

MUSICIAN EDUCATION ON BRAZILIAN FARMS: A HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE OBJECTIVES OF MUSIC CULTIVATION IN THE PAST



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ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the education of musicians on Brazilian farms during the colonial and imperial periods, to understand the pedagogical intentions regarding this practice. In this way, reflections will be presented on the use of education as a tool of domination, understanding some concepts from a cultural point of view, as well as from ideas about the contributions of pedagogical approaches that meet the expectations of the dominant classes. Subsequently, from a historiographical perspective, we will examine how the formation of Brazilian musicians took place in the social context of the colonial period, to understand the social function of the first musical groups then formed mostly by blacks, their musical repertoire, and the order to which they were subjected. Furthermore, the education of musicians on Brazilian farms will be discussed, highlighting music bands as one of the first informal spaces for musical education, demonstrating their connection with farmers and the church, through catechesis, for the benefit of the mercantile project of the Portuguese in Brazilian lands. Finally, we understand that there is a need to broaden our perceptions about the interpretations of historical facts, presented in the text by researchers and chroniclers, to reflect on new possibilities of Music Education in contemporary music bands.

Keywords: Music Education. Enslaved Musicians. Brazilian Farms.

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between education and work in Brazil was marked by both the exploitation of slave labor and the lack of humane perception on the part of the colonizers towards the colonized (CASTANHO, 2006). According to Castanho (2006, p. 3), "Socially, however, both colonial education and servile labor were considered to be of lesser value, in other words, discriminated against." It was in this context that the activity of musicians emerged on the farms of colonial Brazil.

From this perspective, education for work with music was linked to a project of domination developed by the Portuguese colonizer, made possible by religious brotherhoods and colonels (farm owners), aiming to catechize blacks and control trades in the colony (CASTANHO, 2006). For Sérgio Castanho (2006), slaves were seen as commodities and should perform activities and services that could generate income for the project celebrated between the aforementioned entities.

Slave owners had two options: either they had their slaves perform trades in independent "tents", generating income, or they rented their slaves out for various services. In the latter case, they were called "young men for gain" or "slaves for gain" (CASTANHO, 2006, p.6)

Analyzing Castanho's quote about the lives of these men, we realize that black musicians were "slaves for gain" and that their life trajectories began in inhumane conditions because they were enslaved and did not have the right to have the status of a liberal professional. According to the Bluteau dictionary (1716), the meaning of liberal comes from the Latin liberalism, which means "well-born person" or "person of quality". For Lynch (2007), liberals were individuals who practiced non-mechanical arts, that is, those performed "without using their hands" and were typical of "noble men", different from the activities then practiced by commoners and slaves.

By drawing an analogy to the work of black musicians in the colonial period, we can consider that most of them were "mechanics," because they handled musical instruments of different types and classifications, followed a routine of studies and exhaustive performances, and worked without pay. From this perspective, we understand that the role of musicians in Brazilian slave society followed the guidelines of slave labor, subservient to the interests of entertainment in the colony and the Brazilian empire.

The perception of this historical scenario mobilizes us to seek to understand the reasons that contributed to the sociocultural construction of a country that was unfavorable to musicians, professionals, and human beings, in fact. From this perspective, this reflection leads us to believe that one of the reasons that perpetuated the devaluation of musicians in Brazil is related to the bourgeois mercantile project, with its educational purpose to maintain the status quo.

In this sense, this essay aims to discuss the intentions of the education of black musicians during the period in which slavery was in force. To this end, in dialogue with important theorists, arguments will be presented regarding the use of education as a tool of domination; reflections will be undertaken on how musicians emerged in Brazil, to understand the activity of Brazilian musicians and the educational processes undertaken at the time; as well as discussions on the education of black musicians on Brazilian farms, highlighting music bands as one of the first spaces for musical education.

