte, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 24 June, 2011.
When I was a kid, like Charlie too. First I practiced, I missed a lot, practiced... missed a lot, I do not know. Then you are fixing. You were correcting your melodic mistakes and other harmonic mistakes, there you go fitting the cadences, chord sequences in order to form... it does not matter, because choro is played in groups, never like, two, three [musicians]. It has always been played within the group. This is the main factor for you... to develop what is choro. First you watch.

Murray: without playing?

Souza: não é...é...de preferencia. Você assiste para você poder entender qual é a concepção do choro...aquela coisa toda. Depois você passa a tocar baixinho. Você fica no seu cantinho, ai vem com um violão, ali baixinho para poder você ir vendo observando...

Souza: No it’s…it’s…preferable. You watch so you can understand what is the conception of choro…the whole thing. After, you go playing softly. You stay in your little corner. There you come with a guitar, there softly in order for you to go watching, observing... 204

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Hoje em dia, a gente tem escolas de choro. aqui por exemplo, a Escola Portátil é uma escola. Então agente tem uma roda, que tem alunos. Quando eu comecei, você não tinha isso, por exemplo. Você tinha rodas, e para você chegar tocando numa roda...o choro tem uma caracteristica de que é uma música muito dificil tecnicamente, não é uma música fácil tecnicamente. Então para você chegar numa roda, você tinha que ter já um bom desempenho no instrumento, pelo menos um razoável desempenho no instrumento Do contrario, você não conseguia tocar ali naquele ambiente. Acho que isso mudou um pouco na verdade. Acho que hoje a gente tem roda, a coisa ficou mais institucional, neste sentido, de que agente criou um projeto para educar para fazer o aprendizado de choro, então tem uma roda e ali a gente dá espaço para as pessoas mais iniciantes. A gente tenta, por exemplo, escrever uns choros mais fáceis para iniciantes, etc.

Nowadays, we have choro schools. Here for example, the Escola Portátil is a school. So we have a roda that has students. When I began, you did not have this. For example, you had rodas, and for you to be able to play in a roda...choro has a characteristic that is a music very difficult technically, it is not an easy music technically. So for you to arrive in a roda, you would have to have already be accomplished on your instrument, at least be reasonably accomplished on your instrument. If not, you would not be able to play there in that environment. I think this changed a little to be honest. I think that today we have rodas, it became more institutionalized, in this sense, we created a project to educate, to do the learning of choro, so we have a roda and there we give more room for beginners. We try, for example writing a few choros easier for beginners, etc. 205

Chapter 4:

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A formação musical oferecida pela Escola Portátil de Música é completa (teórica e prática), dando ao aluno formado a possibilidade de trabalhar dentro de qualquer estilo musical, não apenas do choro. Por isso tantos candidatos buscam se matricular a cada ano, atraídos pela proposta inédita de promover a educação musical por meio da linguagem do choro.

Music training offered by EPM is complete (theory and practice), giving its graduates the opportunity to work within any musical style, not just choro. For this reason, so many applicants are seeking to enroll each year, lured by the unprecedented prospect of promoting music education through the language of choro. 206

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Eu lembro que eu ficava um pouco tenso, porque eu não conhecia este ambiente de roda. E quando você chega pela primeira vez é sempre emocionante, em certo sentido. Eu lembro que quando eu fui tocar e eu percebi que era muito diferente, porque eu treinava em casa sozinha, mas quando você toca com outros é muito diferente, porque você tem que estar dialogando com outros instrumentos, e ainda tem uma questão de som, do volume do som. Eu tirava um som muito baixo, não ouvia direito com pandeiro, com violão, etc. Então eu tive que aprender a tirar mais som do instrumento para me fazer ouvir nas rodas. Isso é um aprendizado importante.

