

# Caetano Veloso – “zii e zie”



A step forward with the “Cê” band (today bandaCê) and that LP of Clementina with Carlos Cachaca on my mind. “Incompatibilidade de Gênios” and “Ingenuidade”, both are in “zii e zie” because these are the central tracks of that LP which is still very much alive in my memory. I don’t have a copy of Clementina’s LP anymore. Perhaps there is one in Dedé’s house and today Moreno could perhaps find it. But I haven’t even asked him. At one of the first rehearsals of *Obra em Progresso*, the one in which Jaquinho Morelenbaum was a guest, I wanted to play “Incompatibilidade” and I mentioned it to Pedro, Ricardo and Marcelo. Somehow I remembered that Clementina sang it in, say, C major instead of the A minor that is in João Bosco’s recording. I remember a more conventional harmony in Clementina’s version. I believe that João Bosco has re-harmonized it later. I wasn’t that certain my memory was not playing tricks on me.

Jaquinho said then, “why don’t you do it in C major, if this is what you are feeling?” I tried to find there and then Clementina’s recording (Moreno wasn’t going to the rehearsals) on the internet but without success. I did find however an exuberant and spectacular live version by João Bosco on YouTube, in A minor of course. And I asked myself, is there anything better in this world of ours? But my idea is the direct opposite of that modern jazz version treatment and with a samba swing so strongly felt by all musicians that it actually hurts. I got back to the rehearsal room with the feeling that I didn’t even want to sing the music after all and that if I did, it would be in A minor. C major would be great if I wanted to have a naïve version, which is what the Clementina rendering (if I remembered correctly) sounded like to me. In the simplified version but certainly not naïve which I imagined, the tonal centre in A minor and the “tense” chords surrounding it – was what was demanded. The steady beat had to have the same effect as in “Perdeu”, though somewhat different, starting from Bosco’s beat. We tried it and the number got into not only the show but into the CD.

I talk at length about "Incompatibilidade de Gênios" and "Ingenuidade" in "zii e zie" because I do think this throws some light on the sense of the new CD. Knowing what I suggested for "Perdeu" (and what, together, we got for this transamba), the three guys in the band intuitively knew what was in my head for "Incompatibilidade de Gênios". But the changes for the arrangement, which went through my head, they did not accompany. I went back to the computer deciding to include the song on the CD and said that João's version was humiliating but that we would make a "transamba" while he made a "samberklee". The joke was much appreciated and we all had a good laugh. There is no competition: our version simply showed a different approach, which perhaps could suggest other future approaches to this terrific samba. This tells us a lot about what we do, on this CD as we do with samba in general.

From "Diferentemente" (the oldest of the songs on the CD) to "Lapa" (the newest), all the compositions were created by me using the samba beats I play on my guitar – and searching for melodic phrases that evoke the spirit of the genre. The only exceptions are perhaps "Por quem?" and "Sem Cais". I say "maybe" as for "Por Quem ?" I had always imagined a set of drums bending a transbossanova over the three-time slow beat - and "Sem Cais" had come to Pedro with a lot of Samba already in it. It could be that someone might find it difficult to hear this in "Menina da Ria" or even in "Lobão tem Razão". But I'll say that though in "A Cor Amarela" there are explicit sounds of the samba-in-the-round, there is more samba at the base of these two songs (and in "Tarado ni Você") than in that light axé). I kept the guitar beats I used to compose throughout the recording sessions. I suggested a relation of contrasts or distortion between them and the activity coming from the other instruments. We put together some beautiful numbers and certainly intriguing, even for us.

"zii e zie" is a CD made with the bandaCê, conceived for it. It had been conceived to make "Cê". That is why "Cê" seems to depart from a unity, while "zii e zie" seems to arrive at one. For the four of us, it took some time to recognize this truth (which may be obvious to those listeners not involved in the making of the CD).

"Cê" was conceived to create a band. But the lyrics in it were very personal: I was looking at my close surroundings. The lyrics in the "zii e zie" look further. Mostly they focus Rio. But even there, they go from the favelas to Leblon, from Lapa to the beach, from Chico Alves to Los Hermanos; from its typical anonymous characters to its atypical celebrities, such as Kassin. But they look further still: to Guantánamo, to the caverns in Afghanistan, to Washington D.C. Names of places and people - things you wouldn't find in "Cê"'s lyrics - are back.

All concurred to this being a band record. Moreno Veloso and Daniel Carvalho were happier with the sonic material we presented. Pedro was more like the producer who orients the making of the music. Moreno was more the one who orients the making of the sound.

“zii e zie” is a very clear and dense album. It came to light in a rainy year, a year of dark clouds – no metaphor. It’s a record that bows to the Fernando Henrique/Lula era and talks about Brazil’s ascension in the international arena in a sad tone. I enter the old age. Pedro and Moreno are in the acme of adulthood. Ricardo and Marcelo arrive at it. We are people of different generations sharing similar musical and human interests. Frightened expectations come out of our metal strings, our nylon strings, our mucous membranes.

Caetano Veloso  
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