EDUCATION AS A TOOL OF DOMINATION

Education is a cultural phenomenon, loaded with social objectives and mechanisms of control (GEERTZ, 1978) of the psychological and physical needs of human beings, it is consolidated as an efficient tool for processes of domination, labor exploitation, and enrichment of a few. For Manacorda, education can be understood as

The educational process through which humanity develops itself, in all its various aspects. It seemed to me that they could be summarized in “inculturation” in traditions and customs (or acculturation, in the case that they proceed not from internal dynamism, but from external), in intellectual instruction in its two aspects, the formal-instructional (reading, writing, counting) and the concrete (content of knowledge), and, finally, in learning the trade (understood here as that specific form that is training for war). (MANACORDA, 2010, p. 16)

In this perspective of oppression, the elaboration of the education of human beings must be guided by the process of maintaining their social groups, in the search for strengthening an ideological line on what the life of subjects should be like in a society thus defined, highlighting which paths subjects should follow based on the conception of those who oppress them.

Every society has a peculiar way of educating its members to form their personalities and to be able to live together in their localities, in order to guarantee the proper functioning of the current social dynamics.

Apple (2017) postulates ideological transformations that occur in societies as a whole. Such transformations act directly on reality and become part of the “educational projects” in force.

From a cultural point of view, education does not have a universal meaning. In the studies of Margaret Mead (1963), we perceive that the cultural transmission of three societies in Oceania (Arapesh, Mundogomor and Chambulí) manifests itself in different ways, interfering in the formation of the personality of the subjects in such groups.

Living with the Arapesh, the scholar identified that they were educated to be docile, sensitive, and servile individuals. The children of the tribe were treated with affection and there was no distinction of sex. However, the Mundogomor were educated for combat. In this tribe, aggression was common in all relationships, whether between men, women, or both sexes. However, in the education of the Chambulí, women were educated to be entrepreneurial and extroverted, providers of the family's livelihood, while men were educated to be sensitive and dedicated to the tribe's ceremonies.

Mead's studies (1963) revealed significant progress on the issues of cultural relativism. Based on the knowledge acquired in her research, the author makes it clear that the educational process, as a cultural phenomenon, manifests itself differently among societies in different geographic areas, as well as in the areas inhabited by different groups. Education, as an object of the cultural world, is equipped with mechanisms capable of controlling the lives of others. Geertz (1978) demonstrates that the cultural dimension can be understood as a set of plans, recipes, rules, and instructions to govern man's behavior.

Controlling working hours, ways of working, and the right to work made and makes the bourgeois man a privileged subject. Education as a cultural tool for human development is something that can be manipulated so that individual or collective goals can be achieved, to satisfy the interests of those who create them. In the contemporary world, we see that the interests of the neoliberal agenda are dictating the rules of what schools should do to educate individuals. According to Michael Apple

Increasingly, under the growing power of neoliberal ideological forms, education is being commoditized. Its institutions are being transformed into “products” that must be subject to the logic of the market, and not only in New Orleans. And the people who work in educational institutions at all levels are valued only for their contributions to an increasingly unequal economy, with test results as a parameter for national and international competitiveness. (APPLE, 2017, p. 35-36)

For Neitzel (2020, p. 147), “The mechanisms and strategies of subjectivation, regulation, and control make “market” economic principles, the principles that should standardize all life in society, translating into what we call consumer society”, that is, market principles should be in the curriculum and should focus on the formation of docile and servile subjects like the Arapesh (MEAD, 1963) devoid of any sense of questioning, which could be threatening to business interests.

It is in the perception of education as a powerful tool for social transformation and manipulation that we envisage discussing, in this work, some historical evidence that leads us to think about the education of black musicians on Brazilian farms in the dark past. The interpretation of the historical dimension of the facts presented here can instigate the reader to exercise criticism on the historical faces that still need clarification.

But after all, was there a specific education for black musicians in Brazil? What were the objectives of this education? Was playing a musical instrument in a farm band slave labor? What kind of relationship existed between catechesis and music in the past? These questions are answered from a historical and social perspective on the emergence of musicians, the maintenance of their musical activities on farms, and the mercantile proposal behind catechesis.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE BRAZILIAN MUSICIAN

The figure of the Brazilian musician emerged from the sociocultural fusion resulting from the “confluence, clash, and blending of the Portuguese invader with the native Indians and Campinas natives and with the Campinas natives and African blacks, both enticed as slaves” (RIBEIRO, 2015, p. 17), giving rise to the development of a multifaceted musical culture that integrated the cultural traits of these different peoples, which outlined what became Brazilian music. According to Alvarenga,