I remember when I went to play and I realized that it was very different because I trained at home alone, but when you play with others it is very different because you have to be in dialogue with other instruments, and also it is a matter of sound, the volume of sound. I drew a very soft sound, I could not hear properly with pandeiro, with guitar, etc. So I had to learn to make more sound from the instrument to make myself heard in the rodas. This is an important learning issue. 207

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Eu estou dando uma aula este semestre para uma turma de alunos que já fez um curso de harmonia, teórico, de harmonia pratica, sem pensar em teoria. Passando a minha experiência pessoal de como harmonizar. Como é que você harmoniza uma música. Como você re harmoniza. De que maneira você pode fazer isso. Está sendo uma aula muito curiosa porque é toda improvisada a aula por mim. Mas os alunos estão descobrindo muitas coisa. Eu também estou descobrindo. que era uma coisa que eu nunca tinha feito. Então nós treinamos pegar um choro tradicional, harmonizar com um acorde em cada compasso. depois com um acorde em cada tempo, depois com um acorde em cada colcheia. Então a harmonia tem que andar mais. Ai começa a aparecer cromatismo, aproximação cromática. Depois começamos a harmonizar cada

207 Pedro Aragão, interview with author, digital audio recording, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 8 December, 2011.
not a melody, in block, as a deck of saxophones. But without using rules theories, only using intuition, perception. Is a very interesting work.

I'm teaching a class this semester for a group of students, who already did a course in harmony, theory, [it is] practical harmony without thinking about theory. Sharing my personal experience of how to harmonize. How it is that you harmonize a song. How do you reharmonize. In what way you can do this. It's been a very curious class because the class is all improvised by me. But students are discovering many things. I'm also discovering. It was something I had never done. So we train to get a traditional choro [song], to harmonize with a chord in each measure. Then with a chord on every beat, then a chord with every eighth note. So the harmony has to walk more. There begins to appear chromaticism, chromatic approach. Once we begin to harmonize each melody note, collectively, as like a section of saxophones. But without using rules theories, using only intuition, perception. It is a very interesting class.208

É importante as pessoas conheceres o repertório de todas as épocas. Acho que a gente pode dividir em 4 partes, em 4 épocas bem definidas: 1) O seculo XIX, os compositores do principio do choro; 2) A geração do Pixinguinha, no seculo XX; 3) O choro dos anos 40-50, onde entra Garoto, Jacob, Altamiro, Orlando Silveira que já tem uma linguagem harmônica diferente da linguagem do Pixinguinha e que os pioneiros usavam; 4) E o choro contemporâneo. Então, acho que são 4 grupos de repertórios bem distintos e que as pessoas precisam tocar de formas diferentes. Pelo estilo. Eles tem coisas em comum, mas tem coisas específicas de cada período. Então é importante no repertório da roda, você abordar cada uma dessa épocas para você ter contato com esse fio condutor da historia do choro e formação desta música. Acho que isso é legal para quem está estudando.

It is important people are aware of the repertoire from all the periods. I think we can divide them into four periods, four well defined periods: 1) The nineteenth century, composers from the beginning of choro; 2) The generation of Pixinguinha, in the twentieth century; 3) Choro from the years 40-50, where enters Garoto, Jacob, Altamiro, Orlando Silveira and it already has a harmonic language different from the language of Pixinguinha and that the pioneers used; 4) And contemporary choro. So I think there are four very distinct repertoire groups and people need to play them in different ways, in style. They have things in common, but there specific things in each period. So it is important in repertoire of the roda, you consider each of this periods for you to have contact with this thread of the history of choro and creating this music. I think it's cool for people who are studying.209

Violão
Estudo e treinamento prático dos diversos ritmos conformadores do choro - polca, maxixe, valsa, schottisch, etc. - e suas ramificações, como o samba e o frevo. Estudo de repertório representativo de cada período de sua história.

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209. Ibid.
Guitar
Study and practical training of various rhythms conforming to choro—polka, maxixe, waltz, schottische, etc.—and their offshoots, such as samba and frevo. Study of repertoire representative of each period of its history.

Violão I
• Formação de acordes.
• Exercícios para posicionamento das mãos direita e esquerda.
• Primeiras sequências harmônicas (C, Am)
• Exercícios para troca fluente de acordes
• Primeiras levadas (valsa, choro - sícope no primeiro e no segundo tempos)
• Repertório simples para acompanhamento sem uso de pestanas

Guitar I
• Formation of chords.
• Exercises for placement of left and right hands.
• First harmonic sequences (C, Am)
• Exercises for changing chords fluently
• First rhythmic patterns (waltz, choro)
• Simple repertoire to follow without the use barre chords

