



SETTING THE SCENE: RIO DE JANEIRO

by Russell Slater

The neighbourhood of Lapa, a short walk from Rio's financial centre, is the throbbing heart of Rio's party culture. Come nightfall the streets around Lapa's famous arches are packed with people there to drink caipirinhas and experience the carnivalesque atmosphere. The neighbourhood is known best for its atmospheric botecos, its impromptu samba jams, and its many dance clubs. Yet just five minutes walk from the arches, tucked up a side street, is Plano B, a record store that has become a hub for Rio's new experimental music scene.

Felipe, of the group Chinese Cookie Poets, a cornerstone of the scene, describes Plano B as "a five square metre hot oven." In 2004, in cramped surroundings, the shop started organizing improvisation sessions every Friday night. Attendance was often confined to just a handful of people, but the simple fact that Rio's avant-garde musicians had a place to meet had a big effect. According to Felipe, genres from free jazz and avant pop to IDM and noise rock mingled at the sessions. "Just by being there and seeing other people sharing the same musical interests was like discovering the lost island," says Felipe.

Slowly word got out and a network of open-minded musicians began to coalesce around the shop, which also began featuring international touring artists. In 2011, a new night called Quintavant started in Botafogo's Audio Rebel club and splintered into an additional venue at Comuna (also in Botafogo). This meant that the scene finally had venues that could accommodate a full band, something which was never possible at Plano B. This move from mostly electronic gigs at Plano B to full bands at Quintavant is one of the reasons why this scene is so diverse. The range of styles includes the heavy doom of Bemonio, Chinese Cookie Poets' arrhythmic rock, Duplexx's glitchy IDM, Sobre A Maquina's Throbbing Gristle-esque noise assault and the Tropicilia-tinted improv of Negro Leo. This is a scene united by a spirit of experimentation.