[...] the constitution of the Brazilian people (Amerindians, Portuguese, blacks), possibly made their music; with the 19th century, traces indicating an origin appear nascent geniality, but still incapable of motivating an unmistakable national color; it was only in the last quarter of the 19th century that, fixing elements that were until then uncertain or indecisive, our folk and popular music began to define itself as a peculiar and representative creation of the Brazilian people (ALVARENGA, 1982, p.13)

The indigenous people were the first people to cultivate music in Brazil. However, it is important to note that, after the arrival of the Portuguese, the musical practice carried out by them became the result of a process of cultural invasion, which annulled the language and music of the indigenous people, since the social organizations existing here were decimated. According to Castagna, "the musicians of the land" (CASTAGNA, 1994), as the Indians were called, performed a satisfactory musical activity during the 18th century, being able to produce their instruments and play them with relative technical dexterity. At the same time that the native peoples were co-opted by the Portuguese colonizer, the trafficking of Africans for slave labor began in Brazilian lands. This phenomenon had a decisive impact on the formation of colonial society, because, according to Alvarenga (1982), the contact between white men and black women in the domestic life of a remote Brazil energized their cultures, promoting the strengthening of cultural traits that are still alive today.

The musical culture of black people spread and took on different contours in light of the social situation of oppression to which they were subjected. The intertwining of music and work was redefined and gradually entered the heart of the country's farms. According to Alvarenga (1982, p. 259), "in Brazil, there is a great variety of work songs, linked to urban and rural activities. Many of these songs live today only in the memory of old people, killed by the mechanization of the work that motivated them". Realizing the taste for music that Africans showed, the white men, who owned the blacks at the time, began to restrict their cultural freedom, conditioning them through musical acculturation processes, forcing them to learn European music, during the slavery period in Brazil (ALVARENGA, 1982).

It was in this scenario that the first music bands were born, centers of musical instruction in the large sugar mills and farms spread throughout Brazil in the past. According to Alvarenga (1982, p.19), the bands "were an obligatory musical element of popular festivities, where they possibly performed many dances and also excerpts from operas". Other groups also made a great contribution to the strengthening of the bands,

such as the ternos-de-barbeiros, which according to Alvarenga (1982, p.19) may have been “the only popular groups of professional instrumentalists that we had at the time”.

The activities of the music bands were not the only ones carried out on Brazilian farms and sugar mills. In exchange for the reduction of hard labor and flogging, blacks, in addition to being musicians, also performed various artistic activities. According to Gilberto Freyre,

[...] blacks were the musicians of the colonial era and the time of the empire. The boys were choirboys in the church. Several chapels on sugar mills had black choirs, and several mansions, preserving the tradition of Mangue la Bote, maintained, for the delight of whites, bands of African slaves. At the Monjope sugar mill in Pernambuco - for a long time owned by a Carneiro da Cunha who ended up as barons of Vera Cruz - there was not only a black band, but also a circus with little horses in which the slaves acted as clowns and acrobats” (FREYRE, 2003, p. 505)

The relaxation of the harsh and cruel measures against black musicians began to occur at a historical moment in which slave labor was in economic decline in some colonies, due to changes caused in the market. According to Ponce

As the conquered peoples stopped providing slaves and wealth, taxes, fees, and requisitions increased. Poverty grew to such an extent that the exploitation of enormous domains - latifundia - by veritable armies of slaves no longer produced compensatory income (PONCE, 1996, p. 81)

According to Ponce, the slave as a product or object of sale and exchange was no longer useful due to the development of machines, which required skilled people to operate them, thus causing a series of changes in mass production processes. Furthermore, according to Ponce (1996, p. 145), “The complicated machines that industry created could not be effectively directed by the miserable knowledge of a servant or a slave due to technical changes in the market”. Slaves who could not read and write became useless to the bourgeois class of the 19th century. However, it is interesting to note that there were literate black people with musical knowledge who educated many children of sugar mill owners in the arts and literacy when there were no schools, among other things. s educational institutions in the vicinity of the slave quarters. Gilberto Freyre presents relevant aspects of the professional activity of the black Calisto in the 19th century, which reveals another social vision of the work of blacks as teachers and musicians in Brazil.