Violão II
• Sequências harmônicas (G, Em, D, Bm)
• Primeiros exercícios de arpejo
• Levadas de polca e tango
• Repertório simples para acompanhamento com uso de pestanas

Guitar II
• Harmonic sequences (G, Em, D, Bm)
• First arpeggio exercises
• Rhythmic patterns for polka and tango
• Simple repertoire, accompanying with barre chords

Violão III
• Sequências harmônicas (F, Dm, A, F#m)
• Primeiras escalas (em tonalidade maior)
• Exercícios de sonoridade
• Repertório intermediário
• Integração com a prática de conjunto via repertório do Bandão

Guitar III
• Harmonic Sequences in the keys of F, Dm, A, F#m
• First scales in major
• Sonority exercises
• Intermediate repertoire
• Integration with ensemble practice through the repertoire of Bandão
Violão IV
• Escalas menores (melódica e harmónica)
• Intervalos (exercícios práticos)
• Estudo das inversões dos acordes (terça, quinta e sétima no baixo)
• Sequências harmónicas em todas as tonalidades
• Iniciação à leitura melódica (choros e valsas simples)

Guitar IV
• Minor scales (melodic and harmonic) Escalas menores
• Intervals (practical exercises)
• Study of chord inversions (third, fifth, and seventh in the bass)
• Harmonic sequences in all keys
• Introduction to melodic reading (choros and waltzes)

Violão V
• Iniciação ao estudo das baixarias
• Baixos obrigatórios
• Levadas de valsas choro (uso do 6/8 no compasso ¾)
• Levadas de schottisch e choro sambado
• Exercícios de memorização de harmonias

Guitar V
• Introduction to the study of the baixarias
• Required basslines
• Plucking/strumming patterns for waltz choro (use of 6/8 in the bar of 3/4)
• Plucking/strumming patterns for schottisch and choro samba
• Exercises for memorizing harmonies

Violão VI
• Execução de melodias de dificuldade média
• Harmonias com uso de tensões (9as, b5, #5, 7M, e suas combinações)
• Repertório contemporâneo de choro

Guitar VI
• Performing melodies of medium difficulty
• Harmonies with the use of tensions (9s, b5, #5, major 7, and their combinations)
• Contemporary repertoire of choro

Violão VII
• Realização do acompanhamento (encadeamentos com uso de notas comuns, baixo pedal, contracantos
  superiores (na ponta do acorde) e intermediários (nas vozes intermediárias dos acordes)
• Execução de melodias mais complexas
• Levadas de samba

Guitar VII
• Performing accompaniment (guide-tone lines, bass pedal, higher countermelodies at the top of chords and middle voices in the chords)
• Implementation of more complex melodies
• Rhythmic patterns for samba
Violão VIII
• Violão solo
• Repertório de João Pernambuco, Garoto, Canhoto da Paraíba
• Duos e trios de violões

Guitar VIII
• Solo guitar
• Repertoire of João Pernambuco, Garoto, and Canhoto da Paraíba
• Duos and trios of guitars

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Cavaquinho
Neste curso serão transmitidos os fundamentos do acompanhamento de cavaquinho para os diversos ritmos brasileiros sob a ótica do Choro, tendo como referência as escolas dos mestres Canhoto e Jonas. Os alunos devem comparecer as aulas com o instrumento cavaquinho, não aceitamos banjo.

Cavaquinho
The fundamentals of cavaquinho will be transmitted in this class, accompaniment for many Brazilian rhythms from the perspective of choro, with reference to the schools of masters Canhoto and Jonas. Students must attend classes with the cavaquinho instrument, banjo (a newer style of cavaquinho used in a type of popular samba called pagode) is not accepted.

Cavaquinho - nível I

Cavaquinho - level I
Basic level for beginners. Basic chords, chords study. Training elementary rhythms.

Cavaquinho - nível II
Introdução do repertório clássico de choro. Harmonia básica no instrumento. Treinamento de ritmos para acompanhamento de gêneros como polca, schottisch, tango, choro, samba, valsa.

Cavaquinho - level II
Introduction of the classic choro repertoire. Basic harmony on the instrument. Rhythmic training for accompanying the genres polka, schottische, tango, choro, samba, and waltz.