[...] the black Calisto, presenting himself to his students wearing a top hat, black frock coat, and white trousers, presented himself orthodoxly dressed in the official attire, so to speak, of the upper and literate class of his time. "He promised my father," wrote Arthur Orlando of his black teacher, to teach me the first letters in exchange for an ebony flute with silver keys (FREYRE, 2003, p. 505)

The presentation of this historical-social fact by Gilberto Freyre reveals a favorable position of the "black Calisto" about the precarious slave labor conditions of the blacks who lived on large Brazilian farms in the 19th century. Such a view motivates us to understand what the black man did to gain this social position in his time. Did Calisto receive the same education as the blacks in the slave quarters? Did his skills and intelligence give him a privileged position among the other slaves? Historical evidence shows that few blacks managed to "escape" from the whippings thanks to their socio-cultural skills (an object of interest for the colonels in the past). However, this reality differed from that of other equally exploited black and mixed-race slaves, who were forced to do manual labor and were compared to animals. This work considers this evidence as aspects that allow us to reflect on the type of education offered to farm musicians at the time of the transition between the colony and the Brazilian empire.

MUSICIAN EDUCATION ON FARMS

"Non-institutionalized spaces were one of the first places for the cultural formation of Indigenous people and slaves in colonial Brazil (SAVIANI, 2011). Their construction was revealed by the symbiosis between Education and Catechism, necessary for the colonization project that lasted for many centuries, in its ways of structuring the effect of domination in the Brazilian civilization still under construction. According to Neves (1978, p.148), non-institutionalized spaces played a fundamental role in the formation of people in the past. For the author, "the non-institutionalized forms of knowledge were much more effective, omnipresent, radical, in their deceptive multiple smallness than what was presented in the Schools, at least from the point of view of establishing cultural domination".

From the perspective of the aforementioned authors, we understand that the farm bands, orchestras, and chapel choirs, created in the interior and on the coast of the country at the time, were some of the first spaces for the education of Brazilian musicians. The function of the agents of these educational spaces was primarily the instruction of blacks and mixed-race people, subjected to Christian doctrine to form subjects who were submissive and docile to the demands of work on the old sugar cane and coffee plantations.

[...] In the case of education established within the scope of the colonization process, it is a matter of acculturation, since the traditions and customs that are sought to be instilled arise from an external dynamism, that is, which goes from the cultural

environment of the colonizer to the situation that is the object of colonization (SAVIANI, 2011, p. 27)

The education of black musicians, in the “farm bands”, was aligned with the development of the exploitation of slave labor. Such institutions were strongholds of work practices that brought great profit to the sugar mill owners, who were great entrepreneurs in the music business during the empire. According to Tinhorão (1997), it is possible to find reports on the activities of Raimunda Porcino de Jesus, who was considered at the time one of the great entrepreneurs of slave bands in Bahia in the past.

Having become a true modern businesswoman, the owner of a band “with a good master, who they say was once a slave, was numerous, had good instruments, and a large and varied repertoire” – as José Freire de Carvalho Filho would recall in his book *A devoção do Senhor do Bonfim e sua história* –, the Charadista began to almost monopolize the contracts for providing music for all public festivals in Salvador, which hastened the decline of the old barbers’ music (TINHORÃO, 1997, p. 142).

The exploitation of slave labor was one of the intentions of the education of musicians in farm bands. This action fostered the education of musicians, consolidating differences between the education of blacks and whites during the period mentioned. On the one hand, a formal education for the children of white men should be trained to hold privileged leadership positions in the structure of the State. On the other, an education for blacks and mixed-race people based on Christian doctrine would promote their acculturation and domination for hard work. Regarding these differences, Casimiro (2002) points out that.

The education provided in schools was different from that provided for indigenous and mixed-race people. While the latter received only the catechism in preparation for baptism, for the Christian life, and for fulfilling their duties to God and the State in the missions, the white Portuguese, the children of the elite (very few) were the target of a formal, long and diversified education, preparatory for power and/or for ecclesiastical life. Other white Portuguese (restricted segments of the working classes) had access only to the rudiments of schooling: that is, reading, writing, and arithmetic (CASIMIRO, 2002, p.12)

The devaluation of blacks, mixed-race people, and whites from the working classes is evident in Casimiro's speech. Education was used to favor the children of the empire (Portuguese) and to disadvantage the workers (blacks, mixed-race people, and Portuguese from the working classes). It was from this socio-educational context that the education of

the Brazilian musician was also established. Christian doctrine used a set of mechanisms to persuade and instill in the minds of those being catechized the only truth: faith in the sugar mill owner and not exactly in God. Regarding this doctrine, Almeida, Casemiro, and Silveira address the development of traditional catechesis:

The traditional catechesis developed in the Jesuit schools and colleges could also be aimed at the mamelucos and some indigenous children. Blacks were left out. Since the beginning of colonization, there was a clear separation in the catechesis given to the Indigenous people, to the whites and the black slaves (ALMEIDA, CASEMIRO, and SILVEIRA, 2017, p.3)

But what kind of catechesis was given to the blacks? A catechesis based on cultural invasion and imposition controlled by processes of acceptance and conformity of the blacks through the recitation of the creed. From this perspective, all black people should accept the destiny set by the “church” and not by God, that is, servitude to the master and docility to work were the path to achieving the divine gift.

It was not a catechesis carried out like that of the indigenous people, in villages, or like that of the whites, in schools. It was a catechesis carried out in the homes, on the farms, where the black people served as slaves. Some farmers had a chapel and even a chaplain with knowledge of African languages to facilitate the process (ALMEIDA, CASEMIRO and SILVEIRA, 2017, p. 39).

The educational process of black people was very complex. Instilling Christian doctrine in the enslaved was a difficult task for the dominators. The catechesis was supposed to build the image of subjects subservient to the economic and cultural development of colonial Brazil to meet the mercantile interests of the time.

[...] the State had a control mechanism over the entire colonial organism, mainly over the Church itself. Both because of the Patronage and because of the attributions of the Board of Conscience and Order and the Overseas Council. We cannot forget, moreover, that it was an absolutist, regalist, centralizing State that monopolized any decisions that went against its mercantilist interests (CASIMIRO, 2009, p. 6)

During the colonial period, there was a need to educate individuals in the Christian faith, as this was one of the only ways that Jesuit priests were able to work with the State at the time. If the church did not fulfill its duty, possessions and goods were lost and this put

at risk the interests of the “Christian Economy”, so necessary for the perpetuation of the church in the newly discovered lands.

And because the slaves of Brazil are the most in need of Christian Doctrine, there being so many nations and a diversity of languages that pass from gentile to this State, we must seek all means for them to be instructed in the Faith, either by someone who speaks to them in their languages, or ours, when they can already understand it. And there is no other means more beneficial than that of an instruction adapted to their rudeness of understanding and barbarity of speaking. Therefore, the Parish Priests will be obliged to order copies made (if those that we have ordered to be printed are not enough) of a brief form of the Catechism, which is in title 32, to be distributed among the houses of the parishioners, so that they may instruct their slaves in the mysteries of the Faith and Christian Doctrine, through the form of said instruction, and their questions and answers will be examined, and more easily than studying the Creed from memory. And others, who learn, those who are more capable (ARIMINO, 1705, p. 86)

An instruction based on the “mysteries of faith” was a mechanism of alienation, which instilled in slaves the understanding that it was God’s will to serve their master and that blacks were forbidden to question any subject related to their creed because if they did, it would be seen as an offense or a motivation that would lead them to hell.

It is by understanding the interplay of relations between the church and the State that it becomes possible to perceive the implementation of the “farm bands” as an extension or equipment at the service, also, of catechesis. “The farm bands” were cultural equipment (SILVA, 2023), in which slaves learned to read sheet music and play wood, percussion, and brass instruments. They were financed by the slave owners and the repertoire was Eurocentric, with sacred and secular music. According to Marcos Holler, the brass bands, in addition to having the function of livening up the salons of the masters and mistresses at the Santa Cruz plantation in Rio de Janeiro, also performed activities in liturgical celebrations (HOLLER, 2006) of the Catholic Church.

It was in education for the profession of musician that slaves in imperial Brazil found a way to rise socially, and this fact enabled the emergence of several musicians who engaged in such activities on Brazilian farms. Generally, music instruction was given by a European (military) maestro or a slave bandmaster who mastered the art of reading, writing, and “knowing music.” According to studies by Correa (2016), children and women also participated in the band as musicians. According to this author, in one of the stages of

his documentary research, the music school instructed slave musicians about musical activities and their duties.