Cavaquinho - nível III
Estudo de escalas, arpejos, técnica de mão direita. Harmonia avançada no instrumento. Ampliação de repertório.

Cavaquinho – level III
Study of scales, arpeggios, and right hand technique. Advanced harmony on the instrument. Expansion of the repertoire.

210. “Conteúdo dos cursos oferecidos na Seleção EPM 2012 II Semestre,”
Bandolim
Este curso trabalha o desenvolvimento da técnica interpretativa, através de exercícios específicos para sonoridade, trêmulo, uso de adornos e construção de repertório com os diversos gêneros que compõem o universo do choro. Nas turmas mais avançadas, acompanhamento e harmonia aplicada ao bandolim.

Bandolim
This course works on the development of interpretative technique through specific exercises for tone, tremolo picking, use of ornaments and building repertoire with the various genres that make up the universe of choro. In the more advanced groups, accompanying and harmony applied to the mandolin.

Clarinete e Saxofone
Elementos técnico e interpretativos do clarinete aplicado à linguagem da música popular brasileira, partindo do choro. O objetivo principal do curso é potencializar e enriquecer a formação de instrumentistas no processo de profissionalização no mercado da música popular.

Clarinete e Saxofone
Technical elements and interpretation clarinet applied the language of Brazilian popular music, starting from crying. The main objective of the course is to enhance and enrich the training of musicians in the process of professionalization in the market of popular music.

Clarinete/Saxofone - nível I
Fundamentos técnicos para iniciantes: Respiração, postura, embocadura e sonoridade, aplicados a repertório de nível técnico básico. Noções elementares de palhetas, e boquilhas.

Clarinete/Saxofone - nível I
Fundamental techniques for Beginners: Breathing, posture, embouchure and sound, applied to the repertoire of basic technical level. Elementary notions of reeds and mouthpieces.

Clarinete/Saxofone - nível II
Nível intermediário: percepção melódica no clarinete, escalas, arpejos, articulação, ornamentação e recursos expressivos, aplicados a repertório de nível técnico médio. Iniciação a leitura de cifras, campos harmônicos e técnicas de memorização e construção de repertório.

Clarinete / Saxophone - Level II
Intermediate level: melodic perception on the clarinet, scales, arpeggios, articulation, ornamentation and expressive features, applied to the repertoire of medium technical level. Start reading chords, harmonic fields and memorization techniques and building a repertoire.
Clarinete/Saxofone - nível III
Nível avançado: Percepção e transposição melódica, transcrição de melodias e contrapontos, prática de interpretação de solo de regional e conjunto de sopros, técnicas de articulação, ornamentação, flexibilidade e recursos expressivos, leitura de cifras, memorização e construção de repertório avançado, contraponto e improvisação fundamentados em exemplos históricos da música popular brasileira.

**Clarinet / Saxophone - Level III**
Advanced Level: Perception and melodic transposition, transcription of melodies and counterpoints, practical interpretation of [conjunto] regional solos and woodwind ensembles, articulation techniques, ornamentation, flexibility and expressive resources, reading chords, memorization and building an advanced repertoire, counterpoint and fundamental improvisation on historical examples of Brazilian popular music.

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Trompete
O curso de Trompete da EPM visa oferecer ao aluno conhecimentos sobre o trompete, de maneira a dar-lhe condições técnicas e interpretativas de realizar o repertório proposto, de acordo com os seguintes níveis: iniciante, intermediário e avançado.

**Trumpet**
The Trumpet course at EPM aims to provide students knowledge about the trumpet, in order to give you technical conditions and interpretations to perform the proposed repertoire, according to the following levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced.

**Trompete - nível I**
Aspectos técnicos: Parte física: respiração, embocadura, dedilhado, afinação. Domínio do instrumento: escala cromática, modo maior e menor natural (até duas alterações), extensão mínima de 14ª (a partir do F#2), articulação básica (ligado e destacado).

**Trumpet - Level I**
Technical aspects: Physical part: breathing, embouchure, fingering, tuning. Instrument domain: chromatic scale, major mode and natural minor (up to two octaves), minimum range of 14th (from F # 2), basic articulation (legato and staccato).

**Trompete - nível II**
Aspectos técnicos: Parte física: respiração, embocadura, dedilhado, afinação, resistência. Domínio do instrumento: escala cromática, escala/arpejo no modo maior e menor natural e harmônico (até cinco alterações), extensão mínima de duas oitavas, articulação básica (ligado e destacado), dinâmica em suas diferentes vertentes.

**Trumpet - Level II**
Technical aspects: Physical part: breathing, embouchure, fingering, tuning, endurance. Instrument domain: chromatic scale, scale/arpeggio in the major mode and natural and harmonic minor (up to five alterations), minimum range of two octaves, basic articulation (legato and staccato), dynamics in its various aspects.
Trompete - nível III
Aspectos técnicos: Parte física: respiração, embocadura, dedilhado, afinação, resistência.
Domínio do instrumento: escala cromática, escala de tons inteiros, escala/arpejo no modo maior e menor natural, harmônico e melódico (todos os tons), extensão (F#2 a Ré5), articulação básica (ligado e destacado), dinâmica em suas diferentes vertentes.

Trumpet - Level III
Technical aspects: Physical part: breathing, embouchure, fingering, tuning, endurance.
Instrument domain: chromatic scale, scales in all keys, scale/arpeggio in the major mode and natural, harmonic, and melodic minor (all keys), range (F# to D5), basic articulation (legato and staccato), dynamics in its various aspects.

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Flauta transversa
Elementos técnico e interpretativos do instrumento aplicado à linguagem da música popular brasileira, partindo do choro. O objetivo principal do curso é potencializar e enriquecer a formação de instrumentistas no processo de profissionalização no mercado da música popular.

Transversal flute
Technical elements and interpretation of the instrument applied to the language of Brazilian popular music, starting from choro. The main objective of the course is to enhance and enrich the training of musicians in the process of professionalization in the market of popular music.

Flauta transversa - nível I
Fundamentos técnicos para iniciantes: Respiração, postura, embocadura e sonoridade, aplicados a repertório de nível técnico básico.

Transversal flute - Level I
Fundamental techniques for Beginners: Breathing, posture, embouchure and sound, applied to the repertoire of basic technical level.

Flauta transversa - nível II
Nível intermediário: Percepção melódica no instrumento, escalas, arpejos, articulação, ornamentação e recursos expressivos, aplicados a repertório de nível técnico médio. Técnicas de memorização e construção de repertório.

Transversal flute - Level II
Intermediate level: Melodic perception on the instrument, scales, arpeggios, articulation, ornamentation and expressive features, applied to the repertoire of medium technical level.

Flauta transversa - nível III
Nível avançado: Prática de interpretação específica para cada gênero musical (choro, maxixe, valsa, polca, schottisch, etc.), com regional e conjunto de sopros, técnicas de articulação, ornamentação, flexibilidade e recursos expressivos, memorização e construção de repertório avançado, contraponto e improvisação fundamentados na linguagem do choro.

Transversal flute - Level III
Advanced level: Practice of specific interpretation for each musical genre (choro, maxixe, waltz, polka, schottische, etc.), with conjunto regional and woodwind ensemble, articulation techniques, ornamentation, flexibility and expressive resources, memorization and construction of advanced
repertoire, counterpoint and fundamental improvisation based on the language of choro.
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionário para a tese:
Ensino e aprendizagem da música instrumental do choro: história inspirando tradição e inovação

Nome: ______________________________________________________________
E-mail: _____________________________________________________________
Nacionalidade: _____________________________________________________
Idade: ______
Instrumento(s): ____________________________________________________

Você concorda em ser identificado no corpo da tese? [ ] Sim [ ] Não

Há quanto tempo você toca um instrumento musical? ________________________
Há quanto tempo você toca choro? _________________________________

Se precisar, você poderá marcar mais de uma resposta.