The person in charge of the music school was responsible for teaching the slaves to read and write, teaching only what was necessary for the performance of the music profession and that in their daily routine, they should make them study the songs chosen by the administrator. They would also have to preserve the farm's musical instruments, remaining in the school sector from 7:30 in the morning to 2:30 in the afternoon, dedicating themselves exclusively to the daily studies of their instruments, and performing at all ceremonies of the parish church and presentations that the administrator ordered (CORREA, 2016, p. 9).

In his research, Correa (2016) also identified some musical activities of Targine José, music master of the band of the Santa Cruz farm, located in Rio de Janeiro. Based on his research, teaching practices for teaching musical instruments to other bandmasters were highlighted.

On September 30, 1844, in the Rio de Janeiro daily newspaper, we find Targine Jose participating in an event at the São Francisco theater organized by the Santa Cecília brotherhood, in which he presents several studies and variations of Ophicleyde. We can see that several musicians and music masters from Santa Cruz were related to this brotherhood, which aimed to bring together all the musicians in the city of Rio de Janeiro, where it organized and provided services related to musical work (CORREA, 2016, p.11).

The need to have an organized musical activity on a farm was not seen as a benefit to black people on the part of the sugar mill owner. What motivated the maintenance of farm bands was the political interest in the entertainment of the trades and the income that the bands generated for the farmers and the brotherhoods in the past. The diversification of the field of activity of the bands provided by the religious brotherhoods and the high profitability that these pieces of equipment gave to the slave owners in the empire is incalculable. However, the objective of education in the plantation bands was to domesticate the slaves through musical learning, so that the band would communicate, through sound, to the faithful the values of the catechesis that exploited the black musician as a low-skilled labor force for musical trades and reinforced the status of the bourgeois man and his place of power in the colony, to consolidate the tradition of his ancestors.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study presented here had the objective of discussing the intentions of the education of the musician, as an enslaved subject, on Brazilian plantations, throughout history. The act of reflecting on historical facts, on the musician and his education, reveals possibilities for new interpretations of the discourses of chroniclers and of primary and secondary sources, found in research, as well as on historical studies of the lives of enslaved people in Brazil.

In this work, we initially present a discussion on the concept of Education from a cultural point of view, in an attempt to present one of the visions on its role in society. During the dialogue between the authors, it was possible to verify that education is an excellent tool for perpetuating cultural traditions and its importance for projects of domestication of man for commercial purposes.

In the development of this study, we discuss the emergence of the musician in Brazil in a historical construction on the social context in which he emerged, seeking to highlight the process of social formation in the colonial period; the first groups of enslaved musicians; the repertoire played and the first perceptions on the purpose and function of music in this context, and the subjection of these to educated work, that is, linked to the music of the colonizer.

In the last topic, we held a discussion about the way musicians were educated on Brazilian farms and we identified the relationship between musical education and the mercantile domination project of the court and the Church, perceiving the influence of catechesis on the formation of music bands and its close relationship with the education of enslaved musicians on Brazilian farms.

From the perspective of history, we perceive that education goes hand in hand with the development of great civilizations, using it as a structuring element of a dominating project. Consequently, most of the wealth generated from the Portuguese colony resulted from the inhuman labor to which enslaved men were subjected for centuries. Acculturated by the dominant force of weapons and the fury of the dominator, the enslaved were subjected to an education based on physical and psychological violence that operated their dehumanization. This process began with the cultural invasion, based on catechesis, which imposed a violent process of denial of the religious cultures of the subjects smuggled here, forcing them to adhere to Christianity. The search for historical evidence about the education of musicians in Brazil is an attempt to better understand the world and discover the genesis of the “truths” about man, helping to break established paradigms and pointing

out paths for the decolonization of education. From this perspective, such activity assumes an ethical commitment in search of the construction of a human conscience, which is inclusive of human beings, based on robust ethical principles and aspects linked to solidarity. Therefore, this work seeks to contribute, with a reflection on Brazilian musical education, based on the authors' interpretation of historical facts that still require greater depth for a more accurate perception of the realities of a dark and unfavorable past for musicians in Brazil. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that the historical facts presented in the text are points of great relevance for thinking about an emancipatory educational project, which provides new educational practices with music in Brazil.

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