1.) Você participa da Escola Portátil de Música (EPM)?
[ ] Sim (como: [ ] aluno, [ ] professor, [ ] monitor) Se sim, desde quando? ______
[ ] Não

2.) Como foi seu primeiro contato com choro?
[ ] através da minha família [ ] pelos meus amigos [ ] através dos meus estudos
[ ] pela internet
Outro: _____________________________________________________________

3.) Em geral, quantos dias por semana você pratica choro?
[ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7

4.) Em média, quanto tempo você se concentra a cada vez que para estudar choro?
[ ] 30 min. [ ] 1 hora [ ] 2 horas [ ] 3 horas [ ] mais do que 3 horas

5.) Quais destes meios você usa para aprender/estudar choro?
[ ] livros [ ] gravações áudio [ ] aulas particulares [ ] internet [ ] rodas de choro
[ ] escola (além da EPM)? ____________________________________________
Outro: _____________________________________________________________

6.) Quais destes aspectos você pratica mais?
[ ] técnica instrumental [ ] melodias [ ] harmonias [ ] ritmos
Outro: _____________________________________________________________

7.) Quantos choros você tem memorizado?
[ ] 1-15 [ ] 15-30 [ ] 30-50 [ ] 50-80 [ ] 80-100 [ ] 100-150 [ ] 150+
8.) Quantas harmonias de choro você tem memorizadas?
[ ] 1-15    [ ] 15-30    [ ] 30-50    [ ] 50-80    [ ] 80-100    [ ] 100-150    [ ] + de 150

9.) Você sabe transcrever a partir de gravações audio (tirar de ouvido)?
[ ] Sim      [ ] Não

10.) Você toca…
[ ] sozinho    [ ] entre amigos    [ ] em espaço público    [ ] em boates/restaurante
[ ] teatros
Outro:__________________________________________________________________

11.) Você toca choro em algum grupo?
[ ] Sim      [ ] Não

12.) Você sabe rearmonizar melodias?
[ ] Sim      [ ] Não

13.) Você improvisa quando toca choro?
[ ] Sim      [ ] Não

14.) Você improvisa com o quê?
[ ] contrapontos    [ ] baixarias    [ ] variações rítmicas    [ ] variando notas da melodia
[ ] criando outra melodia
Outro:__________________________________________________________________

15.) Você compõe choros?
[ ] Sim      [ ] Não

16.) Como você aprendeu a história do choro?
[ ] escola/aulas    [ ] livros    [ ] internet    [ ] falando com músicos de choro mais velhos
Outro:__________________________________________________________________

17.) Você toca outros tipos de música além de choro?
[ ] Sim      [ ] Não
Se sim, o que? [ ] clássico    [ ] samba    [ ] bossa nova    [ ] MPB
Outro:__________________________________________________________________

18.) Você ensina choro?
[ ] Sim      [ ] Não

Se sim, por favor continue à próxima seção. Se não, muito obrigado pela atenção! E um grande abraço!
Ensinando choro

1.) Há quanto tempo você dá aula de choro? Anos: ______

2.) Você aprendeu formalmente como ensinar música?
[ ] Sim  [ ] Não

Se sim, com quem ou onde?

3.) Você dá aula...
[ ] na EPM  [ ] aula particular (em casa, escola, estúdio)  [ ] na internet
[ ] numa outra escola. Qual?

4.) Você ensina ou já ensinou outros gêneros musicais?
[ ] Sim  [ ] Não
Se sim, qual?

5.) O que você ensina em relação ao choro?
[ ] melodias  [ ] harmonias  [ ] história  [ ] teoria  [ ] improvisação
[ ] composição
Outro: ______________________________

6.) Você usa algum material específico para dar aula?
[ ] Sim  [ ] Não

Se sim, qual?

7.) Você estimula seus alunos a aprenderem por transcrições de áudio (tirando de ouvido)?
[ ] Sim  [ ] Não

8.) Você ensina improvisação?
[ ] Sim  [ ] Não

Agora acabou! Muito obrigado! Um grande abraço!
GLOSSARY


baião – A dance music genre from northeast Brazil. Associated with forró.

baile – A party with music and dancing.

baixarias – Counterpoint bass-lines, commonly performed by six and seven-string guitars.

Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros – Band of the Firefighters’ Brigade.

Banda do Arsenal de Guerra – Band of the War Arsenal.

Bandão – Big band. The name of EPM’s full school ensemble and a major component of the school’s curriculum.

bandolim – A Brazilian mandolin.

banjo – A modified cavaquinho, designed in the style of the banjo from the United States, commonly used in pagode music ensembles.

bossa nova – “new way.” A Brazilian popular music style developed in the late 1950s.

botequim – A Brazilian bar that serves drinks and simple food items.

Camarata Carioca – “Rio Chamber,” An ensemble from the 1970s and 1980s that performed choro as chamber music.

capoeira – A Brazilian dance, game, martial art accompanied by music.

carioca – A person from Rio de Janeiro.

Instituto Casa de Choro – Choro House Institute. The institution responsible for the production and administration of Escola Portátil de Música and The National Festival of Choro.

cavaquinho – A small steel four-string lute of Portuguese origin. Commonly used in choro and samba ensembles. Capable of playing melodies but usually functions as a rhythmic/harmonic instrument.

charameira - A folk oboe from the Iberian Peninsula, popular in colonial Brazilian.

choromeleiros – Instrumental music ensembles that incorporated the charameira, guitars, and cavaquinhos. Any musician in the ensemble would be known by the term.

chorão (plural: chorões) – A member of the choro community.
chorinho – The diminutive form of the word choro.

choro – A Brazilian instrumental music genre, which began forming in the 1870s, characterized by the performance practices of various European dance music genres (especially polka and waltz) and subsequent Brazilian dance music genres.

Choro Carioca - Joquim Callado’s 1870 ensemble.

conjunto regional (plural: conjuntos regionais) – Portuguese for regional ensemble. The “standard” choro ensemble modeled after the radio bands of the 1930s-1950s.
Instrumentation: one or two six-string guitars, a seven-string guitar, cavaquinho, pandeiro, and a melodic instrument. The accordion is also popular in the regional ensembles as well as various Afro-Brazilian percussion instruments—scrapers, small drums, and various types of shakers.


festa – A party.

forró – A dance music from northeast Brazil, the traditional ensemble being a trio of accordion, triangle, and zabumba [shallow bass drum].

frevo – A dance music genre from northeast Brazil. A fast syncopated duple rhythm.

jongo – An Afro-Brazilian dance genre considered the antecedent of samba.

levada – A Rhythmic pattern for chordal accompaniment.

lundu – An Afro-Brazilian dance and consequent rhythm, influential in Brazilian popular music in the Nineteenth century.

maxixe – A popular Brazilian rhythm and dance from the end of the 19th century. A syncopated interpretation of polka rhythm and dance.

malandro – A bohemian, trickster, or vagabond.

malandragem – Style and/or character of malandros. In choro, refers to musicians who exhibit exceptional style, craftiness, or shrewdness.

malícia – “malice.” In choro, refers to exceptional style.
milonga – A dance music and rhythm popular in southern Brazil.

modinha – A Brazilian popular lyrical song, often accompanied by guitar that began in the eighteenth century.

Música Popular Brasileira (MPB) – An umbrella term for Brazilian popular music beginning in the 1960s, characterized by a mixture of Brazilian and International musical and cultural aspects.

ophicleide – A bass register, keyed conical bore wind/brass instrument, popular in the early stages of choro.

pagode – Traditionally a party. A popular style of samba that began in the late 1970s.

pandeiro – A shallow, single-headed drum with jingles, similar to the European tambourine, but unique in number and construction of jingles.

reco-reco – A scraper percussion instrument.

roda de choro – “choro circle.” A gathering of choro musicians.

roda de chorões – “circle of choro musicians.” Used by Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto in his book O Choro: Reminiscencias dos Chorões Antigos to describe members of the choro community.

roda de tocadores – “circle of players.” Used by Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto in his book O Choro: Reminiscencias dos Chorões Antigos to describe members of the choro community.

samba – A Brazilian genre of music, dance, and rhythm.

sarau – A social gathering, from the French soirée.

seresta – A romantic song. Literally, serenade.

society musical – “musical society.” Local musical institutions in cities and towns throughout Brazil that offer music education and performance opportunities in bands.

tamborim – A shallow, high-pitched, single-head drum, hit with the hand or beater.

terno – Portuguese for men’s three-piece suit, used in the context of choro for the original ensemble format of guitar, cavaquinho, and flute.

violão – Portuguese for acoustic nylon or steel six-string guitar.
**violão sete cordas** - Portuguese for acoustic nylon or steel seven-string guitar.

**xôlo** – A term related to Afro-Brazilian dance, considered by some scholars as the word that transformed into choro.

**zabumba** – Shallow bass drum from northeast Brazil, used in forró ensembles.
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